

Andrew Barr MLA
ACT Budget Consultation
Treasury Directorate
GPO Box 158
Canberra, ACT 2601



10 January 2012

Dear Mr Barr,

I write on behalf of the National Folk Festival, to ask if you will give consideration to allocating additional funds in support of the local Festival and Event Industry.

As your are well aware, the Festival and Event Industry has been faced with large increases to compliance and operating costs accompanied by a decrease in government allocation and corporate sector support.

The Festival and Event industry is an invaluable asset to the local economy and the cultural wellbeing of Canberra and Australia as a whole. Without adequate support from local government this will be an industry that will cease to exist as is evident by the number of events that have been cancelled or bailed out within the past 12 months.

Festivals and Events are largely Not For Profit Organisations that have minimal operating profit during good years and often operate at a loss, yet each of these organisations contribute millions of dollars to local economies, through tourism, wages and operating expenses.

These events also support local businesses and educational institutions by offering employment and volunteer or intern positions to thousands of people each year, providing access to practical experience including work safe practices that they are able to take back to their school or place of work.

During the previous three years this industry has suffered from decreased attendance due to decreased consumer confidence caused by the GFC and an increase to expenses due to rising compliance costs with recent changes to legislation such as the Work Safety Act of 2008, the Liquor Act of 2010 and increased costs and compliance brought about by the national harmonisation of Workplace Health and Safety Regulations.

If local festivals and events are not given the additional support they need, especially where compliance costs are concerned, then this industry will cease to exist as is evident by the number of festivals that have closed during the last year.

Events that have suffered in this regard include: Mission to Launch, Great Southern Blues Festival, Funk n' Grooves Festival, Rewind 80's Australia, Perth's One Movement Festival and Soundwave Revolution. The need for the Moreton District Council to purchase the land that Woodford Festival owned and subsequently rent it back to the organisation is also a clear indicator of the pressures that festivals are facing.

With the Centenary of Canberra fast approaching, I think that Canberra can be justly proud of its well-established festival events that are part of a unique community cultural identity that sets Canberra apart from other major centres. I hope you will see fit to provide additional support to ensure the longevity of these events.

Thank you for your consideration of this submission to the ACT Budget Consultation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Flynn', with a small dot at the end.

Sebastian Flynn
Managing Director
National Folk Festival