



Town of Port Hedland

Live and Local

Research Report

Prepared by Griffith University

Professor Andy Bennett

Dr Ben Green

Dr Adam Trainer

For the Live Music Office

Lucy Joseph, Project Manager

Fiona Duncan, Program Coordinator

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Background

Live and Local is a capacity building program that aims to increase participation in Australian local music scenes and strengthen the ecology of live music communities. The program models best practice for hosting live music and aims to foster a consistent approach to live music through all levels of the sector – from musicians, to venues, to council regulation and policy. The program's key events include:

- facilitating a live music census;
- establishing a community working group;
- programming and delivery of two micro-music festival events;
- professional development workshops;
- facilitating a music industry forum with local community members.

In addition to this, the program also addresses regulation and policy challenges in relation to live music within local councils through the engagement of a strategic policy development consultant.

The Town of Port Hedland Live and Local program was delivered by the Town of Port Hedland Council in partnership with the Live Music Office (LMO). Relevant context for the Town of Port Hedland includes the *Arts & Culture Plan 2023-2027*, *Community Development Plan 2022-2027*, and the *Portside Activation Project*.

Griffith University researchers were engaged by the LMO to evaluate the Town of Port Hedland Live and Local as part of a broader evaluation of the Live and Local program. This report is provided to the Council to assist with its evaluation, reporting and further live music policy and planning.

Research Methods

The Griffith University research team comprised Professor Andy Bennett, Dr Ben Green, and Dr Adam Trainer. Research data was collected through participant and non-participant observation, surveys and interviews, including:

- meetings with Council program leads, Venue Liaison Officer and Live Music Office representatives throughout the program;
- attendance, observation and surveys of audience, musicians, venue representatives and Council staff (48 responses) who attended the West End Street Party event;
- data collected relating to the live music industry forum, run by WAM as a Northwest Regional Roundtable event;
- attendance and observation at one Live Music Working Group meeting and one professional development workshop;
- further surveys of industry personnel who attended professional development programming;
- in-depth interviews with seven program participants representing musicians, venues and Council officers.

Details of the program events are set out in the following section. The research was undertaken with the approval of the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (REF. NO. 2022/217).

Town of Port Hedland Live and Local

Project team and working group

Council Lead and Facilitator

Erin Nelson, Events Officer

Venue Liaison Officer

Mel Hatwell, Director of Events, PPP Events

Working Group

Erin Nelson, Brad Holder, Kirk Lenton, Tom Christides, Christina Takai, John Reid

WAM Regional Roundtable

WAM (Western Australian Music) is the peak body for the music industry in Western Australia. Its role is to advocate for musicians and the wider industry across the state in areas such as funding, policy, community building and professional development. Due to Western Australia's geographical spread, WAM holds regional roundtable events as a means of bringing music industry personnel from across the state together to network and discuss issues facing the industry. Following a desire from participants at a November 2023 regional roundtable for more in-person meetings, WAM engaged with the Town of Port Hedland and BHP to secure the funding necessary to run the first regional round table hosted in the Pilbara region. The Town of Port Hedland used this event as an alternative to the industry forum usually organised as part of the Live and Local program, as its aims were similar, but it took in a regional whole of state perspective as opposed to focussing specifically on live music in the Town of Port Hedland. Delegates from across the state attended the event, which was held in Port Hedland from June 14–16, 2024.

The objectives for the roundtable that align specifically with the Live and Local program were:

- to facilitate a collaborative forum for participants and local government to address challenges in the industry

- to explore opportunities in supporting regional live music in WA.
- to document and analyse challenges experienced across regional WA
- the creation of a comprehensive regional live music network for WA

The first day of the roundtable was led by WAM in addressing the challenges and opportunities facing regional live music in WA, and the second day was led by the Live Music Office and highlighted both the Live and Local program, as well as providing participants with strategies for engaging with LGAs in order to develop strategies for better supporting live music. In addition to providing an opportunity for networking across the industry, the roundtable had a number of tangible outcomes. These included the documentation of key issues facing the industry as well as the challenges and opportunities relating to them, attendance for all participants at the Red Country Music Festival, and performance opportunities for all attending artists at the local Pride Pilbara Rainbow Family Day in South Hedland Square.

Comprehensive documentation of the findings of the roundtable are included in WAM's Final Report on the event. The key points of discussion were as follows:

- the importance and survival of WA regional festivals;
- building community by creating hubs;
- music education in schools, TAFE and other teaching facilities;
- networking for artists and industry professionals in the regions;
- careers, skills and training;
- access to mentoring and professional development;
- touring for both regional artists, Perth artists and international artists;
- mental health and music/songwriting;
- working with LGA's in regional WA;
- WAM in the regions;
- funding across WA.

Given the industry and state-wide nature of the WAM Regional Roundtable, the event was used as a networking and data collecting opportunity with regards to regional music in WA. The activities usually included in a Live and Local industry forum took place after the conclusion of the West End Street Party, as part of the first meeting of the Live music Working Group. The findings of that meeting can be viewed below.

Professional Development Workshops

In consultation with the Live Music Office, the Town of Port Hedland developed a series of professional development workshops. Town of Port Hedland Events Officer Erin Nelson undertook the planning, programming and execution of the majority of these sessions, which were offered both in person as well as on Teams for participants to attend virtually if preferred. The schedule of the workshops was as follows:

Workshop Details	Workshop Content
October 8 - Welcome & Key Music Industry Organisations and Programs	An introduction to national industry bodies & reps from these bodies, including the Live Music Office, APRA AMCOS, Natsimo, Music Australia, WAM & Support Act, including a discussion of WAM resources and membership
October 15 - Musicians: Getting to Know You – Develop your Brand and EPK	Developing an EPK & Rider – what they are, how to make them (both tech & hospitality riders), and ways of strengthening your brand
October 31 - Venues: Getting Live to Thrive - How to use music for Economic Growth	Specific to venues but open to musicians, the session aims at discussing positive economic impacts that live music has, and detailing small changes that can positively impact the industry

November 5 - Musicians: Getting Booked - How to grow & create your live opportunities	Getting booked, contracts, pitching to promoters for supports and festivals – regional and metro, tips for putting on shows or organising a tour (regional & remote).
November 12 - Musicians: Getting Paid - Finance, Funding & Tax 101	Run in consultation with Kylie Thompson of Sorrento Strategic Accounting, covering invoicing, setting a price, maximising earnings at tax time, funding facts and grant insights
November 19 - PHLMA EOY Networking Session	Physical launch and celebration of PHLMA – key findings of L&L program and next steps, with an invitation to the wider community, including the Pilbarra and beyond

Odyssea Hedland West End Street Party

The Live and Local micro-festival element comprised performances at the West End Street Party, which was part of the Odyssea Hedland Music & Arts Journey, a series of events offered across the Town of Port Hedland between August 17–31. This was the second iteration of the Odyssea Hedland Music & Arts Journey. The headline event was Tunes on the Turf, featuring performances from touring artists Jebediah and Dice. Odyssea Hedland is run by Town of Port Hedland, with BHP as its principal partner.

West End, also referred to as Portside, is an area of approximately four blocks that includes commercial properties, civic buildings including a police station and the Courthouse Gallery and Studio, and the town’s main commercial street, Wedge Street. The West End Street Party was scheduled on a Saturday morning to coincide with the regular monthly Wedge Street Footpath Markets, an event usually run on

Sundays that alternately runs on Saturdays in conjunction with other events, featuring market stalls from local vendors.

The West End Street Party included a range of offerings for the public, such as:

- Live and Local programming from four performers at four dedicated venues across the West End precinct;
- The Wedge St Footpath Markets;
- Junkadelic – roaming performances, instrument building workshops and dedicated performances at both Marapikurrinya Park and the Courthouse Gallery Gardens;
- A children’s craft activity tent located at the Courthouse Gallery Gardens;
- A treasure map activity run by the Port Hedland Visitor’s Centre;
- Food and beverages provided by local businesses, a food truck located between the Footpath Markets and Courthouse Gallery Gardens, and the Silver Star Café, with alcohol served at the latter.

The musicians who performed as part of the Live and Local programming at the West End Street Party were:

- Tom Christides – performing mostly covers and some originals on acoustic guitar and vocals in styles including rock, pop and alternative;
- Joel Guest – performing instrumental keyboard compositions predominantly in a classical style, but with some more atmospheric synthesizer pieces;
- Kirk Linton – performing covers on acoustic guitar and vocals in styles such as folk, country, rock and pop;
- Razi Zain – performing mostly covers and some originals on acoustic guitar and vocals in styles that included pop, soul, roots and folk.

The Live and Local program promotes a diverse representation of musicians including *‘equitable gender representation, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse musicians, Indigenous musicians, musicians with a disability and musicians under 18’* (Live and Local Manual). In this case the program included all male performers, two First Nations musicians, and culturally and linguistically diverse musicians.

The Live and Local programming had originally included performances from six acts, comprising five local solo artists and one duo. However, one artist was ill and unable to perform, and the duo decided not to perform due to misunderstanding about the nature of the performance: namely that they are a full band not an acoustic duo which is how they were booked, and that they assumed incorrectly that backline for a full band would be provided. Other performers covered the vacant slots on the bill. Performers were given two sets each (with some playing an additional set to make up for the missing performers) across two of the four operating venues, with each performer playing a set at the Courthouse Gallery Gardens, which was the best attended of the four venues, and one other.

Live and Local performances were located within an approximately 100 metre radius to enable attendees to walk between venues. Another planned element of the West End Street Party as a growers market run in consultation with a local fresh produce grower, who had planned to engage other growers from the nearby Gascoyne region. This would have seen market stalls set up further along Wedge St towards both Provisions and the Harbour Café. However, due to a lack of confirmation of the involvement of vendors this element of the event had to be cancelled. This, coupled with the fact that many businesses on Wedge St located between the various stages were closed, made offerings sparse between the four Live and Local locations operating for the event.

Over the course of the event 650 total entries were recorded through the Port Hedland Visitors Centre people counter, noting that this can include patrons entering more than once. PPP Events recorded audience tallies across the event as follows:

9:30am – 93

10:30am – 319

11:30am – 357

12:30pm – 328

1:30pm – 60

Venue	Observations
Courthouse Gallery Gardens	<p>The Courthouse Gallery Gardens is a shaded public garden adjacent to the Courthouse Gallery and Studio, with space for an audience of approximately 500 standing or 300 seated. The Courthouse Gallery and Studio was open throughout the event, selling arts and crafts, and was well-frequented by attendees.</p> <p>Also set up in the garden space were marquees dedicated to children’s craft activities, which was well-attended across the day, as well as an information marquee for the Portside town team – an organisation dedicated to enhance the Portside precinct, within which the event was held. The PPP Events tent was also located on the periphery of the space.</p> <p>The space is also adjoined by the Silver Star café, a renovated train carriage, which offers food and beverage options, and is licensed to serve alcohol. Whilst that venue was operating a liquor license, which included the presence of security, during the West End Street Party it sold only two alcoholic beverages throughout the event.</p> <p>The Courthouse Gallery Gardens were well attended throughout the day, with visitation significantly higher than any other venue, largely because of its size, the other uses of the space, and the shade provided by trees, which made it appealing during the hot weather.</p> <p>Musicians performed directly outside the entrance to the Courthouse Gallery, with good visibility from all areas of the space. Engagement was generally minimal but casually appreciative, and the music added to the relaxed nature of the space as a hub for the event.</p>
Wedge Street Cafe	<p>The Wedge Street Café is a café and lunch bar located on the western side of Wedge St, the main street of the West End/Portside precinct. It includes indoor and al fresco dining areas.</p> <p>Musicians performed directly outside the entrance of the venue, with a small PA set up to project into the al fresco area and towards the market stalls set up across the road. Engagement with performers from patrons was minimal.</p>
Provisions	<p>Provisions is a wellness and beauty store located at the north-west end of Wedge St, close to Marapikurrinya Park, a large open space adjacent to the port. The store itself is located behind a steel fence, which performers were</p>

	placed behind, making them difficult to see from Wedge St. The front of the store also features minimal shade, which made stopping to listen unappealing during the hot weather. Performers received minimal to no audience at this venue, though the venue did report decent visitation across the event.
Harbour Café	<p>The Harbour Café is a small café and lunch bar located on the eastern side of Wedge St, close to Marapikurrinya Park. It features a shaded al fresco dining area adorned by plants and seating for up to a dozen. There is also a shaded space directly next to the venue where audience were able to view performances.</p> <p>The Harbour Café is not usually open on Saturdays. Although the owners had agreed to open for the event, the venue did not open for the West End Street Party. This had a flow on effect for the performances that were scheduled outside it, as visitation from the public was minimal. Some performances attracted several audience members who used the al fresco seating, but attendance was sparse.</p>

Survey Results

A total of 48 surveys were returned to the research team.

Survey respondents

Type of Stakeholder	Number of Respondents
Venue owner/manager/workers	6
Musician/performers	11
Council staff	4
Attendee/audience members	27
TOTAL	48

Venue Owners/Managers/Workers

Program Evaluation

According to survey responses from venue representatives, after taking part in the Port Hedland Live and Local program:

- Venue representatives who responded rated the program as 'very good' (n=1) or 'average' (n=2);
- All respondents rated the micro-festival as 'sufficiently organised' (n=3), and said that prior to the event they received 'some' of the information they required (n=3);
- All respondents observed an increase in visitation during their live music event ('somewhat' n=2; 'yes' n=1);
- All respondents reported an increase in sales during their live music event ('somewhat' n=3);
- All respondents described their impression of the public's response to the live music as their venue as 'appreciative' (n=2) or 'very good' (n=1);
- All respondents said that the live music acts were suitable for their venue ('appropriate' n=2; 'very suitable' n=1).
- All respondents said that the event created a positive experience for the local community ('somewhat' n=2; 'yes' n=1);
- After taking part in the event, one of the three respondents reported an increased understanding of the value of live music programming, and of how to program live music; one of the three respondents said they would like to host more live music in the future.;
- After taking part in the event, two of the three respondents said they feel more connected to the local music industry network of musicians, venues and organisers ('yes' n=1; 'somewhat' n=1);
- All respondents said they would recommend live music programming to colleagues running similar businesses ('yes' n=3);
- When asked, 'Would you be happy to be involved in Live and Local event/s in the Town of Port Hedland again?', responses were 'yes' (n=1) and 'unsure' (n=2).

Elements that venue representatives said they liked about the event were:

- ‘The set up and atmosphere’;
- ‘The live music and the stalls’;
- ‘Gives musicians an opportunity to perform. Something different for residents.’

Elements that venue representatives said they disliked about the event were as follows:

- ‘Not many stalls or food options’;
- ‘The music was in random spots and minimal stalls were around’;
- ‘Weather, harbour cafe not being open’.

Other feedback provided in response to an open survey question was as follows:

- ‘More advertising and allow people to understand what the event actually is’.

Challenges for Live Music

Venue representatives were asked, ‘In your view, what are the greatest challenges facing live music in the Town of Port Hedland and how do you think these challenges could or should be addressed?’. Responses were as follows:

- ‘No one wants to visit Hedland’;
- ‘Costs and availability of local musicians’.

Musicians/Performers

Respondents

Musicians who performed at the West End Street Party were asked a series of questions about their experience of the event. Because the survey was completed by some musicians who were not part of the Live and Local component, not all questions were relevant to their experience. While a total of 11 musicians responded

to the survey, only 9 of these responded beyond the compulsory demographic questions. All of those who completed the survey identified as male.

When asked what format they usually perform in, 56% (5) of musicians selected solo, with 44% (4) selecting band.

When asked what style of music they perform, musicians gave the following responses:

- Commercial music;
- Acoustic;
- Funk;
- Contemporary Rock;
- Ballad;
- Pop covers;
- Classical/contemporary.

A third of musicians (n=3) reported that they usually perform 'at least weekly'; a third (n=3) 'at least monthly'; and a third (n=3) 'rarely'

Program Evaluation

In terms of their experience of the Live and Local program as part of the West End Street Party, musicians responded to the survey as follows:

- *Overall, how would you rate Live and Local as part of the West End Street Party?*
 - Excellent: 22% (2)
 - Good: 45% (4)
 - Average: 22% (2)
 - Poor: 11% (1)
- Most respondents said the event was 'sufficiently organised' (67%; n=6) or 'extremely well organised' (22%; n=2); one (11%) felt it was disorganised.

- Most respondents (78%; n=7) reported receiving 'all' of the information they required prior to the event, with one (11%) receiving 'some', and one (11%) receiving 'none'.
- Most respondents said the venue they performed at was 'appropriate' (67%; n=6) or 'very suitable' (22%; n=2); one (11%) said the venue was unsuitable.

Elements that musician survey respondents liked about the micro-festival event included:

- 'The scenery, the organisation';
- 'The community participation and the relaxed atmosphere';
- 'Sound quality of production and folk style guitar/singing suited the venue';
- 'Different stalls and engagement with the community';
- 'Well facilitated from a performer's perspective. Conditions weren't too hot.';
- 'Location and staff';
- 'Town of Port Hedland's support';
- 'Use of local artists'.

Elements that musician survey respondents disliked about the micro-festival event included:

- 'Could use more colour... and possibly a more diverse range of arts';
- 'More public awareness of what is available where, maybe an event map';
- 'Everything was too spread out and some sections didn't make sense';
- 'Lack of audience/community at function. Lack of foot traffic in the West End';
- 'Program was provided late'.

All musicians who gave feedback on the music industry forum found it useful and productive ('yes' n=2; 'somewhat' n=2).

Most reported that following their participation in the Live and Local program, they felt more connected to the local music industry network of musicians, venues, and organisers ('yes': n=3, 'somewhat': n=1; 'no' n=2).

Most respondents (89%; n=8) said they would be happy to be involved in Live and Local events in the Town of Port Hedland in the future, and one (11%) said they were unsure.

Challenges for Performing Live Music

Musicians were asked in the survey, 'In your view, what are the greatest challenges facing live music in the Port Hedland region and how do you think these challenges could or should be addressed?' Their responses included:

- 'Tyranny of distance from other cities';
- 'FIFO culture, Shift work, lack of venues.';
- 'Transient population; less FIFO and greater residential population. High level of shift rostering within mining companies; provide a better work/life balance.'
- 'Funding and performance opportunities';
- 'Complicit venues and appropriate pay';
- 'The support to host musicians. Advertising larger events and encouraging different types of performers to reach out';
- 'The consistency of event through out town and the rehearsal space for bands and performers';

Council Staff

Respondents

Three respondents answered the questions directed to Council staff. Their responses are summarised below.

Program evaluation

- two Council staff said they found the Live and Local model useful for engaging with their local live music community, one said they did not find it useful;
- two Council staff said they found the live music census a useful tool for canvassing their local live music community, and one said they did not find it useful;
- all respondents said they found the industry forum useful and productive for engaging local stakeholders on future policy development;

- two Council staff said they found the micro-festival format useful for building capacity of local stakeholders, and one said they found it somewhat useful;
- respondents rated the Live and Local component of the West End Street Party as 'very good' (n=2) and 'average' (n=1);
- two said the event was 'sufficiently organised' and one said it was 'disorganised';
- two Council staff said they found the professional development model useful for building capacity of local stakeholders, and one said they did not find it useful (noting in comments that the professional development activities had not been completed);
- all respondents said that their impression of the public's response to the Live and Local program was 'appreciative';
- two Council staff said they found the Policy Consultation services 'somewhat' informative and useful for future strategic policy development, while one said that they did not (noting in comments that the Policy Consultation services had not yet been completed);
- two Council staff said that following participation in the Live and Local program, they feel more connected to the local music industry network of musicians, venues and organisers, with one responding that they do not feel more connected;
- all respondents said they would adapt and use the Live and Local program model again to assist with future engagement and growth of their local live music community.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Live and Local Program Model

Council staff provided the following feedback when asked about the strengths of the Live and Local program model, with comments focusing on the micro-festival event:

- Great to showcase local talent to the community;
- Micro-festival format a good way to showcase musicians in various locations;
- Lack of commitment from audience;
- Brings vibrancy to the town;
- Good to provide performers with some income.

Council staff provided the following feedback regarding weaknesses of the program model, with comments focusing on the micro-festival event:

- Not enough people attending;
- Marketing that didn't hit the mark and effectively communicate what the event was;
- Programme activity was spread to much across the town centre;
 - Not enough activity engaging via each site ;
 - Based on the numbers it could have been held just in a single location;
- Some sites not being open for trade so didn't inspire visitation.

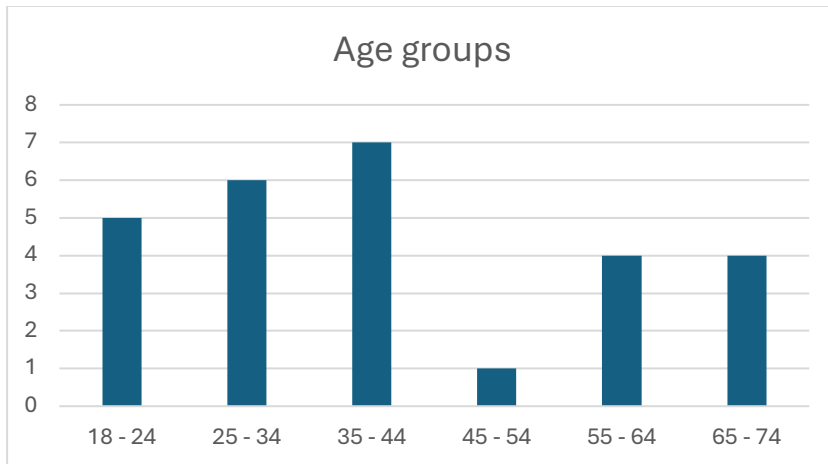
Attendee/Audience members

Survey Respondents

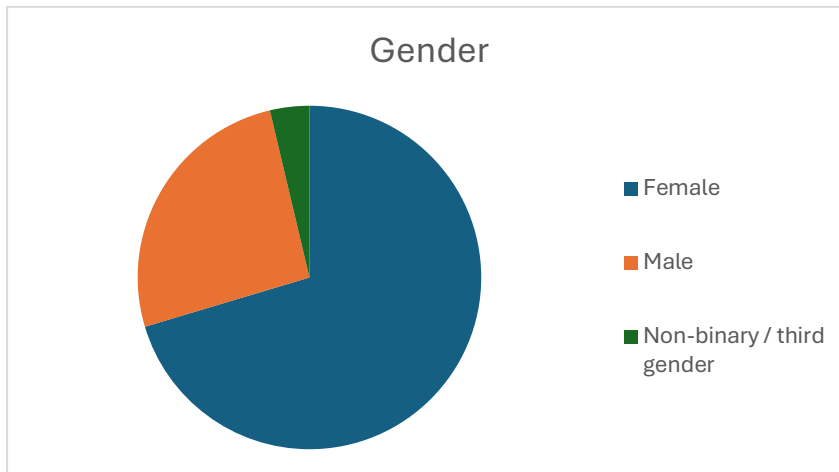
Residential postcodes of audience survey respondents

Postcode	Responses (n=27)	Percentage
2463	1	3.7%
4573	2	7.4%
6714	1	3.7%
6718	1	3.7%
6720	1	3.7%
6721	11	41%
6722	9	33%
7170	1	3.7%

Age groups of audience survey respondents



Gender identity of audience survey respondents



Micro-Festival Attendance

Just over half of audience respondents (n=13, 54%) attended 3 or 4 Live and Local performances, and just under half (n=11, 46%) attended 1 or 2 Live and Local performances.

Participants were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Entirely) how important music was as their reason for attending the event. Results:

- Entirely (5): 37.5%, n=9
- (4): 33%, n=8
- Somewhat (3): 20%, n=5
- (2): 4%, n=1
- Not at all (1): 4%, n=1

All respondents said that they travelled to the West End Street Party by 'private transport' (n=24).

Audience respondents estimated their expenditure at the West End Street Party between nothing and \$300 with an average of just over \$90. Purchases included:

- Food: 67% (n=14);
- Drinks: 81% (n=17);
- Event tickets: 19% (n=4);
- Retail shopping (including markets: 62% (n=13);
- Accommodation: 10% (n=2).

Micro-festival Evaluation

All respondents rated the performances they saw as either 'excellent' (58%, n=14) or 'very good' (42%, n=10).

Elements of the event that audience members said they liked were as follows:

- Atmosphere;
- Music;
- Market stalls;
- Accessibility;
- Variety;
- Family friendly;
- Sense of community cohesion;
- Exposure to local musical talent;
- Activation of different spaces.

Elements of the event that audience members said they disliked were as follows:

- Location of live music felt random & too spread out;
- Not enough food options;
- Not enough stalls including the farmer's market;
- Music was too loud;
- Not enough marketing;
- Lack of shade.

Attending Live Music in Port Hedland and Beyond

Audience survey respondents reported their usual live music attendance (in any location) as:

- At least monthly: 24% (n=4)
- Several times a year: 53% (n=9)
- Yearly or less: 24% (n=4)

Audience survey respondents reported their usual live music attendance in Port Hedland as:

- At least monthly: 6% (n=1)
- Several times a year: 29% (n=5)
- Yearly or less: 65% (n=11)

When asked about their preference for particular types of live music, the most common response was “Any/all”, with the following responses also recorded:

- Band;
- Contemporary music;
- Pop acoustic;
- Everything except for country;
- Australian indie / rock.

When asked whether they preferred to see original or cover songs in live performance, respondents answered overwhelmingly that they enjoy both, with some preference for originals and no respondents preferring covers alone:

- Originals: 11% (n=2)
- A mix of both: 89% (n=16)

When asked how they find out about live music events, respondents provided the following responses:

- Friends/Word of mouth: 82% (n=14)
- Print media: 18% (n=3)
- Websites: 12% (n=2)
- Social media: 59% (n=10) (Facebook was the only specific example)
- Radio: 6% (n=1)
- At the venue: 6% (n=1)

- Posters: 35% (n=6)

All survey respondents said they 'would like to attend more live music events in the Town of Port Hedland'. When asked what would encourage them to more live music in the Town of Port Hedland, respondents provided the following responses:

- More events;
- Family-friendly events;
- More or better advertising and promotion;
- More dedicated live music events with touring artists;
- More food/beverage options at events.

Audience respondents identified the following challenges for live music in the Town of Port Hedland:

- Distance;
- Lack of event organisers;
- Putting people behind fences;
- Venues for the performances that have decent facilities/food/beverage service;
- More sponsorship;
- Weather and location;
- Distance;
- 'It's hot in the summer, more shade and fans blowing mist would help';
- 'Creative culture seems to have decentralized in the last few years';
- Audience participation;
- 'Dedicated live music venue or regular live music events touring and local artists to tap into'.

Live Music Working Group Meetings

As part of the Live and Local program the Town of Port Hedland assembled a Live Music Working Group comprised of stakeholders in the Port Hedland live music scene. The working group included musicians, live music and events industry professionals, and Council staff. Whilst the Live and Local program usually includes an industry forum event, in the case of Port Hedland the Regional Roundtable event run in collaboration with WAM was utilised as an initial conversation, and the first Working Group Meeting was utilised as a forum for further discussion.

This meeting was run both in person at Ray's in Port Hedland, as well as online via Microsoft Teams. Eleven people attended the event, including musicians and other community members, Council and Live Music Office staff, Griffith University researchers and the Policy Consultant engaged by the Town of Port Hedland. The purpose of the meeting was to consult with community members about the strengths, challenges and opportunities for live music in the local government area, and to identify steps that could be taken by stakeholders. The research team attended the meeting to record notes.

The forum commenced with an overview of the Live and Local program by Lucy Joseph, Live Music Office Program Manager, who detailed the objectives and elements of the Live and Local program. The main component of the meeting was a guided discussion of the following questions:

- What does a thriving music scene look like?
- What are the challenges facing the Port Hedland music scene?
- Where do the opportunities lie?
- What are the solutions for developing live music in Port Hedland?

Summarised below are the key themes that emerged from these four discussion points.

What Does A Thriving Live Music Scene Look Like?

- Regular events and live music on weekends ;
- Artists coming through from out of town;
- A busking scene;
- Space being activated, including venues getting involved;
- People wanting to find live music and creating demand;
- Dedicated live music venues;
- An engaged community;
- Connection to broader industry through touring opportunities;
- Sustainable pathways for artists;
- A holistic approach including music education in schools;
- Council on-board and facilitating live music.

When asked about other scenes in the state that are thriving, participants gave both Exmouth and Broome as examples, as well as mentioning Busselton, which is building a \$50 million performing arts centre. Karratha was also mentioned as a location where venues have a reputation for looking after artists in terms of both infrastructure and opportunities. It was mentioned that Karratha underwent significant expansion 12 years ago, which has seen the live music scene develop significantly from seven to eight years ago.

What Are the Challenges Facing the Port Hedland Music Scene?

- A strong need to increase demand for live music.
 - This is arguably about more than just letting people know what's on, but would involve a cultural shift to build investment in live music culture.
- Climate and weather – heat and cyclones both pose issues.
 - This keeps audiences away during certain times of the year.
 - Equipment becomes weathered easily due to the climate.
- Transient population:
 - People don't stay longer than a few years so there's no follow through;
 - Town remains socially siloed;
 - Shift-work means people can be unreliable;
 - Supportive voices in council often move on quickly.

- Present lack of dedicated venues:
 - No regular ongoing live music in any venues;
 - Venues lack infrastructure;
 - Outdoor amphitheatres are underused;
 - There is a need for air-conditioned venues.
- Diminishment of performance opportunities in recent years:
 - Large scale festivals such as the North-West Fest have died off;
 - The touring circuit present in the '80s and '90s has died since travel is now flight-based;
 - Lack of sustained opportunities post-COVID.
- Port Hedland is missed as a touring destination:
 - Costs are prohibitive for touring artists;
 - Accommodation can often be difficult to book;
 - Flights are often cancelled and flights from Karratha or Broome are prohibitively expensive when compared to driving.
- Lack of surrounding live music infrastructure/culture:
 - No dedicated rehearsal space or jam room;
 - Music education in schools has diminished – high school music program has been cut off;
 - Performing arts is in a beleaguered state generally.
- Regulatory barriers:
 - Council regulations are often prohibitive in terms of land use;
 - Limited number of occasional liquor licenses;
 - Council support can be difficult to obtain for stand-alone events

What Are the Strengths of the Port Hedland Music Scene?

Whilst noting that there are significant challenges to developing live music culture, forum participants noted that the Town of Port Hedland does also have potential. They identified the following positive elements:

- Winter offers a good opportunity for touring artists, as the weather is good;
- Music is often rolled into other events, e.g. rodeos, sports, etc. This can be built on to make music a greater focus of these events;

- Outdoor amphitheatres are presently underused and have the potential to be developed;
- Opportunities exist in indoor spaces and spaces with air-conditioning, such as shopping centres, particularly during summer;
- The Esplanade offers strong opportunities as a dedicated live music space, as does The Walkabout Hotel;
- There is potential for a flow-on effect, as when venues start supporting artists, others follow suit. Demand can be built through supply.
- Members of council are supportive of live music and may be open to advocating for it internally.
- Local government funding and private investment in live music in addition to sports.
- There is a lot of money in town due to the mining sector. Audiences have disposable income, and the opportunity exists for mining companies to invest in equipment and infrastructure rather than one-off events, so as to facilitate sustainable opportunities.
- Significant investment by the mining sector in the revitalisation of the West End as a cultural hub. BHP is buying back the West End, and the newly built marina (\$200m) is opening soon. There may be opportunity for development of a live music space. The history of the West End is significant; the Yacht Club used to be a cultural hub and has great views.
- The majority of the population live in South Hedland. There is minimal infrastructure there to facilitate live music, but some spaces that could potentially work, including a 300-capacity theatre/cinema that is owned by the high school and difficult to access/program due to restrictions on use.
- An appetite to engage more with WAM based on the recent Regional Roundtable, which bring the opportunity for greater connection to other local councils in the region

Discussion around potential opportunities led to the distillation of several key points that emerged as answers to the last question, which sought to identify solutions to the problems faced, as well as actionable outcomes for opportunities.

What Are the Solutions For Developing Live Music In Port Hedland?

- Better infrastructure for live music: more venues offering live music more regularly;
- Port Hedland as a key touring destination in the North-West, facilitated by better relationships with other LGAs in the region;
- A more connected and cohesive scene with greater opportunities for artists;
- A sustainable live music scene that is facilitated by Council, industry and the community;
- Live music added onto other events, driving opportunities and further investment.

In order to work towards the above goals, the following were determined as potential priorities for both the Town of Port Hedland and the Working Group moving forward.

Priorities for Council include:

- The development of air-conditioned venues with infrastructure, even if merely power;
- Provision for artist fees for a short period of time to facilitate greater investment in live music;
- Collaboration with other venues in other areas to generate greater flow-on in terms of touring throughout the region;
- Regular get-togethers of local music venues across the Pilbarra region.

Priorities for the Working Group and the Port Hedland music community include:

- A dedicated live music association as a centralised space for conversation, including contact details of people who can get and be involved;
- Regular and ongoing networking events for musicians;
- The live music association to put evidence and ideas to venues and industry, as this would make a more marketable difference in generating buy-in;
- Regular contact and networking facilitated by Council.

A second Live Music Working Group meeting was held via Teams on 24 September, to provide participants with confirmed details of the professional development sessions that were being offered by the Town of Port Hedland. A third session ran on October 1 facilitated by Policy Consultant Ant McKenna, discussed below.

Policy Consultant Meeting

In order to develop policy outcomes tied to findings from the Live and Local program, the Town of Port Hedland engaged the services of Ant McKenna as a Policy Consultant. A Live Music Working Group meeting was held as a means of identifying key issues for the community as they relate to Council and policy. Council staff did not attend this meeting so that participants felt free to discuss any challenges they face with council and identify issues needing to be addressed in developing live music culture in the town.

Key Takeaways from this meeting were as follows:

- Lack of suitable venues and infrastructure as a major barrier to live music events;
- Council departments' poor communication and inconsistent processes hinder event planning;
- High staff turnover at Council creates inconsistency in event approval processes;
- Significant economic potential exists, but reinvestment in local infrastructure is needed.

Discussion focussed around several key areas: venues and infrastructure; interactions with council staff; and regulatory issues, with some next steps identified as viable pathways for overcoming hurdles and further developing live music opportunities in the town. These discussions are summarised below.

Venue and Infrastructure Challenges

- The Walkabout Hotel, formerly the town's main music venue (800–1000 capacity space), has been converted into a playground with nothing to replace it;
- A lack of purpose-built event spaces with necessary infrastructure (power, staging, toilets);
- The new marina development lacks adequate power (only 15amp outlets) and level ground for staging, making it unsuitable for major events;

- The town currently has no dedicated outdoor event space with permanent infrastructure.

Council-Related Issues

- The siloed nature of local government and poor communication between Council departments (e.g., Parks and Gardens, Events team) means there is a lack of consistency in proposing and planning events;
- There are inconsistent and often excessive requirements for event approvals;
- High council staff turnover (30–40% annually) leads to changing interpretations of regulations and often means gaps in knowledge for new staff;
- Overcompensation by new staff unfamiliar with local context.

Regulatory and Licensing Hurdles

- Noise management plans required for events after 10pm, which are often costly (\$1,500+) and seem unnecessary given virtually no events are held in spaces near residential areas;
- Excessive requirements for structural forms, electrical testing, and tagging;
- Liquor licensing processes are relatively smooth, but limited to 12 temporary permits annually.

As a result of this discussion, a number of actionable tasks were identified as useful next steps for the Working Group in advocating for policy change:

- Advocate for creation of a dedicated outdoor event space with permanent infrastructure;
- Propose streamlined, consistent approval processes for events to Council;
- Suggest annual blanket approvals for reputable event companies to reduce red tape;
- Explore potential for music industry development initiatives leveraging local economic strength and support from the mining industry;
- Investigate successful models from other regions for adapting to a Port Hedland context.

Stakeholder Interviews

The research team conducted semi-structured interviews with eight stakeholders representing participants in the Live and Local program and interested parties. This included three interviews with artists, two interviews with venues involved in the West End Street Party, two interviews with Council staff involved in the delivery of Live and Local, and an interview with the Venue Liaison Officer who was also contracted to deliver the West End Street Party. These interviews were an opportunity to gather qualitative feedback from participants and explore in-depth some of the themes identified as part of the Working Group meetings and observations made at the micro-music festival. The following themes emerged from the interviews.

Building Demand for Live Music

It was recognised by interviewees across all groups that there is a need to develop demand for live music in Port Hedland. The following were identified as the key themes that relate to this point:

- The town is one of Australia's wealthiest communities due to mining exports. Despite this, there is generally limited reinvestment of wealth into local infrastructure and cultural development.
- The highly transient nature of the town, challenging climate and siloed nature of social interaction contribute to this lack of cultural vibrancy.
- Many venues currently have a preference for DJs over live music due to cost and simplicity.
- Building demand for live music was perceived as a “chicken and egg” situation, with the assertion put forward that greater offerings at a small grassroots level would allow demand to build organically.
- Interviewees felt that events such as the West End Street Party proved there is a demand for live music, and that further development in this space was needed in order to drive it.
- Regeneration of Port Hedland as a touring destination would increase interest in and therefore demand for live music.

- Visitation by touring artists would provide opportunities for local artists and build their profiles within the community.

Venues and Infrastructure

It was noted by multiple participants that there are currently no venues in Port Hedland that offer live music on a consistent basis, though there are multiple venues that are supportive of live music. The following are the key observations relating to venues and infrastructure:

- There was discussion as to whether the West End is the best place for live music offerings, with some suggestion that South Hedland may offer viable options and great foot traffic for public events.
- Assistance from government or corporate sponsors for venues to develop permanent live music infrastructure such as staging and PAs may provide a platform for more regular ongoing live music offerings.
- At present the onus is on artists or promoters to supply PA and sound engineers, which is not financially viable. Shifting this to venues will make running live music events more appealing for local artists and promoters.
- There is a need for outdoor venues with sufficient infrastructure such as power in winter, and for air-conditioned indoor venues with the same in summer.

Consistency and Regularity in Live Music Offerings

The nature of live music events in the Town of Port Hedland is currently ad hoc and inconsistent in scale. The following observations were made with regards to fostering sustainable ongoing live music culture:

- Previous efforts by the mining industry to support large-scale festival-type events did not meet expectations and were gradually scaled back before being cancelled altogether prior to COVID.
- Facilitating the presence of live music at other community events including sporting or other cultural events such as rodeos and markets does currently,

and will continue to, drive demand for regular live music elsewhere, and should be supported from multiple directions.

- Incentives for venues to host live music will lead to broader acceptance that it is a viable entertainment option.
- There is a need for advocacy on this matter to be led by the community and supported by the Council.

Viable Pathways in Music

Interviewees made the following comments regarding music as a viable pathway to employment:

- Music as a sole vocation is not currently a viable option in the Town due to lack of opportunities and cost of living, so all musicians pursue this as a hobby only.
- The professional development opportunities offered by the Live and Local program could provide artists with the skills required to build their existing practice.
- Music currently plays a minimal to insignificant role in the educational offerings in high school curriculum.
- Greater focus could be placed on viable pathways into music through other elements of the industry such as sound engineering, venue management, arts administration and booking/promotion.

Regional Cohesion and Touring Opportunities

It was almost universally identified by interviewees that Port Hedland is rarely included as a destination for touring artists. The following were the major observations relating to this issue:

- Whilst Port Hedland was part of a viable northwest touring circuit throughout the 1980s and 90s, these opportunities have dwindled in recent years and are now almost non-existent subsequent to COVID.

- Greater investment in venues and infrastructure and funding assistance for touring artists would allow for Port Hedland to become a more viable touring destination, leading to greater opportunities for local artists.
- Following the Regional Roundtable contact has been made and continued with surrounding LGAs, which has led to interest in developing stronger links between councils in order to develop a touring network in the northwest.
- Providing opportunities for touring artists to play shows in multiple locations across the region, a more financially viable and sustainable touring model could be developed, with flow on effects for connected local music communities

Town of Port Hedland Council

All interviewees indicated that the Town of Port Hedland Council has a strong role to play in facilitating the development of a sustainable live music culture in the town. Musicians and venue staff expressed gratitude for the council's willingness to engage the Live and Local program, and in trialling the model with the West End Street Party. Other key takeaways were as follows:

- There is a high degree of turnover with council staff, particularly in the events space, which can lead to a gap in knowledge and skills development.
- While some areas of council are pro-active in supporting live music culture, support needs to be more lateral in order to be more effective.
- The West End Street Party was not sufficiently promoted, and attendance could have been higher if messaging around the event was clearer.
- While interviewees were supportive of the development of a Live Music Working Group to advocate for music in the town, they felt it was necessary for the Council to take a leading role in setting up and supporting such a group in the short to medium term.

Feedback on the Live and Local program

Interview participants identified Erin Nelson (Events Officer, Town of Port Hedland) as an active and efficient driver of the Live and Local program, and a helpful source

of support in building capacity around professional development for both artists and event management staff.

The precinct-based, programmed approach to the West End Street Party was perceived as a beneficial model for connecting community with local musicians, with further refinement of the model required in further iterations. Given the difficulties encountered as a result of not being able to secure sufficient market vendors to fill Wedge St, and the failure of one venue to open, both the Council and venues have expressed a need to reconsider the scale of events of this nature moving forward.

Council representatives found the Live and Local program resources useful, and identified Lucy Joseph (Program Manager, Live Music Office) as a crucial source of advice and support through the program, including through regular work-in-progress meetings. This was important given the substantial undertaking and various elements of the Live and Local program. Council also found the regional roundtable particularly beneficial in providing important connections with other LGAs in the Pilbarra region, which are connections that have been further strengthened subsequently.

A challenge for both Council leads and community participants was in the marketing and promotion of the West End Street Party. In rolling the event into the existing Odyssea Hedland festival framework, it was felt that the point and purpose of the West End Street Party as an event was somewhat diluted. Relying on the Town of Port Hedland's communications team meant that timeframes for marketing were difficult to meet.

There were also some issues with the contracted event manager meeting their obligations in terms of initial planning and communication of the event to key stakeholders, and other logistical considerations such as artist booking and liaison. It was noted that this type of event is new to the contractor in question, and that the support from Council was necessary in order to meet deadlines and outputs. However, as the Council were closely involved in running the event under the existing Odyssea Hedland banner, they were able to assist from a logistical and operational perspective. There were no issues encountered with regards to regulatory frameworks or licensing.

The live music census was still in progress. The Town of Port Hedland does have an existing register of performers, but there was difficulty in resourcing and obtaining support from within the Council to undertake further activity to audit live music in an ongoing capacity. However, it has been suggested that doing so on a regular basis would be a viable approach for council to understand the current state of live music in the town.

Professional development programming was delivered after the West End Street Party event, which meant that artists did not engage with this programming as a means of skills development for this particular event. Engagement of the Policy Consultant, Ant McKenna, ran subsequent to the micro-festival and parallel with the professional development workshops, which enabled him to deliver a session seeking feedback from participants relating to council. This provided useful feedback for the Council with regards to some of the hurdles encountered by those driving live music in Port Hedland, which was then able to be addressed.

Outcomes

The Port Hedland Live and Local program can be evaluated by the following nine intended outcomes, listed in the Live and Local Project Manual.

1. Paid performance opportunities for local musicians

The West End Street Party micro-festival directly provided paid performance opportunities for local musicians, staging a total of 10 performances by four solo acts.

2. More performance spaces activated

The West End Street Party event staged performances across three local businesses and one civic space in Port Hedland's West End precinct. Along with the Courthouse Gallery Garden as an established cultural hub and occasional live music venue, the West End Street Party activated new performance spaces including two other food and hospitality establishments, the Wedge St Café and Harbour Café, and one health and wellness store, Provisions.

3. A network of local businesses established to continue programming live music on a regular basis

The West End Street Party festival developed opportunities for local businesses to be involved in staging live music. Participating venues who responded reported increased visitation and sales, and a positive public response. Following the Live and Local program, some venue respondents reported an increased understanding of both the value of live music programming and how to program live music. The Live and Local program formed new connections between local musicians and businesses which will assist future programming. A specific outcome as stated in interviews is that following participation in the program, The Courthouse Gallery, which runs regular live music events, found the West End Street Party as a useful metric for how to run future events utilizing other spaces in the West End precinct.

4. Database of musicians and businesses established.

A requirement of the Live and Local program is for the Council to develop a database of musicians and venues. This was in progress for Port Hedland, with a live music census and further data collection also in progress. A perceived challenge

is the resourcing for an ongoing management of a live music database. It was expressed in interviews that a database would be a more useful resource if it were run and updated by the community. Interest was expressed at Live Music Working Group meetings for the database to be developed, though no commitment was made in running it.

5. A working group of local representatives established to support growth of local music scene

A working group of local representatives was established to consult on the Live and Local program. This group was brought together following the West End Street Party, with a focus on advocating for live music and facilitating the development of live music culture in Port Hedland. The working group also provided feedback to the Policy Consultant regarding Council processes and regulations, and in the creation of greater opportunities for live music to flourish in Port Hedland.

6. Musicians feel more confident in their professional capacity

The Live and Local program provided performance opportunities and a series of professional development workshops for local musicians, developing confidence in their professional capacities.

7. Businesses feel more confident in their professional capacity

Half of the businesses who provided feedback on the Live and Local program reported feeling more confident in their capacity to engage with live music and to program live music as part of their ongoing business model. All businesses reported a willingness to be involved in programming live music in the future.

8. Musicians and businesses connected to broader industry

This outcome is supported by the survey results and interview findings, with musicians and businesses reporting that following their participation in the Live and Local program, they felt more connected to the local music industry network of musicians, venues and organisers. The involvement of WAM and businesses such as Sorrento Strategic Accounting in the professional development program enabled new connections between the local music community and the broader music industry.

9. Policy specific to growth of local music scene implemented by council

The Live and Local program is intended to support the development of a Live Music Action Plan by local government. In connection with this program, the Town of Port Hedland engaged policy consultant Ant McKenna. Consultation commenced alongside the delivery of professional development initiatives for musicians and industry, and has resulted in feedback from the community regarding local government policy. Feedback from the Policy Consultant, including direct meetings with council will inform ongoing policy review.

Contact

Professor Andy Bennett

a.bennett@griffith.edu.au

Dr Ben Green

b.green@griffith.edu.au

Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research

<https://www.griffith.edu.au/griffith-centre-social-cultural-research>