

# Live Music Festival Feasibility Report

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## **THE TASK**

City of Yarra (the Principal) wished to undertake a feasibility study into the establishment of a new live music Festival within the City of Yarra. This included recommendations about the feasibility, nature, structure, positioning and model for such a new venture.

## **THE BRIEF**

In response to this Brief the study was required to:

- consult across a range of stakeholders, note issues of concern as well as areas of consensus
- consider the status quo as a possible recommendation of the Study
- Produce a report that offered an overview of the feasibility of establishing a new music festival within the City of Yarra.
- This would include:
  - Examining the current context, environment and situation and issues affecting the establishment of a new live music festival including practical aspects such as the Festivals timing, location, management, structure and underpinning principles
  - Evaluating the impact of external factors within the music sector or industry,
  - Providing recommendations to the Principal on viable strategic directions and some next steps

## **METHODOLOGY**

In respect of these terms of reference, the study pursued the following methodology:

- Reviewed relevant written material provided by the Principal including, policy documents, previous discussion papers, and minutes from relevant meetings.
- Conducted analysis of these to inform and create a basis of further investigation and consultation
- Considered the wider sector or market context for a possible new music festival based within the City of Yarra.
- Considered available data and relevant research

- Consulted key stakeholders in the field both persons and organisations whose perspectives, views, experience, location might inform the task at hand including: music venue operators with the City of Yarra, musicians and other performing artists, City of Yarra Councillors, professional promoters and presenters of live music, local residents, local traders, City of Yarra Council officers, funding bodies, members of the Principals *Live Music Working Group*. (A summary of those consulted appears in the Appendix)
- Sought input from those consulted as to further possible consultations or suggestions for other interested stakeholders.
- Shared trends of discussions with YAARTS and sought feedback.
- Conducted a scoping exercise of the best option available considering all the relevant viewpoints and practical opportunities and constraints.
- Out of all this created and presented a draft report to the Principal.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The study found that there was broad support for the notion of establishing a new music festival within the City of Yarra and that indeed a live music festival within the City of Yarra is feasible.

There were many noted areas of consensus amongst stakeholders consulted.

Firstly, and fundamentally, all those consulted agreed that the region defined as the City of Yarra has a strong and valued history in supporting arts and cultural activity which contributes positively to the regions allure. And, that this support has in the recent past focused heavily in the area of contemporary music.<sup>1</sup> It is widely acknowledged that the geographical area within the City of Yarra has, historically, been a breeding ground for the development of a vast amount of musical creativity which has significantly contributed to the Cities reputation – locally, nationally and internationally - as a culturally vibrant place over many years.

Further, there is wide agreement that to lose or diminish such a cultural asset in the face of many threats would be a great loss to the vibrancy of the local area and be very difficult, if not impossible, to replace.

Many stakeholders consulted, particularly those immersed deeply in the music industry, warned of the dangers of establishing a generic or non-descript music festival. The credibility of such an event in an increasingly difficult marketplace or environment is seen as a key factor in the success or otherwise of a new venture. This is borne out by the available research and data. Many noted that the days of throwing together a few musical acts and calling it a festival had long gone and that to attract a music savvy Melbourne audience required deep industry knowledge, some risk taking and industry nous.

Many pointed to a saturation of music festivals ranging from large scale commercially driven music events with international stars and huge box office targets through to smaller scale boutique music festivals (sometimes set up as a critique or response to the big commercially driven events) right down to the local community organized and run music events.

It is noted that industry stakeholders consulted pointed to a necessity for creating a strong point of difference in order to differentiate from existing events and local music venue operators also indicated a desire for a festival to provide something that was not just “business as usual” for them or their audiences.

Many felt there was little or no point in duplicating another event or in trying to push into an already crowded marketplace without strong reasons.

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<sup>particular1</sup> Contemporary music is defined here as music that is being created within a contemporary context but not restricted to a particular genre or form.

There seemed to be considerable confusion and miscommunication amongst those consulted in relation to the Brunswick Street Parade (BSP)<sup>2</sup>.

Many of those consulted assumed that any discussion of a new festival would automatically mean a return to the outdoor, street based BSP. The Consultant found no support for a festival based on the model of the former BSP and many noted that the economic model for such an undertaking had irreversibly changed since the last edition of the BSP. Issues, such as the privatization of public transport would question the viability of any major street based festival on Yarra's well serviced public transport routes. Further, the financial support required to undertake an event of this nature would be very difficult to find in the current financial climate.

Many stakeholders acknowledged Fitzroy as a hub for live music in Melbourne and valued highly prominent venues within the precinct. Many also lamented the closure of the well-known Punters Club forced to close in 2002. Stakeholders also acknowledged the various waves of "band scenes" as they have come and gone since the first wave of the late 1970's and reflected that this is a strong local asset. Some expressed a nostalgic hankering for a return to the halcyon days of the late 70's and early 80's where many new bands and the independent music scene had its start.

The Consultant found that there is considerable interest in small inner city venues focused on music. Residents consulted acknowledged that part of the attraction of living within the City of Yarra is the cultural vibrancy created in part by the proliferation of pubs, clubs, restaurants, galleries and other similar venues.

The Consultant also found, anecdotally, that sound emanating from venues in Yarra has been a point of contention for a minority of surrounding residents since the 1970s, increasingly during the late 1990s and is still an issue facing music in Melbourne today. Laws and regulations in regards to sound can be triggered when a nearby resident finds sound emanating from a venue as being of an unacceptable audible level in a habitable room. The laws currently have the capacity to allow complaints from a single resident to cause the cessation of live music performance at a given venue, and as such remains a contentious issue. The amenity conflict issues are noted particularly from the work of the Yarra Live Music Working Group. Many of these issues fall largely outside the scope of this study.

Some stakeholders pointed to increased gentrification and influxes of new residents to areas occupied by existing live music venues and argued that residents moving into these areas should be aware of the venues and the sounds prior to deciding whether or not to move to the area, as many venues have been operating longer than most residents have lived in the same areas.

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<sup>2</sup> Brunswick Street Parade last run in 2001 was organized annually by Melbourne Fringe Festival and developed over the years into a de facto outdoor music festival featuring several outdoor music stages. It was discontinued as it was deemed financially unviable by the organisers.

Of course, it is also true that a number of these areas are long-time residential areas, and as is often the case with gentrification, new live music venues open in place of traditional non noise-emitting businesses that are not suitable as live music venues.

Notwithstanding these issues around noise and liquor control around music venues there is support for the notion of a music festival in Yarra.

Musicians consulted were not only excited by the possibility of a new performing opportunity brought about by a new festival but also pointed to an opportunity to create a new event with a great point of difference. Some pointed to the gap in the “cultural map” of existing festivals where opportunities for new collaborations and the chance to work with other artists might flourish in the context of professional development. This idea also has some currency in relation to attracting financial support from outside of the City of Yarra.

Research of various industry reports and available data revealed a subtle yet significant difference in trends between live music consumption in smaller intimate venues (which enjoys a healthy attendance) and that of the broader festivals sector which has endured a period of hardship (and a down turn in attendance). Closer examination has revealed reasons for this, which has informed some of the recommendations into the style and nature of a new festival.

Venue operators also expressed an interest in the possibility of an event that created new and interesting performing collaborations which could draw wider audiences into the City and was outside their “business as usual.”

One stakeholder had a very specific and detailed idea for what can be described as “precinct saturation” approach whereby many or most venues (music and non music) would be filled with music programming. This stakeholder cited *South by Southwest* (SXSW)<sup>3</sup> as the preferred model and believed that a new Festival could be based on the Austin, Texas event.

While the SXSW model has some potential benefit it is noted that the alliance of *Melbourne Music Week*, the *Australian World Music Expo* and *Face The Music Conference* held within the City of Melbourne in November is building on the notion of a “saturation” style or conglomerate event with mixed success.

Many stakeholders emphasized the diverse nature of the City of Yarra and strongly suggested that social inclusivity be a strong guiding principle of the festival. The Consultant believes that stakeholders were largely referring to the desire for a new festival to provide opportunities for participation for people from disadvantaged or lower social economic backgrounds. Such an aim is difficult to achieve with a single strand of festival programming or a one style of program. The barriers to participation from

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<sup>3</sup> *South by Southwest* (SXSW) is a set of film, interactive and music festivals and conferences that take place in Austin, Texas, United States. SXSW Music is one of the largest music festivals in the United States, with more than 2,000 performers playing in more than 90 venues

various sections of the community are incredibly complex (and too numerous to explore deeply here) but are not limited to price and depending on the nature of the festival program to be delivered can vary dramatically.

Whilst inclusion of all sectors of the community is probably not possible (no festival anywhere can claim to provide a program that caters for everyone) there is strong reason to believe that with correct programming, engagement with people from lower socio economic backgrounds is possible and desirable.

A couple of stakeholders questioned whether a new music festival was the best way to support engagement with the music sector within the City of Yarra, and one also suggested that perhaps extending and linking to an existing event might be a way forward. There was a minor concern that any new event should not “rob” any existing community festival or event and that new money from Council budget process must be sought.

Stakeholders also confirmed that any new event should have strong environmental credentials and seek to create new benchmarks in relation to sustainability outcomes.

The available research data, likely modest levels of funding and balancing stakeholder interests point to an indoor, bespoke festival realised in the winter months.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

1. That a live music festival is feasible for the City of Yarra
2. There is broad, yet disparate, support for a new live music festival in City of Yarra
3. That the festival must have a strong point of difference to other festivals to be successful
4. The festival is best run by music industry specialists with arms length and financial support from Council
5. That the festival should start on a modest scale and look to expand and grow over time
6. That a new festival should focus primarily on using and working with existing indoor music venues within the City as a basis for a new event

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That a new live music festival be piloted in the City of Yarra.
2. That the festival establishes a strong “point of difference” to other local government initiated events and festivals of a similar nature.
3. The festival should run annually but give consideration to becoming a biennial event once established after the first 3 years.
4. That these points of difference centres on a strong thematic or curatorial focus around collaborative performance possibilities for musicians and unique experiences for audiences.
5. That the festival be a platform for greater opportunities for new collaborations between performing artists not presently available.
6. That the festival has as its primary focus music sector development focus with secondary focus on commercial outcomes and cultural tourism.
7. That the festival be supported for an initial period of 3 years after which further evaluation take place.
8. That the festival takes place where there is a suitable gap in the Melbourne festivals calendar in the months outside of the August to March window.
9. That a core of festival programming be realised in existing indoor venues
10. That at least one event be focused on engagement with residents from lower social economic backgrounds (for example a free concert series)
11. That the festival organizers identify a sustainable development arc over a three-year period in the business plan of the festival.
12. That the festival be scalable according to the amount of financial and other support it receives.

13. That the festival work closely with existing partners, infrastructure and resources particularly in the initial establishment phase (first year or edition)
14. That the festival work closely with existing venues with existing music programs
15. That the festival seek and establish a suite of financial supporters who have the capacity to support a new cultural venture in the City of Yarra
16. That management of the festival is largely external to Council by music industry experts with a strong background in music programming, producing and presentation.
17. That existing programming expertise existing within the music venues networks is harnessed to provide credibility and further “on the ground” industry expertise.
18. That a further Expression of Interest process be undertaken to identify suitable individuals and /or organizations with the capacity to manage and mount a new festival.
19. That new budget allocation be sought via Council budget process to support a new music Festival
20. That the festival program have the capacity to attract funding and sponsorship support from outside of City of Yarra funding.
21. That a new festival establishes a coalition of stakeholders as an advisory to assist with co ordination of festival programming.
22. That the festival establishes strong environmental criteria for the event.

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Melbourne has a deserved reputation as a compelling live music destination in Australia with a strong claim to being the “music capital” of Australia. Local audiences are spoilt for choice when it comes to live music and we continue to have a very vibrant local music scene with full houses still common place amongst smaller to mid size venues. While there are issues facing venues the live music scene in clubs and pubs remains pretty healthy.

According to Live Performance Australia’s (LPA)<sup>4</sup> Ticket, Attendance and Revenue Survey 2010, audience participation in the Non-Classical Music category grew significantly in terms of both ticketing revenue and attendances.

Ticketing revenue increased by 43.1% from \$460.44 million in 2009 to \$659.10 million in 2010. Similarly, total attendance grew from 4.68 million in 2009 to 7.03 million in 2010, an increase of 50.1%.

The significant jump in this category in 2010 is largely due to an increase in large tours by international acts. The largest of these tours in 2010 included *ACDC*, *U2*, *Bon Jovi*, *Metallica* and the *Eagles*. Other large tours included *Leonard Cohen*, *Lady Gaga*, *Muse*, *George Michael*, *Cliff Richard*, *Taylor Swift*, *Linkin Park* and *Yusuf Islam*. The combination of the increase in the value of the Australian dollar against the US dollar, as well as the weaker economic conditions in traditional northern hemisphere touring markets, have both assisted in attracting a greater number of international artists to Australia.

It is estimated that live music contributes more than \$500 million annually to Victoria’s economy.

Whilst this data is not specifically related to small to medium venues it indicates that venue based music programming continues to be supported by audiences.

Whilst this growth is encouraging and points to great confidence of the audiences of music in Melbourne it is generally held that an adjustment in this trend is upon us and that we have reached a watershed moment in terms of audience sales across non classical music in the broader Festival (rather than venue based music) sector.

Following the reported increasing sales for venues noted in the LPA study, 2011 was a difficult year for Melbourne’s live music scene with small venues and large music festivals alike reporting different problems for a major cultural industry contributing significantly to the local economy. Venue closures, the failure of some major festivals to sell out as readily as they once did point to a couple of considerations in relation to the establishment of a new live music festival venture within Yarra.

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<sup>4</sup> Live Performance Australia (LPA) is the peak body for Australia’s live entertainment and performing arts industry

Other issues are brought into sharp focus when considering the possibility of a new music festival.

Audiences are no longer satisfied with an ill-considered approach to music programming. Fees to attract artists of international stature to Australia are rising all the time particularly as the rest of the world experiences the results of the GFC. It is difficult to find a gap in the calendar from August through to May in any year that is not taken up with a music festival or similar event of some shape or size somewhere within Australia. The growth in music festivals over the last decade in Australia has been exponential and there is now a proliferation of music festivals in Australia, which many believe has reached a saturation point for music audiences.

With gentrification and a rising property market there is always pressure on live music venue owners to resist the temptation to turn their building into residential apartments or other uses.

Almost all the new music venues are in Melbourne's inner-northern suburbs and while the traditional south of the river outpost in St Kilda struggles to hold on, the inner north is unequivocally the new heart of the Melbourne music scene. City of Yarra is an important part of that live music venue map.

There is a distinct pessimism at the premium end of the market - the big music festivals - with their dozens of overseas and domestic acts, and tickets costing hundreds of dollars. The internationally renowned resilience of the Australian touring market, which made Australia the lucrative first stop for many American and British bands during the southern hemisphere summer, has dipped, and that may be particularly felt in Victoria, where the festival calendar is crowded.

Last year, the industry's traditional behemoth, January's *Big Day Out*, scaled down its Adelaide and Perth stops - losing *Kanye West* and his \$1 million-a-show fee - and did not sell out as it usually does in Melbourne, with West and grunge veterans *Soundgarden* headlining. Another festival, February's alternative-oriented *Laneway*, was also well short of capacity for its local leg.

Many believe there are too many music festivals and many have lost their sense of distinction. Festivals that have succeeded, whether it was the boutique and eclectic *Meredith* or electronic music gathering *Stereosonic*, are believed to be those with a strong sense of identity and point of difference. In industry parlance, they attract "purists", or repeat attendees, not the more fickle "tourists".

Promoters behind the Gold Coast's *Harbourlife*, which sold out in record time in its first two years, confirmed in 2011 the event had to be postponed; *The Temper Trap* were due to lead 2011's line-up.

Earlier in 2011, *The Lost Weekend festival* failed to make it much past its announcement with the winter event folding before it had begun, and after tickets had been sold.

Festivals during the just past summer season (that averages one event per week from December to February), also witnessed slower tickets sales compared to the swift sell-outs of previous years.

Organisers of the eight-year-old Gold Coast *Good Vibrations* festival, one of the season's most expensive tickets at \$149.90, reported growth year on year but that the crowded market and economic climate was affecting sales.

The electronic/dance music festival *Parklife*, held in September, also failed to exhaust their ticket allocation.

Conventional music industry thinking is that some music festivals will begin to really struggle to the point of extinction, and this is a natural part of the industry attrition that does and should take place.

Festivals need to bring an experience that is distinct, unusual and give an audience an experience different to others or the usual six night a week offering of venue based presentations.

Market, audience and media fragmentation has never been so prevalent than now with younger discerning audiences making more and more informed choices. As one industry insider observed recently: "In a niche-focused music scene it's getting harder to find acts that cut across all divisions. The days of everyone being into either *Pearl Jam* or *Nirvana* are gone. It's hard for promoters to come up with a couple of big names that everyone will want to see."

Although most promoters refuse to go on the record about crowd numbers, the news headlines speak for themselves. The past 12 months have seen *Rewind Australia*, *Great Southern Blues Festival*, *Raggamuffin* and *Funk N Grooves* either cancelled or placed on hiatus.

Industry stalwarts such as *Big Day Out*, *Splendour in the Grass* and *Good Vibrations* have all struggled to move tickets. *Splendour* failed to sell out for the first time in its 11-year history, *Big Day Out* in 2011 was forced to scale back its Adelaide and Perth shows, and *Good Vibrations* was offering half-price tickets in the lead-up to its Gold Coast and Perth events back in February.

In a flooded and competitive festival market, promoters describe the current scene as a lesson in supply and demand. The brief period when promoters could get away with throwing almost any group of acts together, calling it a festival and having any chance of success is over.

Locally however, while exact figures are difficult to confirm, Brunswick Music Festival and Skalds Festival – with its large music program – have continued to perform strongly.

The steady rise in ticket prices and a general economic downturn have also affected attendance levels. According to the Australasian Performing Right Association, the average price of a festival ticket in 2011 was \$133 (compared with \$53 in 2004). Economic fears have seen people now going to two or three events, where before they were going to seven or eight.

In addition, the appearance of stand-alone outdoor concerts has placed added pressure on the market. Acts once considered festival headliners have increasingly gone out and hosted their own stadium events, further segmenting a fractured market. There is a feeling that at the larger end of the spectrum something has to give with music festivals. Programmers have to get more savvy and perhaps more adventurous and not rely on huge names commanding huge fees to fill their coffers.

Recently Moshtix<sup>5</sup> published their inaugural State of Festival Market Report..

In summary they found that:

- Attendance at intimate live music gigs has increased
- Live music attendance is growing but consumers are more discerning about their attendance at festivals
- Customers highlighted concerns at rising costs of tickets but Australians happy to pay more at festivals if it will help the environment
- Positive sentiment and insights highlight opportunities still exist

The report provides in-depth consumer analysis on the state of the Australian music festival market with findings collected from an online survey of 2,949 respondents.

Further, it found:

- Line-up/music acts are by far still key in whether or not respondents would attend a particular festival
- Respondents highlight improved variety and quality of acts as well as better festival organisation as ways festivals had improved in the last five years.
- More than half of the respondents (52.7 per cent) think there are just enough festivals in Australia. 27.2 per cent there were too many
- Their attendance at live music gigs has increased over the last five years according to almost half (47.5 per cent) of respondents.

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<sup>5</sup> Established in 2003 Moshtix is a ticketing and promotions service that has years of experience running and delivering some of Australia most iconic music and festival events and regularly undertakes industry research.

- Intimate pubs were chosen as the most favoured place to watch a favourite music act (56.3 per cent). Festivals were second (23.4 per cent)
- The steep cost of festival tickets is the key reason respondents (83.7 per cent) believe attendance at a number of festivals has declined.
- Nearly two thirds of people who had attended a festival would only pay up to \$499 for tickets to attend festivals across a whole year.
- When asked how the music festival experience has changed over the last five years, the most common response (41.6 per cent) stated that the music festival experience has gotten worse with the remaining of respondents feeling it had improved or stayed the same.
- Respondents are happy to pay a little bit more for food and beverages if it means it will help the environment

What the Moshtix report highlights is that promoters need to find the right balance between securing a high-quality, compelling line-up of artists, keeping the ticket price as low as possible and creating an experience for audiences which eschewed the typical large scale festival experience with huge crowds with potentially inappropriate crowd behaviour a feature of the overall experience.

Importantly, the report illustrates that there is still potential for growth in the market and there are still opportunities for new entries to the marketplace but the festival experience needs to be distinct and of a more intimate nature.

Australian audiences have a universal love for music and while we have seen some frustrations from festival attendees with concerns around crowd behaviour at festivals and increasing costs of festival tickets, rather than turning their back on the industry, they are attending a few festivals and finding alternate venues and ways to watch their favourite music act perform.

The Moshtix report noted an increase in attendance at live music gigs in venues over the last five years, which corresponds to the Live Performing Arts Australia research presented here also.

A closer examination of the venue scene is warranted in the context of a new festival possibility within the City of Yarra.

In 2007, new liquor licensing laws were introduced as a measure to alleviate alcohol-related violence in Victoria. Restrictions were subsequently placed on small music venues, classifying them as high risk and requiring them to have abundant security. These restrictions caused the cessation of live music performance in some venues, forced the closure of the iconic Tote Hotel, and threatened the closure of several other small live music venues such as The Vineyard, St Kilda.

Upon the closure of The Tote Hotel in January 2010, several social networking groups were created in opposition to the closure of the venue, one such group reached 20,000 members, and within 2 days a rally was organised. On 17 January, a crowd of between 2,000 and 5,000 rallied outside the venue, closing traffic to two major roads in Collingwood.

The Tote rally sparked moderate public and political debate about the effect these laws were having on small music venues and quickly grew to encompass other venues which host musical performance and lack of government investment and support of live music in general. The rally also forced the State government to open discussions between the state government and local music industry representatives in fear of losing marginal inner city seats at the 2010 Victorian State election, though no action was taken on amending the laws to remove restrictions on small live music venues.

A new body *Music Victoria* was established and several community groups began organising a much larger rally to encompass the wider spectrum that the issue now covered. Subsequently, the 2010 Melbourne live music rally was held 23 February 2010 with a crowd of 20,000 to 50,000 in attendance.

Simultaneously, on the other side of the city, further social networking groups formed to save their local music venues. *The Keep The Vineyard Live* body, supported by Australian music giants like *Mental As Anything's* Greedy Smith, Ian Molly Meldrum, Triple M Radio's star Mieke Buchan and *Underbelly* actor Damian Walshe-Howling, who together with *SLAM*, packed the St Kilda Town Hall chamber for an emotional council meeting on the matter. The rally attracted the attention of the state government whom, on 28 June 2010 at the 11th hour, sent an express letter to councillors indicating its support for the continuation of the St Kilda live music venue, and thus swayed the council's decision to retain *The Vineyard Bar* as a live music venue.

The fierce public outcry was later hailed as a victory for the people and for live music in St Kilda. Yet, to date, the threatening liquor licensing laws have not been rolled back.

After these events live music seemed to be on the political map and led to the City of Melbourne funding *Melbourne Music Week* to the tune of \$750,000 in its first year.

## LOCAL ENVIRONMENT

There is a tension between residents living in high density housing close to major activity centres, and licensed venues providing live music experiences for eager audiences.

The *Live Music Working Group* in Yarra has acknowledged that the cultural and economic contribution live music makes to the vibrancy and diversity of the city is valued and an important part of local identity.

Planning Yarra has been proactive in its efforts to support both the amenity of residents living close to live music venues, and to encourage best practice management from venue owners.

Whilst legislative and planning amendments in relation to mixed use conflict within the City of Yarra is outside the Consultants brief the issue is mentioned here as it informs the Consultants recommendations in relation to steering a new festival model towards existing infrastructure and opportunities which provide for minimal disruption to residents which might otherwise occur if a new festival was held outdoors in the public domain.

Residents consulted in relation to this study were supportive of the possibility of a new music festival provided it did not disrupt amenity to their local area with particular emphasis on a lack of support for a large scale street based festival.

City of Yarra receives a small number of complaints about live music venues, and many live music issues are complex and entangled in overlapping State and local legislation, permits and enforcement. This makes it difficult for developers, venue owners and the general public to work out who is responsible for what, how to make mixed use work at a local level.

The City of Yarra already actively supports the live music industry at the local level through its community festivals and events, along with other key organisations within the community e.g. the Boite. With the establishment of Music Victoria as an umbrella organisation for the live music industry, collaborative projects are possible in the future.

It is noted that recent changes under the Liquor Control Reform Amendment (Licensing) Bill 2009 have impacted heavily on live music venues, resulting in the dramatic closure of the Tote Hotel in Collingwood, and prompting the subsequent rally in the CBD. While this is largely a State Government issue, and not exclusively a local one, patrons and live music representatives have been inspired by this situation to raise concerns about the way council manages its commitment and responsibilities to the industry.

It is noted that Yarra has a good track record in the management of issues around neighbourhood amenity.

## AN OPTION

The Consultant notes that below is a sketch of what is possible however closer and fuller details of a new festival model should be solicited from potential organisers in order to build strong “buy in” during an Expression of Interest process.

## WHAT

### *BREEDING GROUND* – A NEW MUSIC FESTIVAL FOR YARRA

*breeding ground* - noun.

1. A place where animals breed or which they return to breed.
2. An environment suitable for fostering the development of an idea or thing etc

***Breeding Ground*** is the suggested name for a new Festival based in the City of Yarra.

The name reflects not only the history of the local area in relation to fostering new creativity for live music but also gives an insight into the possibility of new musical collaborations between artists which would be the focus for such an event.

The proposed content for the new festival is new collaborations; new musical ideas between artists to create previously unperformed works, songs or music.

***Breeding Ground*** would facilitate artists to work together to create work that is outside of those artists’ usual material to encourage creative challenges for those participating. These works would be performed in recognized local venues within the City of Yarra in the so called non festival months outside of August to April.

Creating a winter, indoor festival ***Breeding Ground*** honours the creative history of the local area, creates new performance material outside of the usual run of the mill activity of the venues and gives audiences a distinct offering which is intimate and “special”.

A festival of this nature also has the capacity to attract funding from sources outside of the City of Yarra.

## WHEN

The ideal time for ***Breeding Ground*** is outside of the existing cluttered music festival calendar which occurs annually from August to April each year. The event should run in the time from May to July and this should be negotiated and finally decided with venue-based operators within the City of Yarra. This timing also provides venue operators with a boost in their programs in a slower trading period and also doesn’t interfere with their

regular relationships with other music promoters who are more likely to seek side shows during the busier months.

It is recommended that the festival run gigs and events over a ten day period to include two weekends.

## WHERE

It is recommended that **Breeding Ground** should be established in Year 1 largely through a consortium of interested venue based operators within Yarra from which a new festival can be scaled up or down in subsequent years and further growth can be welcomed as budget and finance dictates.

## How

The interest in a new music festival is significant however there is no single entity or interested group with the sole capacity (or interest) to drive a new festival. A further process (EOI) is required to either:

- a) Galvanise existing potential music sector groups and individuals to come together to develop and manage a new festival, or
- b) Attract the interest of music industry specialists to develop and manage a new festival.

## How MUCH

Whilst one of the significant parameters of the festival should be scalability in size and cost, it is unlikely that any new venture could succeed without significant support from the City of Yarra particularly in its initial stages.

A minimum financial commitment of \$125,000 annually from all sources would be required to kick start such a new event.

Broadly this financial support would be broken into:

Management fee:	\$ 45K
Artists costs:	\$ 65K
Marketing:	\$15K

Box office income and other income is estimated at \$40K

## APPENDIX

### LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED

#### LIVE MUSIC FESTIVAL CONSULTATION LIST

<b>FIRST NAME</b>	<b>SURNAME</b>	<b>ROLE/POSITION</b>
Ross	Goeman	Manager Community Planning & Advocacy
Craig	Kenny	Director, Community Programs
Bruce	Phillips	Director, City Development
Geoff	Barbour	Mayor, City of Yarra
Stephen	Jolly	Councillor, Langridge Ward
Amanda	Stone	Councillor, Langridge Ward
Dale	Smedley	Councillor, Melba Ward
Sam	Gaylard	Councillor, Nicholls Ward
Kim	Swinson	Coordinator, Economic Development
<b><i>Venue</i></b>		
Jon	Perring	Bar Open
Helen	Marcou	Bakehouse Studios
Tim	Northeast	Corner Hotel
Steve	Sedergreen	Dizzy's
Mil	Hanna	The Fitz
<b><i>Resident</i></b>		
Judith	Campbell	Resident
Ann	Polis	Fitzroy Residents Association
<b><i>Industry</i></b>		
Patrick	Donovan	Music Victoria
Hannah	Fox	Supple Fox - Live Music Producers/Touring
Blair	Stafford	Live Music Touring
Susan	Forrester	Big Day Out Festival
Adrian	Basso	General Manager PBS radio
Jonathan	Williamson	Manager Contemporary Music, Arts Victoria
Mary	Micahalos	Former Editor Beat Magazine. Sticky Carpet
Sophie	Brous	Musician, former director Melbourne Jazz Festival
<b><i>Musicians</i></b>		
Lou	Bennett	Musician
Shane	Howard	Musician
Dan	Sultan	Musician