



Adam Simmons - director
1 Sumner Avenue
Northcote, 3070 VIC
0407 803 801
adam@tuo.com.au
www.tuo.com.au
21 October 2020

SUBMISSION TO PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S CREATIVE AND CULTURAL INDUSTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS

To the Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Via:

Dear Committee Members

I welcome the opportunity to present this submission for this Senate Inquiry.

INTRODUCTION

Jazz has contributed to Australian economy and culture for many years and continues to do so at all levels including internationally. Jazz is a large part of the live music scene – for example as measured in the 2017 Melbourne Live Music Census, 46% of venue participants said they usually present jazz – that is not much different to Rock (55%), Funk/Soul (47%), Blues (47%) but more than Folk (45%), Pop (42%) and Classical (8%). Yet despite its ubiquitous nature it is not always included in consideration of “contemporary music”.

COVID-19 has totally decimated the arts sector, and the jazz sector is no different, especially as it is such a compelling live performance artform.

This submission focuses on aiding the COVID recovery of the jazz sector but also on addressing structural weaknesses in the sector in order for jazz to not only recover but to assist other sectors in their recovery and prosperity.

Whole of ecosystem or a complex adaptive approach is required, to see how jazz provides the scaffolding for contemporary music due to the skills, knowledge and creativity that jazz develops. Jazz is intertwined with hospitality, tourism, health and education sectors, including strong regional contributions. Funding of the jazz sector (and music more broadly) does generate significant cost-benefits.

CONTENTS

- Executive Summary
- 1. Consultation & Community
- 2. Overview of current/normal state of Australian Jazz sector and role it plays within broader economy
- 3. COVID impact
- 4. Benefits/Opportunities
 - a. Direct/indirect economic
 - b. Non-economic
 - c. Innovation/digital
- 5. Mechanisms for communicating with government
- 6. Recommendations
- 7. Implementation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The community consulted for this submission extends across the whole sector: major international festivals to small clubs; from traditional to contemporary jazz; from our leading professional artists to young emerging artists; and from other associated industry workers to the genre's passionate audiences.

Jazz has a long and influential history in Australia since at least the 1930's, including Australian artists being the international influencers, such as Graeme Bell or The Necks. There are many different styles within jazz, but despite the differences as noted by one participant at the recently held, Australian Jazz Forum, jazz is *"a unique artform that expresses universality and individuality at the same time."* And as Melbourne based drummer, Ronny Ferella, put it, *"It's not what jazz is, but what jazz does"*.

Despite the passion and strengths in the jazz sector and its contribution across many sectors, there has been a decline of visibility and a lack of collective voice since 2002, with the defunding of the National Jazz Coordination Association, along with shifts in various funding initiatives.

Recent developments including international support from Sounds Australia and the Australian Music Centre have increased export opportunities into a global industry that is growing.

COVID-19 has disrupted many plans – tours, festivals, gigs, recordings all gone. What it has done is to reveal the interconnectedness of so many parts, but also the broken nature of the old model and it has accelerated conversations to look at what might be.

Jazz activities help contribute across many sectors of economic and social activity including hospitality, tourism, education and health. As the jazz sector gets back into business, it will be able to participate in the recovery of these allied sector also. For relatively small investment, a jazz festival can help generate much needed economic activity which then pays for itself through the resulting tax revenue.

The key recommendations are designed to create capacity in the sector for it to emerge from COVID in a stronger position than it was prior and be recognised for how it can contribute and grow. Support for the development of a national collective voice will be key to drawing the sector together and giving it the capacity that is currently missing. Other recommendations include properly measuring the impacts of the sector to show what it really generates as well as suggestion for building sustainability for festivals, organisations, venues and artists.

1. CONSULTATION & COMMUNITY

This submission has been prepared by me, Adam Simmons, Director of The Usefulness of Art, in public consultation with a broad range of contributors and jazz industry members from around Australia, as well as informed by recent research and surveys.

The community consulted for this submission extends across the whole sector: major international festivals to small clubs; from traditional to contemporary jazz; from our leading professional artists to young emerging artists; and from other associated industry workers to the genre's passionate audiences.

The Usefulness of Art (TUoA) is an arts consultancy business, which seeks to share learnings of a practicing artist/artworker for the benefit of building a more informed, professional and sustainable artistic community. TUoA offers services in mentoring, grant-writing, career advice and engages in advocacy activities. TUoA extends and draws upon my experience from over 30 years of professional performance practice across most styles of music, performing internationally on saxophones, flutes, clarinets and shakuhachi. Primarily based in jazz, I have self-released over 20 CDs and contributed to over 100, including with major artists such as Gotye, You Am I, Australian Art Orchestra, Kutcha Edwards and others. I have also been artistic director for events including Wangaratta Festival of Jazz and Blues and Festival of Slow Music (Ballarat).

Since May 2019, I have been working via TUoA in a pro bono role outlined by Victoria's Jazz Industry Strategic Action¹ to develop a model for a jazz industry platform. TUoA's activity in regard to this role during this time at a national level includes:

- Researching/preparing a submission for Senate Inquiry into Government's response to COVID-19²
- Australian Jazz Forum - online national consultation on Sep 26, 2020. Over 70 attendees participated in discussing the Australian jazz sector, creating an interactive digital workspace on the Mural platform, allowing ongoing public contribution to the consultation process.³

2. OVERVIEW

Jazz in Australia

This is an outline of Jazz in Australia from the TUoA submission to Creative State 2020+ last year⁴:

What is jazz?

More than a style, it is a collaborative process that connects all participants, that lives and breathes, inspiring conversation that invites all to participate equally and respectfully in creative endeavour. Jazz as a form has many variations, but jazz as a process stays relevant and contemporary, inviting new ideas and influences to build upon the tradition. The spirit of expressive freedom, collaboration and improvisation are at the core of Dixieland jazz, big band jazz, be-bop jazz, mainstream and the latest cutting edge-contemporary jazz.

In Australia, this spirit takes on a unique form and deep significance due to the First People's connection, respect and listening to country and subsequently the improvisational skills required of the early European settlers. Australian jazz has developed its own voice upon the foundation of these collective experiences, but it also has something to offer in contributing to the way we move forward as a nation.

Jazz is firmly embedded in the DNA of Australian contemporary music with a long history of international engagement and influence:

- **Graeme Bell** – Melbourne jazz pianist, described as the “father of Australian Jazz”, helped sparked an international jazz revival in the 1940s and was the first Western musician to take a jazz group to China⁵;
- **Wilma Reading** – born and raised in Cairns, inspired by her aunt who was a jazz singer, began international career in 1959 largely in USA and UK, inducted into National Indigenous Music Awards Hall of Fame in 2019⁶;

¹ Commissioned by Port Fairy Jazz Festival with Moyne Shire Council - <https://www.portfairyjazz.com.au/strategic-plan.html>

² <https://www.tuoa.com.au/blog/submission-to-senate-inquiry-on-govt-response-to-covid-19>

³ Australian Jazz Forum Mural - <https://app.mural.co/t/ghddigital7445/m/ghddigital7445/1600583747987/321d48315ad8e36d6f19a75026eda9c603993b27>

⁴ <https://www.tuoa.com.au/blog/submission-to-victorian-governments-creative-state-2020>

⁵ <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/arts/music/jazz-pianist-led-local-dance-music-revival/news-story/5266679f98d4e8df1f1f966bdb13e54b>

⁶ <https://scenestr.com.au/music/wilma-reading-is-a-hidden-gem-that-still-sparkles-20180730>

- **Gerry Humphrys** – British immigrant, arrived Melbourne 1957, started playing trad jazz in 1960's with The Red Onions Jazz Band, going on to become iconic front man of The Loved Ones, inspiring bands including INXS and Jet⁷;
- **Cold Chisel** – the members of this quintessential Aussie pub-rock band were/are great appreciators of jazz, with Jimmy Barnes stating:
*"If I hadn't joined Cold Chisel they would have been a f---in' jazz rock band," Barnes says, dragging himself away from the hugs and smiling faces at the counter towards a table at the rear of Pellegrini's. "Mossy wanted to play nice, Don (Walker) was into Miles Davis and Steve (Prestwich) was into Yes."*⁸;
- **Don Burrows** – toured the Australian outback throughout his career, including via Musica Viva⁹;
- **The Necks** – specialising in improvisation, this genre-defying trio is a truly international force, recently recognised by being awarded the 2019 Richard Gill Award for Distinguished Services to Australian Music.

This brief outline of Australian jazz demonstrates a long, significant history of international and cultural influence that is continuing to actively contribute to contemporary music today.

Australian jazz eco-system

Jazz is international & multi-cultural, it uniquely inspires individual and collaborative spontaneous creativity & thinking, and its energy, vitality, and emotional content honor its African-American origins. For these and so many more reasons it is a living treasure that should be nurtured both publicly and privately, worldwide."
 – Ken Field, US saxophonist and regular artist at HONK Oz! (Wollongong)

Jazz musicians exemplify the “gig economy” of freelance workers, moving from one job to another, with flexibility but no security. The term was coined by the early jazz musicians over 100 years ago. Given their training and flexibility, jazz musicians and their influence permeate throughout Australian society.

Most obviously there are the many specialised jazz clubs, festivals and venues around the country, presenting the full gamut of professional and casual/hobbyist musicians. But often live jazz is presented in non-genre specific venues and events, as well contributing to the backdrop in numerous cafes, restaurants and functions, including weddings and other events.

Jazz trained musicians are often the core ensemble members of musical groups across all genres due to their skills of improvising, creativity and flexibility. They will be found involved in all of the major musical theatre productions, internationally successful mainstream artists, TV show bands, advertising jingles, film soundtracks and more.

Jazz trained musicians are teaching and researching across all levels of music education, regardless of the style. Improvisation is key for developing skills of flexibility, innovation, creativity, teamwork and resilience, which are transferable to other fields. Secondary schools often incorporate jazz big bands as key in their music programs. There is huge scope to build upon these activities to contribute

The resourcefulness developed by jazz musicians to survive through portfolio careers as bandleader, sideman, composer, publicist, producer, tour manager, agent, educator, composer, administration, grant-writer and now media content producer for online streaming and digital communications, means they often end up involved in various volunteer organisations, festivals, independent record labels and artist collectives. This creates strong, passionate networks and provides some independence, but unfortunately it has become necessary due to the decline of industry support and at the cost of proper sustainability within the sector.

The jazz sector provides a scaffolding for Australian contemporary music through education, performance, composition and recording. It also contributes throughout broader sectors of hospitality, tourism, education and health. But as can happen when something is ubiquitous, jazz is not always recognised for its contribution and given the appropriate support.

Lack of visibility

Things have radically changed since the 80's and early 90's when I remember experiencing jazz regularly on TV and radio, both on commercial and public broadcasting, including Australian jazz artists performing original music.

One example was a 1986 performance by Sydney saxophonist, Sandy Evans with trio at Bondi Beach presented on ABC TV, which I still remember vividly. Sandy notably played in 2000 atop Sydney Opera House, televise worldwide. Sandy has

⁷ <http://www.milesago.com/Obits/gerry-omit.htm>

⁸ <https://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/music/lunch-with-jimmy-barnes-20170525-gwcy2i.html>

⁹ <https://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/music/mr-b-australias-jazz-legend-20080802-ge79r5.html>

remained an influential for me, but also for countless dozens of female jazz artists that she has actively been training and encouraging for many years.

Commercial programs like Hey Hey Its Saturday (Ch9), Steve Vizard Show (Ch7), Sunday (Ch9) and Good Morning Australia (Ch10) as well as the different and regular opportunities on ABC TV were all examples where jazz was presented and performed by high calibre artists, acknowledged for their artistry and often performing original music. Many jazz artists built their profile during this time – James Morrison, Paul Grabowsky, Wilbur Wilde, Vince Jones, Kate Ceberano. But with the decline of all these opportunities for widespread exposure, the following generations have not had access to these pathways and remain “yet to be discovered”.

Two recent examples: Julien Wilson and Andrea Keller

Julien (saxophonist) and Andrea (piano) are both highly celebrated artists, bandleaders, composers and collaborators across a range of projects. They have received high accolades with many national awards between them. Both have been performing professionally for 25 years or more, with at least 10 years of training before that.

With a similar level of training and career achievements, most elite athletes would be getting to the end of their performing career and celebrated as such before possibly pivoting into upper level positions of leadership in training, media or organisational administration.

But for Julien and Andrea, despite all of their national and international achievements and recognition within the jazz sector, they seem to still barely be acknowledged in the mainstream:

- In a recent article for Mixdown, a music industry magazine, it was noted that Julien Wilson “could very well be the future of Australian jazz”¹⁰ - more than 25 years since winning the National Jazz Awards in 1994.
- Last year Andrea Keller was shortlisted for the highly prestigious Melbourne Prize for Music, recognising excellence by a “Victorian musician or group whose work demonstrates outstanding musicianship, skill and creativity” – which is acknowledgement in itself of Andrea’s achievements at the highest level. But what she actually received was the Beleura Emerging Composers Award, which is to be applauded, except that it now sets the bar for an “emerging composer” to have at least 20 year’s experience and a string of ARIA Awards and nominations amongst other achievements.

Both artists are highly deserving of these accolades, but the point is that they have been receiving the same “encouragement” for two decades. Where are the pathways for their steps into their rightful places as elders, and what about the backlog of younger artists that are literally the future of Australian jazz?

Lack of national voice

Linked to the issue of visibility is the fact that it has been nearly 20 years since the de-funding of the National Jazz Coordination Association (NJAC) in 2002. In 1998 Associate Professor Bruce Johnson wrote about his experience of the NJAC, including as being the President, that despite initial scepticism of institutionalism in jazz, he declared, “Not only is it clear that jazz should intervene to give itself a voice in the public arts consciousness, but that it can do so to outstanding effect.”¹¹

Over the past few years, there have been a range of industry gatherings, organisations and individuals researching and considering ways to improve support for Australian jazz. The examples I know about include the National Jazz Alliance, Sounds Australia, Australian Music Centre, Stonnington Jazz Industry Summit, Port Fairy Jazz Festival’s Jazz Workshop, Eric Myers (Discussion Forum/National Jazz Think Tank), Richard Letts (The Music Trust/Music in Australia), Johannes Luebbers and Tim Nikolsky (Australian Jazz Real Book).

In my advocacy efforts during COVID and in preparation for this Inquiry, I have been doing my best to discover how jazz is represented by various music organisations that are involved in liaising at government policy levels, who is engaging with the jazz sector, what research there is available on the sector, and who else from the jazz sector is trying to engage. Other than continued efforts by some of those mentioned above, there appears to be little engagement between the jazz sector and other organisations including government. This is borne out in the COVID/Jazz research conducted by TUoA in May 2020.¹²

Resilience and opportunity

The strength and spirit of Australian jazz, combined with a sustained period of national strategic support, can now be seen as having developed enough capacity to carry it over the past 18 years, but even pre-COVID, the sector was investing in exploring ways to rebuild that capacity. The unfortunate reality is that not enough jazz artists can make a sustainable living from their preferred artform. This has been impacted by broader cuts to arts funding over a number of years, as well as lack

¹⁰ <http://www.mixdownmag.com.au/15-australian-jazz-trailblazers-you-ought-know-about>

¹¹ Bruce Johnson – “Jazz Co-ordination has changed Australian Culture” - <https://ericmyersjazz.com/jazz-coordination>

¹² COVID Survey Analysis - Appendix

of access/eligibility for the recent COVID National Arts Package. A mix of resilience, persistence and passionate commitment have helped propel Australian jazz artists to high international standards of excellence.

COVID notwithstanding, there are some positive emergent conditions:

- Sector consultation undertaken and shared by Port Fairy Jazz Festival to produce Victoria's Jazz Industry Strategic Action Plan, which yielded positive results in audience development for the 2020 festival;
- Discussions beginning to address lack of national advocacy voice or organisation
- Increasing awareness and presence of Australian Jazz internationally, especially with support in recent years from Sounds Australia and also Australia Music Centre from last year;
- Increasing international activity and industry interest outside of normal jazz scene, due in part to younger jazz artists becoming more widely accessible through collaborations with more mainstream artists – examples: Donny McCaslin (David Bowie), Kamasi Washington (Kendrick Lam), Barney McAll (Sia)

Given that much of the jazz activity is self-funded and/or run by volunteers, I believe that there is a need an opportunity to properly measure the impact of the jazz sector's activities. In this way, it will be easier for the Government to evaluate the value of the economic benefits generated by the jazz sector, as well as for the jazz sector to better appreciate its own value and build upon its inherent strengths.

A positive of COVID is that conversations have been brought together in ways that may not have otherwise happened. As a result of the Australian Jazz Forum, there has already been a groundswell of interest and support from representatives across the spectrum of the national jazz sector. There is a very real need for sector-wide support to help everyone survive COVID, but with the right assistance, the jazz community's activities will aid the broader economic and societal recovery while it is building its own capacity and resilience.

3. COVID IMPACT

"For me the social connection and freedom that performance grants me, both in rehearsals and live, has been a terrible loss. I knew that playing with the Maryborough Big Band brought joy to my heart and gave me some respite when life was tough (I'm a low income single parent). My spirits always lifted the moment we sat down, my sax in hand and ready for the count in. I'd be transported for that hour and half to a place without worry. A place of spirit and togetherness that only music has the language for. I've felt the loss deeply, however I appreciate the learning opportunity this has granted me. I can see clearly the positive impact being a musician plays in my life, beyond the mechanics of making sound. It is my solace, my family, my community. I have missed this since February and I can't hold a thought of what I'm missing without weeping."

– Vanessa Parker, saxophonist, Maryborough Big Band

The impact of COVID on the jazz sector echoes that of the entire arts sector. Massive and devastating loss of work and income as well negative health and wellbeing impacts. In some parts of Australia, gigs have resumed but with greatly reduced capacities. In Melbourne, where I reside, there have been no live gigs for me since March. There were a few short weeks in June where some gigs occurred with maximum audience of 20 people before lockdown was reimposed.

I have already published/contributed several pieces on the impact of COVID on the jazz scene, including a survey and submission for the Senate Inquiry into the Government response to COVID-19:

- Coronavirus: Australian Jazz on the Edge – initial impact on jazz sector of pandemic (May)¹³
- Senate Inquiry COVID-19 submission, informed by TUoA/COVID survey (May)¹⁴
- Survey Results: Australian Jazz & COVID-19 – TUoA/COVID survey analysis (Aug)¹⁵
- Jazz sector looks to the future despite COVID's discord – TUoA/COVID survey outline (Sep)¹⁶

Festivals have largely been cancelled or postponed – a couple have pivoted to present online/virtual programs but in much reduced capacity. Some early 2021 events have already decided to postpone until 2022, with expectations of reduced numbers and capacities going forward.

¹³ <https://www.artshub.com.au/news-article/opinions-and-analysis/covid-19/adam-simmons/coronavirus-australian-jazz-on-the-edge-260060>

¹⁴ <https://www.tuoa.com.au/blog/submission-to-senate-inquiry-on-govt-response-to-covid-19>

¹⁵ <https://www.tuoa.com.au/blog/survey-results-australian-jazz-amp-covid-19>

¹⁶ <https://www.artshub.com.au/news-article/features/covid-19/adam-simmons/jazz-sector-looks-to-the-future-despite-covids-discord-261155>

Venues have received varying degrees of support from one or more levels of government. A couple of other relevant references about the broader impact of COVID on venues:

- Australian Live Music Business Council report on COVID impact on live music businesses¹⁷
- Jon Perring – submission to this Inquiry by a long-time venue owner and presenter of jazz¹⁸

Artists have been severely impacted in all kinds of ways, from losing work to needing to find ways to pivot to online teaching/recording/performing, requiring new skills and/or equipment. A disconnect from sense of purpose as well as loss of certainty has had hugely negative mental wellbeing impacts, compounded by the pre-existing lack of connection to any regular workplace or organisational supports. Anecdotally, there are a number of long-standing professional artists that are considering moving to other professions as the pandemic has shown up just how broken the existing system has been. Young students considering tertiary studies are being advised against pursuing music as a career. There are real risks of losing some of the sectors leading artists and drivers of economic activity as well as the loss of transfer of skills and knowledge to younger generations.

International activities are severely curtailed for the foreseeable future. This has all kinds of ramifications. The important thing will be to maintain communication with existing networks and develop new opportunities. Some of this is done by organisations such as Sounds Australia, Australian Music Centre and TUoA, but in jazz often the relationships are formed directly between artists. Facilitating artist-led collaborative projects will be vital. Consideration will need to be given to developing new markets within travel bubbles formed with other low-risk nations.

4. BENEFITS & OPPORTUNITIES

Benefits

The jazz sector contributes to many things at a high level, including both funded and commercial/market-driven activities. Despite lack of funding and infrastructure compared to other genres, the sector still contributes a lot economically and non-economically – both within its community as well as to other genres/artforms/industry sectors:

- Direct/indirect economic – sustainability of artists, recording studios, IP/royalties, hospitality, weddings, musical theatre, education, tourism, health, fundraising (charity/education – disaster appeals, school fetes)
- Non-economic – social connection/cohesion, creativity, mental wellbeing, national identity, urban transformation
- Innovation/Digital – diversification of income streams, expansion of potential audience, connection to international networks/organisations/festivals

A significant study into the live music was conducted by the University of Tasmania and released Wednesday 12 August, 2015 by the Live Music Office.¹⁹ The key findings were:

1. Live music spending in Australia delivers at least 3:1 benefit-to-cost ratio;
2. Nationally, an estimated 65,000 full and part-time jobs are created by monies spent on live music, with taxation revenue generated for all tiers of government;
3. Food and drink is the number one expense for those attending a live music performance equating to 29.3 per cent of the total spend;
4. Expenditure on tickets comes in second at 19.2 per cent of spend, followed by travel at 17.6 per cent and accommodation at 12.4 per cent;
5. Audiences are prepared to travel significant distances to attend live music, and this demonstrates live music is a source of regional competitive advantage;
6. Live Music attendance was identified by punters and venues as contributing to improved health and wellbeing.

Further research that builds upon the University of Tasmania study has been done by South African-Norwegian live music development project, Concerts SA. Its findings in regard to benefits of live music are summarised as:

“For individuals, many international studies have shown how participating in live music contributes to health and well-being including physical fitness, improved immune response and more robust mental health.

“But those are just some of the benefits. A thriving live music environment helps to unite communities and generate social awareness. For the economy, live music is a major generator of revenue in its own right while helping cities and provinces brand themselves and attract foreign direct investment. Businesses that locate themselves close to a vibrant live music scene can attract top employees, enhance productivity and innovation, and indirectly help to retain and grow their market share.”²⁰

¹⁷ <https://almbc.org.au/news/survey-results-confirm-crisis-in-australian-live-music-business>

¹⁸ Jon Perring – Submission no. 19 to this Inquiry: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Communications/Arts/Submissions

¹⁹ <https://livemusicoffice.com.au/research/utasresearch/>

²⁰ <http://www.concertssa.co.za/new-research-report-starts-heartbeat/>

As a performing artist I have experienced these benefits directly myself and received feedback from audience members that backs up these findings in terms of economic and wellbeing. As a festival director, including Wangaratta Festival of Jazz & Blues, I have engaged with business sponsors and community members that wholeheartedly supported the festival for its contribution to their town, but had no real interest in the actual event.

To properly quantify all of the benefits is beyond the scope of this writer's knowledge and resources. Efforts have been made to gain data from various major organisations. The data is incomplete, inconsistent or in some cases not available. To do this properly would require consistent methodology to obtain the required specific data about jazz to compare with other sectors. As stated above, a proper scoping study to measure the activity and impact of jazz would go a long way to understanding how to grow the sector.

Opportunities

There are opportunities being discussed at state and federal levels. Some are already being put into motion, others are long term and/or aspirational.

Young artists

One of the significant opportunities for Australian jazz is to make the most of its young, emerging artists, many of whom are playing at very highly developed levels across all of the various styles within jazz and sometimes incorporating more mainstream/popular music styles. Given the right avenues of support, these artists will bring younger and different audiences to the music. They are already doing through labels such as Earshift Music (Sydney) and Plug Seven Records (Melbourne) as well as through online blogs like Attaboi, bringing fresh, contemporary perspectives to the scene.

VicJazz Connection

With COVID in mind, I have applied to VicHealth to develop a pilot program for 2021, connecting 7 organisations for monthly online social connection gatherings – musical performances, listening party, storytelling, mentoring, conversation. The organisations include regional and metropolitan festivals, presenting organisations, tertiary institutions and artist collectives. This is driven by understanding that creating certainty and regaining a sense of purpose for the community are vital in creating resilience. 2021 is unlikely to have many festival gatherings where old and new friends meet. This series will be designed to augment regular live performances with a view to provide opportunities to for social connection. Support could be given to extend this nationally.

Investing in jazz festivals/organisations

There are only two multi-year funded organisations that I am aware of at a federal level in the jazz sector – Australian Art Orchestra and Melbourne International Jazz Festival. These are both important institutions that do have capacity building programs, but they represent a small part of the overall Australian jazz sector. For the remainder of the nation's jazz festival and organisations, this lack of financial security precludes long-term strategic planning at an organisational level, let alone for an entire sector.

- **Festivals** - More than just a collective of concerts, festivals are their community, because they rely so heavily on the community support whether as volunteer staff or often with artists performing for fees that are not sustainable. They can become victims of their perceived success: the festival may run on a small budget, but often the economic benefits quoted are usually based on the contribution to the broader sector – hospitality, tourism, local trade – which in turn generates significant Government revenue through GST, alcohol excise and other taxes.

One example is Wangaratta Festival of Jazz & Blues, which in pre-COVID times was declared to contribute \$3-5 million to the local economy²¹, but the overall budget for the festival was approx. \$800,000 at the time of that estimate, with \$200,000 in funding across all three levels of government²² (which does not include the substantial in-kind from dozens of volunteers). This does not take into account the long-term benefits of the festival being the reason that some people have articulated for moving to the region.

An example of a smaller, regional festival is Port Fairy Jazz Festival, an annual event that attracts an average of 1400-1700 attendees annually with the only government support coming from Moyne Shire Council of \$10,000. The festival's budget was a total of \$103,000, but supported by \$74,000 of in-kind support from volunteers (\$25/hr) and equipment. The Council has calculated a benefit upwards of \$850,000 to the local economy, leveraging the festival's community and activity to significantly benefit local businesses and tax revenue much greater than by giving it direct to business.

²¹ Wangaratta Festival of Jazz & Blues - Submission no. 415 to the Senate Enquiry on the Impact of the 2014 and 2015 Commonwealth Budget decisions on the Arts: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/Arts_Funding/Submissions

²² Wangaratta Festival of Jazz & Blues Annual Report 2015: https://acncpubfilesprodstorage.blob.core.windows.net/public/8bada29b-39af-e811-a960-000d3ad24282-43a1106f-3529-4cd7-b72c-84839e9621e2-Financial%20Report-09b8d580-4ab0-e811-a963-000d3ad24077-WFOJ_Financials_2015.pdf

In both cases, the funding contributes to the festival's ability to generate economic activity that would result in GST/tax revenue much greater than the funded amount. Too often arts funding is perceived as a handout, especially by critics objecting to spending of taxpayer's money, but actually the return to the taxpayer may be much greater than the initial grant amount in actual dollar terms as well as flow-on from associated social and health benefits.

These examples back up the research by the University of Tasmania that shows live music generates a 3:1 benefit-to-cost ratio.²³ There are numerous festivals like the second example that may get local council funding but don't even consider themselves eligible for state or federal funding. There is an opportunity to invest in these festivals/events to help them survive COVID first and then to build over the next few years.

- **Presenting Organisations/Clubs/Artist Collectives** - Generally involving a mix of paid and volunteer staff, who are passionate but not always suitably skilled – the need to pivot due COVID has exacerbated this issue, with lack of resources in terms of time, skills, personnel and/or equipment. These organisations are often the first port of contact for local or touring artists, as well as a conduit to other opportunities and partnerships. They do what they can, but they are generally working at their limit at the best of times to connect and communicate with their communities.

There are opportunities to connect organisations with youth/students for mutual benefit – internships/skills development for students to work with organisations that would benefit from a youth perspective as well as the additional workforce and skills. This would help address the main objective of Victoria's Jazz Industry Strategic Action Plan, which was to engage with younger demographics and new audiences.

There are numerous metropolitan and regional organisations around Australia that could be linked up without too much effort to create state-wide or national loops. Key for touring success is to have a local point of contact – from personal experience, this is not too hard to organise, but there is little coordination between venues so it is difficult to get dates lined up to do a tour economically, especially when many gigs require the artist taking a risk on ticket sales. With a more coordinated effort by a dedicated tour agency, more efficient use of funds would create consistency of event promotion, build a dedicated database, develop potential supportive partnerships (vehicle hire/accommodation) and establish a strong brand. One of very few examples of this kind of agency was Australian Northern Europe Liaisons, run by Henk van Leeuwen, who managed this successfully over many years, but nothing has replaced this since he retired from these activities. There are international jazz agencies such as Gatecrash (India) that could provide a good example.

Venues

Support for venues to sustainably present music will be key for both them and the artists. There are examples of venue support including Victoria and Queensland through grants and tax relief. JobKeeper continues to be crucial. As mentioned above, there is the Australian Live Music Business Council survey which reports that "70% of business members surveyed are predicting closure within the next six months based on cashflow projections and current government support measures" and that only 17% of members expect "to benefit from the Federal Government's RISE package, with a large proportion falling outside the eligibility criteria."²⁴

For a venue operator's perspective and a possible solution, please refer to Jon Perring's submission to this Inquiry²⁵, which is in a nutshell, proposes a hypothecated fund is setup specifically for supporting venues to present live music. The revenue source would be the from the WET monies based on the venues reporting turnover. This would help spread the proceeds generated from the sale of alcohol to include musicians who do play an important role in drawing and maintaining audiences/patrons. A percentage of bar takings used to be considered in calculating artist fees, but it's a long time since those days.

Invest in jazz musicians

Developing sustainability for artists is vital. COVID has revealed how fragile the model is, if it's not actually broken.

In November 2015, I presented "100:25:1", a project featuring duets with 100 artists across 25 nights. Five broad musical categories were represented by 20 musicians in each. One of the discoveries was that the jazz segment was the most connected across all genres of performance, followed by classical. Of interesting note was how the most connected people in the network were not necessarily the "stars" but were those that crossed genre and worked across a number

²³ <https://livemusicoffice.com.au/research/utasresearch/>

²⁴ <https://almbc.org.au/news/survey-results-confirm-crisis-in-australian-live-music-business>

²⁵ Jon Perring – Submission no. 19 to this Inquiry: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Communications/Arts/Submissions

of musical traditions, channelling “people to other people, and likewise channelled capital through the network”.²⁶ In our writing, we argue that “to really support this creative economy, we need to fund people, places and their connections.”²⁷

This is a list of just a few examples of musicians that have trained in jazz and perform regularly as jazz musicians but contribute at a high level in mainstream/popular music also:

- Paul Grabowsky – recent recordings with Paul Kelly and Kate Ceberano
- The Cat Empire – started as a jazz trio led by Steve Sedergreen as mentor
- Zoe Hauptmann - plays with Missy Higgins and Ian Moss, Artistic Director of SIMA and Co-Artistic Director of Wangaratta Festival of Jazz & Blues
- Lawrence Pike – jazz drummer, played with Sarah Blasko on ABC’s Q&A last week
- Shannon Barnett - ex-Circus Oz Band
- Ben Northey – played jazz in school big band, now conducts Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
- Adam Simmons – recorded with Kutcha Edwards, Gotye, Bertie Blackman, You Am I

Louise Denson, a Canadian-born, award-winning artist, composer and educator based in Brisbane, Australia, speaks about how this is an impact from the role of jazz in music education:

“It’s because of their training in improvisation that jazz musos are so versatile and therefore useful in so many musical contexts, and therefore well connected across the industry. Jazz trained musicians make up a very large percentage of primary and secondary school music teachers in Queensland - and I’m sure in other states too. They make a direct and hugely important contribution to the education and wellbeing of generations of young Australians.”

Education and support for their development and employment as jazz musicians is key for gaining transferable skills such as creative thinking and problem solving, that are utilisable across all kinds of music as well as in other aspects such as teaching, marketing, production, management, administration and hospitality. I am only touching on jazz in education in this submission, but it is actually worthy of much longer discussion as to the well-researched, long-term social and economic benefits.

Other research on Australian jazz

For further background on the state pre-COVID of the Australian jazz sector, these recent documents identify a range of challenges and opportunities being identified through documents such as:

- SWOT Analysis of Jazz (2018)²⁸;
- Victoria’s Jazz Industry Strategic Action Plan (2019)²⁹;
- Creative State 2020+ - TUoA submission for Victorian jazz sector state-wide – (2020)³⁰
- The Current Circumstances of Jazz in Australia (2020)³¹.

5. MECHANISMS FOR COMMUNICATION WITH GOVERNMENT

A collective voice

Currently, there is no central organisation or collective voice speaking for the Australian jazz sector to the various levels of government. This has not always been the case, nor does it mean that jazz has been ignored. But increasingly there are conversations underway to address this identified need – the consultation informing this submission is evidence of that.

Jazz and other niche styles have slowly slipped out of the commonly used term of “contemporary music”, despite the continuing influence of jazz in other genres³² and the utilisation of jazz artists across genres due to their skillsets.³³ The organisations involved in Government level discussion about arts/music sectors have not been actively engaging with the jazz community, probably because there is no clear central voice to consult with. Nor have the specific initiatives to date for addressing the COVID impact on the arts been of any significant assistance to the jazz sector – this is borne out in the TUoA COVID Survey results showing a huge disconnect between the jazz sector and the Government with 93% stating there is not enough support for Australian jazz and only 1.2% saying there was.³⁴

²⁶ **Appendix 2: Fit for Purpose?: Funding the creative economy beyond venues and stars – Fitzgerald/Simmons - <https://www.tuoa.com.au/blog/fit-for-purpose-funding-the-creative-economy-beyond-venues-and-stars>**

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ The Music Trust, http://musicinaustralia.org.au/index.php?title=SWOT_Analysis_of_Jazz

²⁹ Commissioned by Port Fairy Jazz Festival with Moyne Shire Council -<https://www.portfairyjazz.com.au/strategic-plan.html>

³⁰ <https://www.tuoa.com.au/blog/submission-to-victorian-governments-creative-state-2020>

³¹ The Music Trust, http://www.musicinaustralia.org.au/index.php?title=The_current_circumstances_of_jazz_in_Australia#SWOT_Analysis_of_Jazz

³² <https://www.amacad.org/publication/why-jazz-still-matters>

³³ <https://www.tuoa.com.au/blog/fit-for-purpose-funding-the-creative-economy-beyond-venues-and-stars>

³⁴ <https://www.tuoa.com.au/blog/submission-to-senate-inquiry-on-govt-response-to-covid-19>

But there is an identified need and call from different quarters for developing a collective voice from different quarters – including in Victoria’s Jazz Industry Strategic Action Plan and at the recent Australian Jazz Forum.

VicJazz Connection, mentioned above, could serve as a pilot for developing a broader network and collective voice. Already, there is a financial commitment from the seven partners to support the initiative, which will be centrally coordinated but with a co-created program. Building upon this model, a national collective voice support engaged, active members and have demonstrated financial support from within the sector, ultimately working towards being self-sustaining. Initial Government investment would be used to leverage other private and public partnerships. As noted earlier, there were tangible benefits for institutional support for jazz in the 80’s-90’s, as well as the positive cost-benefits of investing in live music and festivals. A more contemporary organisation will support and empower organisations and individuals through developing connections, sharing skills, conducting and sharing research for practical use throughout the sector.

Australia Council for the Arts

The Australia Council for the Arts (ACA) has been supporting development of jazz in various ways over many years. In more recent years, funding has been more competitive, particularly due to lingering negative impacts from the introduction of the now defunct Catalyst program – discussion of this is beyond the scope of this submission, but this was the subject of a Senate Inquiry in 2015.³⁵

In a recent meeting with Kristy Rivers, the new Head of Music at ACA, it was pointed out that there could be more engagement from the jazz sector across their various programs. This contrasts with anecdotes from the jazz sector of a common lack of success and/or feeling that there is no point. Having been on both sides as an applicant/grant-adviser and assessor, I know there is a middle ground to be found.

ACA supported initiatives that have recently contributed to Australian jazz include the ongoing support of Sounds Australia and more recently the Australian Music Centre in promoting and developing export into the European market via Jazzahead industry showcase (Germany). From personal experience, as an artist and/or festival director, I have seen and directly benefitted from the increase in awareness, profile and activity this targeted industry support has generated.

But if there was more support for development of the jazz sector it would enable increase the capacity to engage efficiently and effectively with these larger organisations like ACA, Sounds Australia, Australian Music Centre, APRA AMCOS, AMIN and others, in order to develop strategies with the specific but varied needs and strengths across the jazz sector in mind.

Retaining arm’s length funding for the arts via ACA is important. From experience as a peer assessor for other bodies (not ACA), I have faith in the integrity of the systems in use across the arts, which makes it easy to engage and encourage others. With the aforementioned Catalyst program as an example that drew widespread criticism for its implementation and outcomes, it would be imprudent to consider moving in that direction again.

³⁵ Senate Inquiry into the Impact of the 2014 and 2015 Commonwealth Budget decisions on the Arts
https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/Arts_Funding

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognise

- Create “whole-of-jazz-sector” map in relation to associated sectors
- Including but not limited to jazz clubs, festivals, weddings, cafes/restaurants, musical theatre, education, tourism, recording, mainstream music industry, media
- Engage with larger organisations to ensure representation/understanding – including Live Performance Australia, APRA AMCOS, ARIA, AMIN, Australian Festivals Association, Regional Arts Australia
- Opportunity to fill this knowledge gap
 - Initial work can be done with existing resources,

Measure

- Commission scoping document
 - identify and measure size, impact and benefits of Australian jazz sector
 - venues, festivals (regional/metropolitan), public events, education, community/school ensembles
 - create baseline as a reference for measuring future impacts
- Build organisational capacity for measuring/data collection – skills/resources, training, increase workforce opportunities

Grow

Support Sector Growth/Visibility/Capacity

- Support development of a national collective voice – e.g. scale-up VicJazz Connection pilot accordingly
- An alternative model to be applied for jazz to get Major Performing Arts funding support from Australia Council, acknowledging the size of the sector, audience and impact in comparison with other funded artforms
- Support ABC to continue recording and presenting Australian jazz across different parts of the network

Tourism/Festivals/Regional opportunities

– social connection, professional development/networking, employment, hospitality/local business

- Funding for existing regional festivals (many that normally survive without Federal or State funding but run by volunteers with limited capacity) to survive COVID
- paid internships for young, emerging professionals – marketing, logistics, production, IT, managerial, accounting, etc – creating employment opportunity, increasing productivity and developing networks and audiences.
- Tourism – jazz festivals to work in conjunction with Tourism agencies to promote domestic and international cultural tours.
- Establish regional touring circuits and a support organisation for logistics, planning and promotion – “mini-loops” (3-6 gigs) often more sustainable than national touring – provide support and consistency for jazz presentation via organisations such as Regional Arts Victoria, Musica Viva and/or existing regional jazz programs such as coordinated by Sydney Improvised Music Association, Small Space Music (Melbourne/Ballarat) and NEAL (Geelong)
- Encourage/Support combined concert/education touring – currently funding is usually actively for one *or* the other, diminishes financial viability and reduces ability to connect completely with communities in wholistic fashion.

Venues

- See Jon Perring’s Inquiry Submission suggestion for venue support through hypothecated fund based on turnover through WET³⁶
- Funding for venues wanting to renovate to include a stage and in-house PA for presenting live music
- See also below regarding Artist Sustainability

Export

- Support international connections especially in view of flight restrictions – examples include
 - Sounds Australia’s Global Music Match
 - Wangaratta Festival – Amersfoort Jazz Festival partnership

³⁶ Jon Perring – Submission no. 19 to this Inquiry: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Communications/Arts/Submissions

- The Boite – presenting international artists and facilitating collaborations
- TUoA – engaging with World Jazz Network (conference in November 2021, Netherlands/South Africa)
- Showcase event – invite target regions – example of The Visit (supported by Creative Scotland)

Health/Wellbeing

- Support artist’s health – retain and broaden scope of JobKeeper/Jobseeker to ensure eligibility and support
- Maintain funding for Support Act’s income and mental wellbeing assistance programs

Other

Other broad opportunities and for jazz to be part of COVID recovery and develop structural capacity:

- Development of a National Arts and Cultural policy – this should actually be the starting point, a document created in consultation with arts sector representatives to highlight the fundamental and multi-faceted nature that arts plays in our connection and development as a species – formally recognising the role that art plays equally across economic and non-economic arenas.
- Support national celebration of International Jazz Day (UNESCO) – April 30 – chance for international engagement
- Funding options (including multi-year) for existing jazz presenting organisations to allow certainty and flexibility in planning – e.g., SIMA (NSW), Melbourne Jazz Cooperative (VIC), Make it Now (QLD), Make It Up Club (VIC), Johnston St Jazz (NSW), NIMA (Newcastle), Lebowskis (VIC), NEAL (VIC), COMA (SA), MONA JAM (TAS)
- Targeted showcase event to promote Australian artists – example, Scotland’s The Visit which promotes both Scottish music and culture to industry professionals from different regions each year. The 2018 iteration resulted in a first-time project, “The Year of Scotland” planned for Australia in 2020, a full year of touring artists (interrupted by COVID)
- Music in hospitals – refer to the Launceston General Hospital’s live music program connected to direct health benefits both preventative and restorative.³⁷

Artist Sustainability

Vital for developing skills/training that contribute across different sectors and contributing to aiding certainty and connection to purpose that have been rocked by COVID, but key to resilience. These recommendations could apply to arts sector in general, including but not limited to jazz sector:

Non-competitive funding programs – existing models include:

- guaranteed travel support if certain conditions are met, e.g. minimum 3 concerts (eg. Finland, Sweden, France)
- Australian Govt construction stimulus package – non-capped funding for renovations that meet eligibility criteria
- Business development program (Victoria) – consultant to help complete application and meet all criteria
- “Lottery” grants – simple, no-fuss – example of Sidney Myer Foundation, which were easy to apply for, reduce equity barriers, increase potential participation and spread of funds – possible target of emerging artists
- An “elder” level – reduce need for established artists to constantly prove their worth once they reach certain markers, maybe just less work/justification required, maybe a separate round, maybe an assisted process/dialogue

Venue subsidy for presenting live music

- Guaranteed fees – based on JobKeeper mechanism – venue pays artists and receives money in arrears
- Fund drawn from turnover, based on WET Tax paid by venues – refer to Jon Perring’s submission to this Inquiry³⁸

Various other examples of artist support

- Maintain/extend JobKeeper and Jobseeker support for all artists/artworkers
- French IDS System for artists – an annual wage subsidy based on working a minimum number of hours/engagements
- Universal Basic Income – gaining international traction, including a version being implemented now in San Francisco for artists (though to be Universal, it should be for everyone)³⁹
- Job Guarantee – an alternative with positive public good outcomes⁴⁰

³⁷ https://health.tas.gov.au/hospital/lgh/art/conversations/spring_2019_-_conversation

³⁸ Jon Perring – Submission no. 19 to this Inquiry: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Communications/Arts/Submissions

³⁹

⁴⁰

7. IMPLEMENTATION

Much of this could be implemented through non-jazz specific avenues, but the key recommendation of this submission is that support for the jazz sector's efforts in creating a more united and active network will be more efficient in capacity building and help the sector to help itself.

Existing avenues/potential funding & strategic partners

- Funding organisations, i.e., Australian Council, Regional Arts Australia and state bodies - infrastructure, processes and networks are already in place
- Jazz organisations and other music bodies – SIMA, Melbourne Jazz Cooperative, festivals, venues, Music VIC, Music NSW (& similar), APRA AMCOS – identify which strategies they could implement directly – things that are basically supporting and extending their core activities

New collective voice – for the extra stuff

- No one has capacity to do extra stuff (that has been articulated more than once in different conversations!), so there is an identified need – bigger picture, develop consistency of measuring, work in cooperation with other major organisations for better strategic planning and communication for specific needs of the various (and varied) parts of the jazz sector.
- Any new body will need to aim for self-sustainability. Financial support and engagement from within the community will be vital to ensure its longevity and relevance. Extra assistance would come from a mix of public, private and philanthropic funding.
- The aforementioned VicJazz Connection pilot program for 2021 is already creating an active network and a dedicated platform. This state-wide initiative could develop a model for other states to implement, ultimately with a view to uniting in a national platform as a conduit for the jazz sector to connect and complement the activities of other organisations. In the spirit of a jazz ensemble, all the parts would aim to work together for a whole greater than the sum.

Finally - there is a lot here, but that's because there are many positive opportunities that the jazz sector can respond to, and in some cases are already being acted upon. For relatively small investment financially, certainty can underpin the jazz sector's recovery and prosperity, and in doing so assist the broader recovery in generating positive economic and social wellbeing outcomes.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss this submission further.

Kind regards,

Adam Simmons
The Usefulness of Art