



**Media Release – For immediate release**

**Statement issued by:**

Australian Festival Association  
Live Performance Australia  
Music NSW  
APRA AMCOS  
Live Music Office

**23 February 2019**

## **NSW PREMIER DELIVERS FESTIVAL LICENSING FIASCO BY SMS**

In the latest Berejiklian Government's chaotic pre-election bid to brand festivals as the problem in NSW, they have now selected 14 festivals as supposedly "high-risk", without assessment guidelines, and only alerted the festival organisers by SMS last night just before announcing the news via a late-night press release.

The live music industry said:

"Despite numerous attempts to engage the Government on these issues, our offer to sit down and work through sensible steps to improve safety has fallen on deaf ears.

Instead, the Berejiklian Government has adopted a chaotic policy on the run approach to the issue of festival safety.

The government's consultation process on this issue has been a farce – and it reached new heights last night when industry bodies received a copy of the Minister's embargoed media release and the still incomplete regulations proposal after 10pm. Risk assessment guidelines and reference documents have still not been made available.

The process has lacked integrity and transparency - and there are just as many questions left unanswered by the government's latest announcement.

Organisers of festivals which have been named in the 'high risk' category were getting SMS messages and phone calls from late yesterday evening to let them know they were being subjected to these new regulations.

The Government has named 14 festival organisers, some of whom haven't been given the courtesy of a discussion about concerns with their events prior to this announcement.

These festivals haven't seen the guidelines under which they have been assessed, nor given a right of reply.

There remains confusion that these festivals shouldn't even be in the high-risk category. A stand out example is Laneway Festival which does not meet the government's stated high-risk criteria.

It's also not clear how new festivals will be assessed, what discretionary powers will be available and what risk assessment criteria will be applied.

As it stands, any festival can be added to the high-risk category at any time



It exposes this whole process as a media stunt by the Premier without any genuine commitment to working with us on festival safety issues.

We can't have any confidence in a government which issues new policy announcements to the media first and by SMS – it's an insult to the professionalism of our industry and the commitment of festival organisers to delivering high-quality and safe events which are enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of people each year.

If the Premier was serious about this issue, she would have sat down for proper consultation with us and talk to the experts – the festival organisers – instead of dictating regulations that will potentially drive festivals out of NSW.

We reaffirm our commitment to better safety at our festivals - but we won't cop unfair and unreasonable regulations without consultation and which will damage the economic and social contribution our festivals make to the NSW economy in our cities and regional areas."

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**About LPA**

LPA is the peak body for Australia's live performance industry. Established 100 years ago in 1917 and registered as an employers' organisation under the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*, LPA has over 400 Members nationally. We represent commercial producers, music promoters, major performing arts companies, small to medium companies, independent producers, major performing arts centres, metropolitan and regional venues, commercial theatres, stadiums and arenas, arts festivals, music festivals, and service providers such as ticketing companies and technical suppliers. Our membership spans from small-medium and not-for-profit organisations to large commercial entities.

LPA has a clear mandate to advocate for and support policy decisions that benefit the sustainability and growth of the live performance industry in Australia.