City of Monash - Live Music Action Plan - DRAFT

Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Monash acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong People, and recognise their continuing connection to the land and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend this to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Our Traditional Owners and arts, creative and cultural practices

We also acknowledge that arts, creative and cultural practices have been celebrated and shared throughout Victoria for more than 60,000 years and pay respects to Elders for all nations.

Our Vision

In the City of Monash, we envision a vibrant live music landscape that celebrates our diverse culture and fosters local talent. Through our Live Music Action Plan, we look to further enhance a vibrant and sustainable local music scene that boosts the cultural and economic life of our municipality and fosters social connection and community wellbeing.

Introduction

Located in the southeastern region of metropolitan Melbourne, the City of Monash stands as a testament to the vibrant and evolving tapestry of Australian culture with over 50% of residents born overseas. While it wears many hats— as a hub of innovation, academia, business, and community— one of its less illuminated yet profoundly resonant facets is its rich musical heritage.

Music, often hailed as the universal language, serves not only as a mirror reflecting the socio-cultural dynamics of a community, but as a beacon, guiding the evolution of its communal spirit. Within the precincts of Monash, music has carved out a niche, ranging from the soothing strains of classical melodies to the rousing beats of contemporary genres.

This paper embarks on a journey to map the musical landscape of Monash, shedding light on its historical symphonies, its present-day rhythms, and the potential harmonies of the future. In understanding the role of music in Monash, we uncover not just notes and tunes, but the very heartbeat of a community that thrives on expression, connection, and shared experiences.

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Background

In 2022, the City of Monash participated in a Live Music Census, led by Music Victoria. This research primarily focused on documenting the activities in 2019, a year representing the last 'normal' period of operation before the Covid-19 pandemic. It compared this data with the severe impacts faced by the entertainment and hospitality sectors during the subsequent two years, marked by restrictions, shutdowns, and cancellations due to pandemic-related public health orders.

The objective was to report on the sharp contrast between pre-pandemic vibrancy and the crisis that unfolded, providing a clear picture of the pandemic's effects. This report will inform government entities and private sector stakeholders, aiding them in crafting more effective, targeted policies and support mechanisms. The goal is to aid in the recovery of the sector, supporting the revival of businesses and livelihoods of workers and practitioners, and rekindling the communal joy of fans gathering at live performances and major events.

Key findings from this report illustrated that live music is a significant driver of economic development in the City of Monash. In the 2019 calendar year, there were:

- 3,930 - Live music gigs in Monash
- 272,450 - Attendance at live music events/venues
- $4.7 million - Box Office revenue
- $29.6 million - Ancillary (non-ticket) spending by attendees
- 411,900 - Employment hours for casual live music performers / staff

It is also worth noting that in 2017, there were 471 APRA writers in the municipality. By 2022, that had grown to 695 – a 47% increase, well above the 30% national growth during the same period.

Cultural Mapping the City of Monash

As part of our comprehensive Live Music Action Plan, we have introduced a cultural mapping initiative, focused exclusively on music-related assets within our community.

This map provides a clear, visual representation of our city's musical infrastructure, making it easier for residents, visitors, musicians, and industry professionals to discover and connect with these resources. It includes live music venues, recording studios, music schools, and Council-owned spaces that are either already known for music activities or have the potential to be utilised for such purposes.

The cultural map also looks to act as a guide for locals and tourists seeking music-related activities and venues; it provides a resource for musicians and producers in search of specific

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services or collaboration opportunities; and it helps policymakers and stakeholders in understanding the landscape of our local music industry for better planning and support.

The digital format not only ensures wide accessibility but also allows for continuous updates and additions, reflecting the evolving nature of our music scene.

The map can be viewed here Cultural Map – Live Music Action Plan

Why we need a Live Music Action Plan

A vibrant live music scene significantly contributes to the cultural identity of a city or region. It becomes a reflection of the community's history, diversity, and character, giving residents a sense of pride and belonging. Through a structured action plan, councils can ensure that this musical identity is preserved and allowed to flourish, adapting to contemporary tastes and embracing new genres and forms.

Economically, live music can be a substantial driver of local revenue. From ticket sales to increased patronage at nearby restaurants and shops, a thriving music scene can stimulate the broader local economy. By commissioning an action plan, councils can strategically invest in and support music initiatives that yield significant economic returns.

Live music also serves as a powerful tool for community engagement and cohesion. Concerts, festivals, and other music events provide opportunities for residents to come together, fostering community spirit and strengthening social bonds. An action plan ensures that these events are inclusive, accessible, and resonate with the diverse demographic of the community.

Lastly, in the age of rapid urbanisation and technological advancements, cities and regions are vying to attract the best talent and investments. A robust live music scene, backed by a comprehensive action plan, can enhance the appeal of a region, making it a magnet for creatives, professionals, and businesses alike.

By developing and implementing this live music action plan, we aim to underscore our commitment to cultural enrichment, economic growth, and community wellbeing for the municipality, recognising the transformative power of music in shaping vibrant, resilient, and harmonious communities.

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The role of Council

Local councils play a crucial, multifaceted role in the development of the music sector within their jurisdictions. At its core, a council acts as both a facilitator and advocate, ensuring that the local music scene thrives and remains accessible to all.

Council is instrumental in providing infrastructure support. This can range from availability of venues for performances and rehearsals to offering spaces that cater to the evolving needs of contemporary musicians, such as those equipped with modern technological amenities.

Beyond infrastructure, councils often act as financial enablers. Through grants, subsidies, or partnerships, they assist emerging artists, support local music events, and stimulate business ventures related to the music industry. This support is crucial in maintaining a vibrant and sustainable music ecosystem.

Councils also have the responsibility of some regulatory oversight. By streamlining processes related to permits, licences, and other bureaucratic necessities, they can ensure that artists and organisers navigate the system with ease. This, in turn, fosters an environment where creativity isn't stifled by red tape.

Lastly, local councils play a vital role in community engagement and outreach. By promoting local talent, organising community-centric music events, and ensuring diverse representation, they reinforce the importance of music as a tool for cultural expression, community bonding, and local identity.

In essence, the role of a local council in music sector development is holistic, touching upon infrastructure, finance, regulation, and community engagement, all aimed at nurturing a thriving and inclusive local music culture.

Relevant plans or strategies

This Live Music Action Plan is not an isolated initiative; it is connected to and informed by several key council plans and strategies. Most notably, it aligns with the broader vision and objectives set out in the Council Plan 2021-2025, ensuring that our approach to nurturing the live music scene complements the city's overall development goals. Additionally, the Monash Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 plays a crucial role in guiding this plan, underlining the importance of live music in enhancing community health and wellbeing and a sense of belonging.

Monash Council's Arts & Culture Strategy 2025 is a foundational pillar within this plan, providing specific insights and direction for the integration and promotion of arts, including music, within our specific cultural context. Together, these strategic documents create a cohesive framework, ensuring that the Live Music Action Plan contributes effectively to the broader agenda of cultural enrichment and community wellbeing in Monash.

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Consultation

The development of the Live Music Action Plan for the City of Monash has been underpinned by a comprehensive and inclusive consultation process, designed to capture a wide spectrum of perspectives and insights from across our community and the music industry.

Central to this process was the implementation of a public survey, which provided an accessible platform for Monash residents to voice their opinions, preferences, and ideas. This survey was crafted to delve into various aspects of the live music scene, from business types to broader community engagement, support for local artists and barriers to participation. The robust response from the community not only reflects their keen interest and passion for music but also provides us with invaluable data to inform the direction of our action plan.

This consultation embraced a comprehensive, sector-wide approach, actively seeking input from a diverse range of contributors. This included:

- Musicians from various genres, encompassing a wide spectrum of musical styles.
- A range of music professionals, such as artist managers, booking agents, sound engineers, music educators, and entrepreneurs.
- Various music businesses, including those involved in festivals and venue management, educational institutions, and other related enterprises.
- Music organisations, encompassing advocacy groups and representative bodies within the industry.
- Music fans and consumers.

In addition to the public survey, we conducted a series of one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders. These stakeholders included local musicians, venue owners, music educators, and representatives from music-related businesses and organisations. These interviews allowed for a deeper exploration of specific challenges, opportunities, and the nuanced dynamics of Monash's music landscape. The insights gained from these discussions have been instrumental in shaping a plan that is both realistic and ambitious, addressing the specific needs and potential of our local music sector.

The consultation process also included several industry workshops. These workshops brought together diverse groups of people from various facets of the music industry, fostering an environment of collaboration and creative problem-solving. The discussions and ideas generated in these workshops have been vital in ensuring that our action plan is grounded in industry knowledge and expertise, while also being forward-thinking and innovative.

Overall, the consultation process for the Live Music Action Plan has been a testament to the collaborative spirit of Monash. By engaging with the public, conversing with key stakeholders, and harnessing industry insights through workshops, we have laid a strong foundation for a plan that truly resonates with the needs, aspirations, and talents of our community.

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The Action Plan

Objective		Outcomes	Actions	Timeline
Create opportunities to present and participate in creative activity, and to build creative careers.	1	Adopt the Australian standards pay guide, ensuring fair and appropriate compensation for professional musicians and creative practitioners who rely on their craft as a primary source of income.	• Adopt the Australian Standards pay guide for Live at Warrawee, Council's premier live music event. • Encourage Community event organisers, community groups and local businesses to use the Australian Standards pay guide when engaging with musicians.	**Year 1**
	2	Council to investigate opportunities to modify funding criteria (Inc subsidies) to include individuals and for-profit creative businesses, aligning with sector needs and supporting the broader music industry.	• Review annual Grants program to see if there are any opportunities to open up any of the streams to allow individuals and for-profit creative businesses to be eligible to apply	**Year 2**
	3	Council to partner with peak bodies and industry experts on initiatives that support career and business development for local musicians and music entrepreneurs, fostering professional growth and sustainability in the music sector.	• Continue to work with Monash University to create partnerships and connections. • Continue to work closely with organisations such as Music Victoria, Creative Victoria and Festivals Australia to Investigate and apply for any grants that may arise to run music events and programs.	**Year 1-3**
	4	Develop platforms and initiatives to connect local artists and venues, thereby enhancing the number and quality of live performance opportunities available.	• Maintain a database of local industry stakeholders and artists. • Promote opportunities for professional development from organisations such as Creative Vic and Music Vic.	**Year 1-3**
	5	Coordinate and support regular networking and professional development events to bolster skill enhancement and community building within the music industry.	• Host a yearly networking event for artists to make new connections.	**Year 1-3**
	6	Create and promote career pathways for music students into the music industry, providing them with opportunities to actively participate in the local music scene and consider music as a viable and rewarding career option.	• Opportunities to perform at Council and Community events. • Opportunities to perform in public (busking/shopping centres).	**Year 1-3**

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Build resilient creative businesses and a thriving local creative ecosystem and economy.	7	Acknowledge and adapt to the recent regulatory and planning reforms to ensure that local music sector policies remain current and effective.	• Acknowledge amendment to Planning Scheme clause 53.06 (live music and entertainment noise) • Enact Agent of Change principle where relevant	**Year 1-3**
	8	Encourage businesses to consider local music as part of their business plans	• Develop resources providing clear guidance and information to facilitate the inclusion of live music in venues	**Year 2**
Expand our impact by getting more people involved in creative activities and driving visitation.	9	Increase promotional opportunities for events, festivals, and gigs in the area, making it easy for both locals and visitors to stay informed about and engage with the city's vibrant live music and cultural scene.	• Augment existing media presence with dedicated marketing campaign to support and enhance the promotion and visibility of local music activity. • Investigate development of a playlist featuring local music	**Year 1**
Leverage creative activity to enhance community cohesion and wellbeing.	10	Actively promote and create opportunities aimed at increasing the participation and visibility of underrepresented demographics in local cultural and musical events, ensuring diversity and inclusivity in the city's artistic landscape.	• Ensure that key resources are made available in a range of languages. • Increase the cultural performers and musicians in the database. • Increase inclusivity through Council programming of diverse musical content, including civic events, such as citizenship ceremonies.	**Year 2**

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Creative utilisation of existing and new spaces to support local creatives and community access.	11	Identify Council owned indoor and outdoor spaces that are suitable for rehearsals and performances of live music.	• Undertake audit of existing technical capabilities and identify halls which may be suitable for upgrade and consider funding upgrades to better support the industry • Arts, Culture and Events to feed into Council precinct and master planning to ensure music and arts have been considered in early planning and design stages.	**Year 2-3**
	12	Review of halls fees and charges with a focus on accommodating non-commercial hire activities and consider implementing scaled pricing models based on peak and off-peak timings to make these spaces more accessible and affordable.	• Consider as part of annual review of Council-wide fees and charges • Liaise with Halls in relation to criteria to see if there is scope to allow individuals and for-profit creative businesses to be eligible for fee subsidies.	**Year 2**
	13	Review the current busking policy to foster a more vibrant outdoor performance culture, including the establishment of dedicated zones for amplified music.	• Identify zones for busking activity, including development of noise management plans in key areas to allow for modest amplification • Streamline busking process to allow for ease of bookings	**Year 2**

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Implementation

The next step in realising the Live Music Action Plan is the creation of a comprehensive action and implementation plan. This phase involves converting the goals and strategies outlined above into a series of practical, actionable initiatives. It will define clear tasks, timelines, and responsibilities, detailing the necessary resources and outlining methods for progress tracking and success evaluation.

Importantly, this phase is about collaboration and partnership. It involves working closely with local musicians, music businesses, educational institutions, community groups, and government bodies to ensure that the action plan is inclusive and aligned with the needs of all stakeholders. This collaborative approach will not only ensure the action plan's relevance and effectiveness but also foster a sense of ownership and commitment among those involved in Monash's live music scene.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a pivotal component in the lifecycle of a Live Music Action Plan. By periodically assessing the progress and impact of initiatives, councils can ensure that the objectives of the action plan are being met and can make necessary adjustments to enhance effectiveness. Utilising both qualitative and quantitative metrics, from audience numbers at events to feedback from the local music community, allows for a comprehensive understanding of the plan's successes and areas of improvement.

Reporting will ensure transparency and accountability. Regularly disseminating information on the status and outcomes of the action plan helps in keeping stakeholders informed and engaged. Reports, whether annual or bi-annual, can showcase accomplishments, highlight challenges faced, and delineate future directions. Moreover, these reports can serve as a valuable tool for garnering continued support and resources for the music sector.

Together, rigorous evaluation and transparent reporting not only validate the importance of the Live Music Action Plan but also ensure its continuous refinement, keeping it aligned with the ever-evolving needs and aspirations of the music community in the City of Monash.

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