

# MUSIC FESTIVAL ROUNDTABLE



## Report on the activities of the Music Festival Roundtable for the year ending 30 June 2022

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## 1. Background

On 21 November 2019, the NSW Government commenced the [Music Festivals Act 2019](#) (“the Act”) to promote a safer environment at music festivals. The Act requires the establishment of a Music Festival Roundtable (“the Roundtable”) to support the growth of the music festival industry and the safety of patrons in attendance. The Act sets out the establishment, functions, membership, and operation of the Roundtable.

The Roundtable gives government agencies and industry stakeholders the opportunity to strengthen relationships, share information, address members’ priorities and tackle emerging issues impacting music festivals in NSW. Membership of the Roundtable comprises equal distribution of government and industry representatives.

This report outlines the activities of the Roundtable from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 (“the reporting period”), as required by section 18 of the Act.

## 2. Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and severe weather

Both the music festival sector and the operation of the Roundtable continued to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the NSW Government’s Public Health Orders for most of the reporting period.

In November 2021 the first cases of the Omicron variant were reported in Sydney and by January NSW cases had reached over 30,000 a day, enormously impacting the summer festival season.

Specific restrictions at Music Festivals due to the pandemic were first addressed in Section 14 of the Public Health (COVID-19) Order 2021 on 15 December 2021, requiring a person to be fully vaccinated if attending a music festival in a large indoor facility. There was also a restriction of no more than 20,000 persons attending other music festivals.

On 16 December 2021, a further amendment was added to Section 14 of the Order. Section 14A prohibited music festivals from being held in the City of Newcastle Local Government Area. This amendment was in place until repealed on 8 January 2022.

On 11 January 2022, all singing and dancing at music festivals were prohibited unless the person was a performer or was rehearsing to perform at the festival. All other restrictions stated in Section 14 related to music festivals remained.

The Public Health Order of 25 February 2022 only required that a person to be fully vaccinated if attending a music festival in a large indoor facility. Certain parts of Section 14 were repealed at this time, including removing the restriction of no more than 20,000 persons attending other music festivals.

The Public Health Order of 8 June 2022 saw changes resulting in some normalcy to music festivals post pandemic. The requirement to be fully vaccinated when attending a large indoor music festival was removed. The requirement for persons to register their contact details when entering a large indoor music festival was also removed.

In addition to the pandemic, NSW also experienced a La Niña weather pattern bringing flooding rains and cooler weather. Sydney experienced its wettest summer for 30 years in 2021-22 and March 2022 its wettest on record. Music Festivals throughout the reporting period were cancelled or re-scheduled, impacted by the pandemic or the severe weather and flooding in NSW.

### **3. Governance**

Adjustments made to the governance arrangements of the Roundtable in the reporting period due to Machinery of Government Changes.

#### *3.1 Machinery of Government*

On 1 April 2022 Machinery of Government changes occurred, and a new Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade (DEIT) was established. The new department was formed to drive the NSW Government's commitment to economic transformation and recovery. Liquor, gaming and racing staff and functions came together to form the Hospitality and Racing group within DEIT.

Responsibility for secretariat support for the Roundtable moved to the Hospitality and Racing Group at this time.

#### *3.2 Co-chairs*

As a result of the Machinery of Government changes, the CEO Hospitality and Racing DEIT, Mr Anthony Keon, replaced Mr John Tansey, Executive Director Policy & Strategy, Better Regulation Division, Department of Customer Service as the Government co-chair, effective from 8 June 2022.

Ms Julia Robinson, General Manager, Australia Festival Association remained as the industry co-chair for the entirety of the reporting period.

#### *3.3 Membership*

The first meeting under the new Department saw the revision of the Roundtable membership to ensure member representation was suitable. New members from the NSW Police Force, Ministry of Health, Transport for NSW, and Destination NSW were appointed by the Minister ahead of the 8 June meeting.

#### *3.4 Terms of Reference*

With the agreement of the members at the June 2022 meeting, the Terms of Reference were amended to reflect the Roundtable membership and quorum needs. A copy of the updated Terms of Reference is published on the [Liquor & Gaming NSW website](#).

### **4. Meeting dates and attendance**

Three Roundtable meetings were held during the reporting period. Whilst section 17 of the Act states the Roundtable is to meet four times a year, the industry faced challenging times due to COVID-19. As a result, the August 2021 meeting was cancelled and out of session updates were shared amongst the members. Due to COVID-19 challenges, it was also not possible to hold a meeting at a music festival site, as required by the Act.

Meeting dates during the reporting period:

- 5 November 2021
- 9 February 2022
- 8 June 2022

A report on outcomes from each meeting is published on the [Liquor & Gaming NSW website](#).

The pandemic, and related Public Health Orders, impacted the members ability to meet in person. November and February meetings were held online, with the final June meeting being a hybrid of online and in-person attendance. See member attendance in Appendix A.

## 5. Topics Discussed

Topic	Presenter
<b>5 November 2021 meeting</b>	
Sector update	Industry co-chair, Australian Festival Association
Harm reduction training for NSW music festival staff and patrons	Australian Festival Association
Emerging drug-related health issues	Ministry of Health
COVID-19 Roadmap	Ministry of Health
NSW Government support for music festivals	Create NSW
Government response to the Roundtable review of the Music Festivals Act 2019	Liquor & Gaming NSW
Safety Management Plan template	Liquor & Gaming NSW
Consultation open for 'NSW Guidelines for music festival organisers' update	Ministry of Health
Annual report on the activities of the Roundtable for the period ending 30 June 2021	Secretariat, Liquor & Gaming NSW
<b>9 February 2022 meeting</b>	
The impact of COVID-19. Skills shortage in the industry	Industry co-chair, Australian Festival Association
Sexual Health & Safety Toolkit	Penington Institute
Music industry review	Music NSW
NSW Government support for music festivals updates	Create NSW
Emerging health, patron and COVID-19 safety at festivals	Ministry of Health
Review of Guidelines for Music Festival Event Organisers	Ministry of Health
24-Hour Economy Commissioner presentation - CBD's revitalisation program	Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner
Ministerial reshuffle and Machinery of Government changes	Government co-chair, Liquor & Gaming NSW

8 June 2022 meeting	
Increased costs in event operations	Industry co-chair, Australian Festival Association
Security and hospitality skills shortage in the industry	Industry co-chair, Australian Festival Association
Machinery of Government changes	Government co-chair, Liquor & Gaming NSW
Case Study - One from the Heart Concert	Liquor & Gaming NSW
Mental health, and drug related harms	Ministry of Health
Trends in policing	NSW Police
Music Festival Roundtable - Terms of Reference review	Government and industry Co-Chairs, Liquor & Gaming NSW and Australian Festival Association
Future meeting model and focus	Government and industry Co-Chairs, Liquor & Gaming NSW and Australian Festival Association

## 6. Outcomes from 2021-22

During the reporting period eleven (11) subject music festivals were held.

Outcomes from each Roundtable meeting are published on the [Liquor & Gaming NSW website](#).

The Government response to the review of the Act resulted in the music festival content migrating from Liquor & Gaming NSW website to [nsw.gov.au](https://nsw.gov.au). The Safety Management Plan template developed in consultation with stakeholders for all music festival organisers was made available from November 2021.

The [Music Festivals Resources Hub](#) went live on 14 April 2022. The guide assists organisers plan their music festival, understand who needs to be contacted, and what approvals are needed and when. It also includes the early notification form and other resources such as funding support available to organisers of events.

## 7. Future Activities

With the global pandemic stabilising, and the NSW Government Public Health Orders easing, there has been a re-emergence of music festivals in NSW. There is no requirement now for masks at large indoor festivals, and the requirement to check in at certain premises has been removed. There is a high degree of risk recognition in the community with 95% of adults double-vaccinated against COVID-19, and there is a genuine commitment by organisers to minimise harm and ensure patron safety.

The first Roundtable meeting for the 2022/23 year will occur at the Splendour in the Grass festival in July 2022.

## Appendix A – Meeting attendance

Member Organisation	Nov 2021	Feb 2022	June 2022
NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet	Y	Y	Y
Ministry of Health (two representatives)	Y	Y	Y (one only)
Ambulance NSW	Y	Y	Y
NSW Police Force	Y	Y	Y
Liquor & Gaming NSW	Y	Y	Y
NSW Department of Planning, Industry, and Environment	Y	N	N
Transport for NSW	Y	Y	Y
Destination NSW	Y	Y	Y
Create NSW	Y	Y	Y
NSW Rural Fire Service*	Y	Y	Y
Australian Festival Association (four representatives)	Y (three only)	Y	Y (three only)
APRA AMCOS	N	Y	N
MusicNSW	Y	Y	Y
Live Performance Australia	N	Y	Y
Local Government NSW	Y	Y	Y
Australian Recording Industry Association	Y	Y	N
Unions NSW	Y	Y	N

\* An invitation is extended to NSW Rural Fire Service following the first ever meeting of the Roundtable, where members additionally requested that a representative of either NSW Rural Fire Service or NSW Fire & Rescue receive a standing invitation to the Roundtable meetings.