

Public Question Time and Submissions

Question from Alan Renshaw

A media release by the City of Port Phillip (City) on 23 August 2021 states “Council is offering up to \$5,000 per week until 31 December 2021 to local live music venues and promoters who must cancel gigs due to lockdowns”, and “\$250 per performance to artists”.

The City of Port Phillip Council (Council) is responsible for providing the services and infrastructure required by most residents.

Live music events in the City are not accessible to most residents of the City, nor required by them.

The “Don’t Stop the Music” lockdown assistance scheme is not the responsibility of the Council.

The federal and state governments have programs in place to provide financial assistance to businesses and individuals negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

What is Council’s justification for providing a special interest group in the music industry with additional financial assistance over that provided by the federal and state governments to all eligible business and displace workers?

What is the Council’s justification for spending the funds of ratepayers, who are also negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, on providing additional support to a special interest group in the music industry?

While the Mayor may think “Live music is a massive part of our City”, it can only be enjoyed by a small number of the City’s residents. Live music should never be given precedence when Council is allocating ratepayers’ funds to the services and infrastructure required by most residents, e.g.: to amenity and public safety, and diverting waste from landfills.

The statement that “Please Don’t Stop the Music is funded by savings from the cancellation of the 2021 St Kilda Festival”, is nonsense. All savings in 2020-21 have been reallocated to the services and infrastructure listed in the 2021-22 budget. The live music proposal will draw funds from the services and infrastructure planned for 2021-22.

Council has recently budgeted to increase the rates on property owners in the City. It is incumbent on Council to ensure that increase is only used to fund services and infrastructure required by most residents.

Response

The Live Music Action Plan, endorsed by Councillors in May 2021, outlines Council’s intent in terms of supporting, protecting and future proofing live music locally.

Initiatives were created with the intent to complement rather than replicate measures from other levels of Government. Officers will support Council to continue to advocate to other levels of Government on the importance of this sector.

On 2 December 2020, Council resolved through the report - Financial Update: First Quarter 2020/21 Financial Review to amongst other things:-

- Approve the re-prioritisation of the \$1.7m budget previously allocated to the St Kilda Festival to the Live Love Local program to support the local economy including the

following initiatives in 2020/21 (refer to attachment 3 – Proposed Social and Economic Recovery Initiatives):

- COVID Safe community and live music event support (\$200,000)

With respect to COVID-safe community events, this support was offered to all eligible permit applications but no applications were received.

Council also allocated \$130K to the Live Music Action Plan of which \$80K was funds deferred from the 2020/21 to this financial year.

**Please note: answers to any questions in Public Question Time and Councillor Question Time which were answered at the meeting are included in the minutes of that meeting.*