EVERYONE WANTS A FESTIVAL: THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S CONTEMPORARY LIVE MUSIC FESTIVAL SECTOR

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This article explores the development and growth of Western Australia's (WA) live music festival sector. Historically analyzing activity occurring between 1999 and 2009, festivals of varying scope are discussed, with a particular focus on those that heavily feature indie pop/rock music and include WA artists in their lineup. Seven legs of national touring festivals as well as WA-only and one-off events are examined, being the Big Day Out, Blackjack, Rock-It, Rollercoaster Festival, St Jerome's Laneway Festival, Southbound, Wave Rock Weekender, and West Coast Blues 'n' Roots. These festivals program local artists in one of three ways: as an opening or "support" act, as part of a local music stage or, as a "headliner." Grounded in a discussion on the role of live music performances in the development and sustaining of musicians' careers, the analysis presented draws predominantly from semistructured research interviews with promoters of the festivals in question. By examining the motivations behind development and growth of WA's live music festival sector within the study's timeframe, this article offers commentary on what this growth—and the resulting "saturation point" of the market—means for the present-day market, and critically, to the opportunities for local musicians to perform at these events.

Key words: Music festivals; Live music; Local music scenes; Career development

Introduction

Recent debates in Australia's music media have questioned the viability of the nation's contemporary live music festival sector. As a result of a string of festival cancellations, concerns have been raised about the structure of these types of events, the high costs associated with their staging, and on the

overall sustainability of the market (Baroni, 2015; Johnston, 2013; Lewis, 2013; Northover, 2015; Purtill, 2015). Changes to the ways in which music is paid for and consumed, coupled with music festivals being viewed as a highly lucrative way through which to stage a large-scale, diversified live music event, have led to an influx of new festivals over the past decade or so. A diverse range of large-scale

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and multifaceted music festivals now occur within the global contemporary music market, encompassing a wide range of genres such as: blues, dance, hip-hop and rap, jazz, metal, pop, and rock (to name but a few). Due to this influx, the sector is now considered to have reached its “saturation point” whereby it is overcrowded with events competing for a share of both performers and audiences. This competition has led to an increase in artists’ performance fees and the scope of offerings at festivals, which has ultimately resulted in an increase in ticket prices for the consumer. In turn, numerous longstanding events have gone on hiatus or ceased altogether. One market in which this shift has been acutely felt is that which supports contemporary music performance in Western Australia (WA). In this market, music festivals play a heightened role due to the geographical isolation of its capital city Perth, and therefore there has been a significant increase in festival activity within the state.

This article examines the impact of an increase in the number of festivals being staged on the viability and sustainability of a select number of festivals that took place in WA between 1999 and 2009. This was period in which there was a particularly strong increase in the number of contemporary music festivals being staged, as well as a period in which there was a heightened interest in the music being created and performed by local musicians, many of whom have performed at the festivals discussed here. The analysis presented draws from Ph.D.-level research conducted into the city’s local indie pop/rock music industry. This overarching project focused on a combination of career, business, and sector development between 1998 and 2009—so a year prior to the analysis here—with a particular focus on activity pertaining to the genre of indie pop/rock music. Semistructured research interviews were undertaken with a combination

of musicians and industry members who worked within and from Perth, or who providing external support to activity occurring within this local scene. All musicians had found success or recognition beyond Perth with their music, and industry workers held a diverse range of roles in fields such as: artist management, record label management, music journalism, music venue booking, and festival programming. Within this cohort, those working in the live sector—particularly in relation to large-scale live music performance and festivals—were especially prominent. As a result, shifts within the live music sector were a strong focus of the research, with the growth in festival activity emerging as a critical factor to the development of this local industry in relation to a range of business, career, and sector facets.

This article draws specifically from interviews undertaken with four ($n = 4$) music festival promoters and bookers, as identified in Table 1.

The festivals staged by these interviewees and of the focus of discussion here facilitated audiences’ engagement with a diverse selection of musical acts—broadly within the scope of the indie pop/rock genre—while also providing a platform for Perth musicians to engage with these large audiences. Perth musicians have been included in these events in one of three ways: as an opening or “support” act, as part of a “local music stage,” or in the case of the more established acts, as a “headliner.” As a result, these events contribute strongly to local music culture, particularly in relation to the ways in which musicians can navigate and move within different live music contexts, and in being able to engage with audiences they would not otherwise. The festivals included here range from those which are exclusive to WA, to those which have operated as part of a national touring franchise or east coast partnered event.

Table 1
Music Festival Interviewee Cohort

Interviewee No./Name	Company	Festival(s)
1. David Chitty	Sunset Events	Southbound; St Jerome’s Laneway; West Coast Blues n Roots
2. Jeff Halley	Monster Management	Rollercoaster
3. Ken Knight	Altered State	Big Day Out
4. Paul Sloan	Supersonic Events	Blackjack; Rock-It; Wave Rock Weekender

Music festivals provide a range of benefits to both the music industry and music audiences. They can take on a range of formats, engage with a broad range of genres, and engage with a wide cross section of the community. This diversity is evident in the cohort of promoters here, all of whom engage with a wide range of music activities beyond festivals, including: live music touring of local, national, and international artists, and artist management. Literature examining the structure, functioning, and role of music festivals within and beyond the music industry is similarly wide reaching. These include: perceptions surrounding the ways in which festivals can be staged and managed (Getz, 2008; Oakes & Warnby, 2011; Paleo & Wijnberg, 2006; Pegg & Patterson, 2010), motivations for, and attendance of, audiences (Gelder & Robinson, 2009; Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2004; Tyrrell & Ismail, 2005), the role of branding and sponsorship at such events (Cummings, 2008; Leenders, 2010; Luonila, 2016; Rowley & Williams, 2008), and festivals as a driver for tourism (Gibson & Connell, 2003). Other works, such as Cashman (2013), Cummings (2005), Dowd, Liddle, and Nelson (2004), and Gibson (2007) examined music festivals in more theoretical terms, linking their structure and staging to aspects of place and space, and how these forms of musical engagement can exemplify a music scene. Illustrative of societal concerns about the culture of festival attendance, research has also engaged with ancillary facets of attendance including ways in which to manage and respond to drug use and injury at these types of events (Archer, Beaumont, May, Dargan, & Wood, 2012; Hutton, Savage, Ranse, Finnell, & Kub, 2015; Osler, Shapiro, & Shapiro, 1975).

With music festivals playing a central role in the live music economy, a plethora of nonacademic research has also been undertaken. In relation to that which focuses on the Australian market—the broad site of examination here—most notably, this has included charting attendee demographics and attendance numbers. These range from demographic statistical analysis from Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2009), to annual ticketing surveys undertaken annually by Live Performance Australia. However, one limitation to this data is that it does not adequately capture audience attendance figures. This is particularly the case of the Live Performance Australia reporting—it does not fully engage with

the multitude of ticketing options utilized by festivals and therefore does not adequately represent the nuances of the sector. Considering the breadth of this established literature, this article examines, in a place-specific context, the motivators for a specific subset of growth in WA's contemporary music festival sector, the implications this has on the viability of the events in question, and the local sector as a whole. The discussion presented here is contextualized within the role of live music in musicians' careers and how festivals can provide a vital platform through which to stage large-scale and diverse live music performance.

Following an overview of the structure and functioning of Perth's local indie pop/rock music scene and a deeper discussion of the methods and approach used in the project from which this article draws, a discussion is then presented examining the role of live music in musicians' careers and music festivals as a format through which to stage live performance. The article then shifts to exploring the motivations for establishing and bringing festivals to the state, as well as the opportunities for and attitudes toward providing Perth musicians with an opportunity to perform at these events. Finally, the article concludes with a discussion regarding the saturation point of the sector and comments upon how this impact local musicians in relation to being able to continue connecting with festival audiences and in being able to continue building their careers, as a result of these connections.

Perth Contemporary Music Scene and Case Study Overview

Located toward the south west coast of Australia, Perth's closest neighboring capital city, Adelaide in South Australia, is more than 2,000 km away (Brabazon, 2005). Perth is both geographically isolated from the rest of the country and within its own state, due to a populous concentrated on the metropolitan area, which results in a sparsely populated regional center. Reflecting its isolation, its local music industry is highly concentrated on a relatively small number of key industry players and a relatively small number of sites for music production and performance. This high concentration has cultivated a strong, supportive network among musicians, in which considerable focus is placed

on learning from one another about how to develop and sustain careers within and from this local market, while also supporting one another in attempts to connect with new audiences, particularly beyond the state (Ballico, 2015). Being able to perform, particularly in live music venues and at specific festivals, was especially valued by the musicians and supported by the industry workers who facilitate such opportunities. Perth's music industry still has strong links with the national music industry based in the eastern states cities of Sydney (New South Wales) and Melbourne (Victoria). These connections are facilitated by larger record companies, national music media outlets, and larger national live music touring and festival circuits being based in these cities.

The theme of geographical isolation and the ways in which it permeates local music activity—from a creative and business perspective—greatly informed the project from which this article draws. This isolation was also implicated in the unexpected nature of the interest in Perth music during the study's timeframe of 1998–2009. This study comprised semistructured interviews with 48 participants. Of these, 25 were musicians and 23 were key music industry members. Presented as a case study (Yin, 2003), the overarching methodology was that of narrative reality, which is loosely defined as the art of storytelling (Gubrium & Holstein, 2008). Interviews were conducted over a 2-year period (2010–2012), with many being undertaken in face-to-face settings. A small number were conducted by phone or e-mail, with most lasting on average 45 min and some taking as long as 2 hr. All face-to-face and phone interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Thematic analysis was then conducted to draw out key themes from the data as they related to the structure and functioning of the local music sector and the lived experiences of the interviewees. Taking such an approach to data collection and analysis resulted in strong focus being placed on the personal perspectives of the interviewees. These perspectives similarly shape the discussion presented here in relation to the activities of the four live music festival promoters interviewed and the eight festivals they staged at one time or another between 1999 and 2009, a period in which there was particularly strong growth in the state's festival sector. These

experiences and perspectives illuminate the role of live music in musicians' careers and provide some insight into why music festivals have grown to become a highly valued way through which to engage live music activity.

All interviewees were identified in the research, including in attributed quotations. As a result, it limited the focus of discussion in the interviews and associated analysis due to the sensitive nature of sharing personal experiences and perspectives. Of note to the discussion presented here is that lack of specifics surrounding the economics of the sector. Anecdotal data were gathered in relation to when interviewees began drawing a wage from their work, and the costs associated with undertaking particular music activities; however, this did not generate specific dollar for dollar figures. For those working in the festival circuit, questions relating to how they established their businesses and specific festivals led to discussions pertaining to the broad economics of working in the festival sector. Significantly, these discussions did not enter into the specifics of the cost and profit margins of the events, and as a result, this information is largely excluded in the discussion presented here.

The Role of Live Music in Musicians' Careers and the Music Festivals as a Form of Music Consumption

Live music performances are widely accepted as playing a crucial role in the development of musicians' careers. Performing live facilitates relationships between musicians and audiences and between musicians and music industry members. Performances also provide artists with a crucial income stream and aid in the creative development of music and the development of performance skills (Ballico, 2009; Johnson & Homan, 2003). As Johnson and Homan (2003) argued, the live music circuit is:

Regarded as an "incubator" for artists seeking international success. . . . Musicians, managers, and, recording companies share the belief in the value of the . . . live circuit in preparing artists for regional/ global success.

Furthermore, as Triple J music director Richard Kingsmill explains, live performances are "a testing

of the band by the audience and the audience by the band" (Wide Open Road, 2008). Australia's live music industry comprises metropolitan and regional networks of venues. These venues play host to local, national, and international artists of varying success and recognition. Performances take place in a variety of spaces ranging from pubs and clubs to theaters and outdoor venues. This touring circuit is compliment by, and functions in conjunction with, the live music festival industry.

Stand-alone concerts will generally feature one "headline" act and up to two supporting performers. These events take place over a few short hours while in comparison music festivals are larger in size, scale, and duration. Music festivals take place over 1 to several days, and are programmed with a plethora of musicians of varying genres. Both stand-alone concerts and festivals can take place in front of a several hundred people up to 30,000+. Explaining the role of festivals in the live music industry, Shuker (2005) stated:

Music festivals, as a form of extended concert, reinforce popular music personae, creating icons and myths in the process. . . . At the same time as it forms a temporary community, joined in celebration and homage to the performers/the genre, the festival audience is being created as a commodity. If it attracts the projected audience, the festival is a major commercial enterprise, with on-site sales of food and souvenirs. (p. 106)

The contemporary, mainstream music festival industry in Australia has undergone tremendous growth and transformation over the last two decades. Once consisting of one major festival—the Big Day Out, which started as a Sydney-only event in 1992 and grew into a national touring operation in 1993—the festival circuit now comprises of a myriad of state-based and national touring events. These events are held throughout the year, with most activity taking place between the months of September through May.

This increase in festival activity has occurred at the same time record sales have declined. Arguably, the biggest economic contribution made by the music industry in Australia comes from the live performance sector. For example, in 2008 performances of contemporary music injected \$405.8 million into Australia's economy (Live Performance Australia

[LPA], 2010). More broadly, the revenue from the global sale of recordings has declined 54.8% in the 5 years to 2009 to US\$17 billion. However, the value of the broader music industry has increased 23% over the same period to US\$160 billion (Ballico, 2013; International Federation of the Phonographic Industry [IFPI], 2006). These changes in revenue streams for music represented a shift in the way in which music is paid for and consumed. Such global changes have flow-on effects for Australia's national music industry as well as those that exist locally, such as in WA.

Motivations for Establishing Music Festivals in WA and Including Local Acts on Line Ups

In 1999, at the beginning of the period discussed here, Perth's festival circuit was in its infancy. Over the next decade, and keeping in line with the growth of the national festival industry, WA started staging more local legs of eastern states events, while continuing to develop its own state-based festivals. Table 2 illustrates the growth of live music festivals discussed here, between the years 1999 and 2009.

As Table 2 illustrates, there was particular growth of activity from 2005 onwards. This growth has been attributed to two factors, according to the interviewees. First, the change to the way in which music is paid for and consumed and second, through the recognition of the music festival format as being a lucrative way in which live music can be staged and marketed to audiences. In WA, festivals are particularly lucrative as it has, on occasion, been the only way for it to be financially viable to have high profile international acts perform in the state. However, importantly, this research has found that the motivators for establishing particular festivals has extended beyond profit maximization to encompass factors such as community engagement and place activation. To this end, these nonfinancial motivators have a significant impact on the location of particular events, the scope of what they offer audiences, and the role local musicians play in their staging.

For example, Southbound is held in Busselton, 220 km south of Perth because, as promoter David Chitty explains:

Table 2
Music Festival Activity Between 1998–2009

Year	Festival 1	Festival 2	Festival 3	Festival 4	Festival 5	Festival 6	Festival 7	Festival 8
1999	Big Day Out	Rock-It						
2000	Big Day Out	Rock-It						
2001	Big Day Out	Rock-It						
2002	Big Day Out	Rock-It						
2003	Big Day Out	Rock-It						
2004	Big Day Out	Rock-It	West Coast Blues n Roots					
2005	Big Day Out	Rock-It	West Coast Blues n Roots	Southbound	Rollercoaster			
2006	Big Day Out	Rock-It	West Coast Blues n Roots	Southbound	Rollercoaster	Wave Rock Weekender		
2007	Big Day Out		West Coast Blues n Roots	Southbound	Rollercoaster	Wave Rock Weekender	Blackjack	
2008	Big Day Out		West Coast Blues n Roots	Southbound	Rollercoaster	Wave Rock Weekender		
2009	Big Day Out	Rock-It	West Coast Blues n Roots	Southbound		Wave Rock Weekender		St Jerome's Laneway

I always enjoyed going down to . . . the region [and] loved down south, and over the years—post high school—I just noticed that there's just a mass exit from Perth for the youth to go to that region around the Christmas New Year period. . . . There's never really been anything that's captured and reflected that youth culture on holidays near the beach. And we thought if we did Southbound it would give, the youth a music focal point at that time of the year. (n1)

Similarly, Sloan's Wave Rock Weekender is held in Hyden, 330 km south east of Perth due to a desire to:

Address the breakdown in community and the sort of commercialisation of music, to put something that's much more real together and boutique. . . . I mean it's meaningful and it's very personal to me, that event, because it's sort of more of an expression of how important I think music is in getting people together. (n4)

The perspectives of Chitty and Sloan illustrate the vital role festivals can play in the cultural economy of places, and the ways in which place activation can occur by way of live music activity (cf. Cashman, 2013; Cummings, 2005; Dowd et al., 2004; Gibson, 2007; Gibson & Connell, 2003). Arguably the role of place in the staging of festivals is at the center of the decision-making process due

to the temporary nature of the events. For example, live music activity that takes place in venues such as pubs and nightclubs is temporal in nature due to the constant state of flux in which that sector operates (cf. Ballico, 2016); however, there is still a high degree of fixed infrastructure in place that supports the staging of the events—such as a stage area and other amenities such as bar and toilet facilities. Generally speaking for festivals, this infrastructure is put in place anew each and every time an event is staged.

Place and space motivators have been strong for all promoters. At more of a base level, festivals have become recognized to provide an ease of access when engaging with particularly high caliber artists and facilitating large audience numbers. This was a critical driver in the increase in the number events being staged between 1999 and 2009. Further, it has also been a key factor in these Perth-based promoters partnering with their east coast counterparts engaging with national festival tours. For example, as Chitty, who has partnered with the promoters of the east coast-based Falls Festival and Sunset Sounds explains, “it wouldn't have been [easy] had we tried to bring in acts on our own” (n1). Similarly, as Sloan says, although the live music market in WA has grown to become viable for international touring artists and music festivals, engagement with eastern states activity is

required for this to work as “making [musicians] come to WA’s not difficult, making them come here exclusively is almost impossible” (n4).

In some cases, these WA festivals have not included the full line up on offer to audiences in other cities. This is due to the associated higher financial expenditure required to bring events to the west. For example, as the promoter of the Big Day Out, Ken Knight explains, “it costs you more money to bring the Big Day Out to Perth than it does to go Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne [and] Adelaide [combined]” (n3). Knight says that due to the larger cost associated with bringing the festival to Perth, there was always a reduction in the scale of staging. The costs associated with staging the event in the west, coupled with a change ownership of the overarching company that staged the national event, would see this event cease in 2012. This is discussed in greater detail later in this article in relation to the saturation point of the sector.

Although the festivals discussed here have facilitated strong engagement with national and international artists, it is notable the amount of support provided for local Perth musicians to perform at these events. Doing so can provide a new level of performance experience for them, and facilitate a connections with audiences they would perhaps not get to perform to. Significantly, it is widely viewed in the local sector that the staging of these events takes audiences away from smaller-scale local live music performance. As such, the support for local musicians is critical to reducing some of this negative impact. The motivations for including local musicians include wanting to give them “leg up” in their careers and by exposing them to audiences

larger than they would have most likely performed to in the past. As Table 3 illustrates, these festivals included here program local artists in varying ways, reflecting their scope and size.

Local music inclusion is significant at these events. This is due to the recognition that local musicians are worthy of performing at such events, and that many need to be supported in their attempts to connect with large audiences. Decisions to program specific acts are based on a combination of their level of recognition in the state, and how well they would “fit” into the broader line up. For example, as Sloan explains:

When they’ve worked hard and they’re starting to get some traction, I tend to try to then help build bridges between them and interstate and international bands and build their profile through the events because I think they’ve earned it and I think the timing’s right. (n4)

As Knight explains, the Big Day Out had a dedicated local music stage; however, some may be programmed in another slot on another genre-specific stage due to being more high profile or suiting other audiences better:

Basically, it comes down to, first of all whether we think you deserve a slot . . . we’ll look at the styles of music [by the Perth artists] and the styles of music on each stage before we make [a decision] . . . a lot of it comes down to warrant and a lot of it also comes down to style. . . . We try and never have a band play twice unless they’ve actually progressed in that year past just playing a local stage. . . . In general, it gets down to that and then it gets down to sort of like style of music and you know, what they’ve done. (n3)

Table 3
Perth Artists’ Involvement With Music Festivals

Festival	Local Music Programing
Big Day Out	Local music stage/local support acts/local headline acts
Blackjack	Local support acts
Rock-It	Local support acts
Rollercoaster	Local support acts/local headline acts
St Jerome’s Laneway Festival	Local support acts/local headline acts
Southbound	Local support acts/local headline acts
Wave Rock Weekender	Local support acts
West Coast Blues n Roots	Local support acts/local headline acts

In comparison, Chitty has varying degrees of input into which local artists will be performing at his various festivals, explaining:

It's hard to put local acts on Southbound and West Coast cause there's so many international and national acts coming, it doesn't really leave many spots for locals. But, we always reserve local spots and we just generally choose acts that we think are right to be on that year—that are ready and gaining some profile or you know, their song's on the radio at the time. . . . With [St Jerome's] Laneway—as far as the local acts go—we suggest local acts to the national programmer of that event and work with them on what local acts we offer in WA. (n1)

Programming local musicians at the franchise and partner events can facilitate connections with the national and international live music touring industries. As Chitty says:

They get to meet a lot of international and national musicians and, what we find out of that, is quite a lot of them end up with tours. . . . If a national or international act likes a local band they'll generally offer them to support them on tour and it [also] exposes the local act to a lot more people than they normally would [be]. (n1)

The recognition of festivals as a viable live music performance model resulted in a significant increase in festival activity between the years 1999–2009. The live music festival industry is now struggling to cope as a result of the influx of new events with significant competition between events for performers and audience share.

The Saturation Point of the Live Music Festival Sector and Implications for the Sector

Referring back to Table 2, between the years 1999 and 2009, the festival circuit examined in this research grew from having two events staged to having six events held in any given year. Importantly, this is but a sliver of the festival activity that occurred in the state. The Big Day Out came back following a hiatus in 1998 and other events such as St Jerome's Laneway Festival, Southbound, Wave Rock Weekender, and West Coast Blues n Roots entered the market and remain to this day. In addition to these, other festivals took place, such as

Blackjack, Rock-It, and Rollercoaster Festival on a one-off, or short-term, basis. Significantly, of these latter three events, Blackjack was staged as a one-off festival in order to facilitate US band the Pixies performing in the state, with Rock-It coming back from a hiatus due to its ability to similarly facilitate the band Kings of Leon performing in the West (n4). Rollercoaster was only staged for 4 years due to the increase in festival activity making the event unviable (n2).

Although there was a fluctuation over the years, the sector ultimately grew to have six events held annually by the end of the study's timeframe. In reflecting on this growth and how it impacts the market, Sloan explains:

Everybody wants a festival 'cause they think it's some easy way to make money. Basic analysis of that means [a] completely unsustainable model in Australia . . . 600 new bands a year coming through and headlining and playing stages at a festival in Australia is completely unsustainable. So, what's happening, you're seeing at the moment, is fatigue from that. So three years of that in a row, people are now just saying "I've seen that band five times, its 140 bucks." . . . And they're also saying "I've been to 20 festivals." . . . The opportunity's almost every weekend in summer . . . and all the bands were on each other's events the year before. (n4)

This growth in festival activity resulted in some long-standing events, such as the Big Day Out expanding what they offered audiences and artists alike in order to remain competitive. This was both a positive and negative for the event. As Knight explained:

There's less acts to actually go around and, there's more people vying for the acts. So, it's put the money up and predominantly, the Big Day Out you know, has always been as cheap as you can possibly get. . . . [It] gets really hard under the constraints of the more festivals that come along. Being the only festival that was around gave you more flexibility to keep your ticket prices and stuff lower . . . I think that's also why a lot of times they've broken out into two Big Day Outs in Sydney and stuff like that to try to actually then get another show out [of it] to actually pay a band more money to actually get yourself a headliner. . . . It's also allowed us from another point of view to actually have better production and stuff

over here, better staging and stuff. . . . So, from that point of view, having some other [festivals come to town] production wise, it's actually been good to have more things come along. (n3)

The highly competitive nature of the festival market has resulted in significant shifts in the events on offer. Examining this in a present-day context, the number of events has continued to fluctuate, with numerous events—including beyond the scope of those discussed here—ceasing. Of the events discussed here, only Southbound, St Jerome's Laneway Festival, West Coast Blues n Roots, and Wave Rock Weekender continue to be staged. Southbound is presently on hiatus (however, is expected to return in the coming years), and significantly, the Big Day Out is no longer held. The Big Day Out was one of the most significant festivals within the Australian music market during the 1990s, as its growth went hand in hand with both the nationalization of government funded, youth radio broadcaster Triple J, and the growth in popularity of Australian alternative rock music. As a result, it played a noteworthy role in exposing musicians included in this research to music and performers they would not have otherwise had a chance to engage with, while also providing them with an opportunity to connect with new audiences.

In 2014 a decision was made to no longer bring the event to WA or neighboring South Australia; however, later that year the event was cancelled at a national level. Speaking at the WA Music Conference in 2015, Rosco Stewart who worked on the Perth event, explained factors contributing to the demise of the event in WA ranged from high site fees (of around \$1 million) to the need to subsidize public transport costs (at a cost of around \$60,000) and the need to develop traffic management plans so as to facilitate site access. These additional financial and planning pressures were further compounded by increasing artist costs and long-standing difficulties in obtaining approval from the local council that oversees the day-to-day management of the site. Although this festival is the most prominent and longstanding of those discussed here, the cancellation of this and other festivals is illustrative of how competitive the market has become. For example, increases in festival activity lead to Sloan deciding to now only stage Rock-It sporadically when it will

facilitate the ability for highly popular international artist to perform in the West (n4). In comparison, Rollercoaster Festival was a relatively short-lived festival. As Halley explains, after its third year:

The big franchise festivals had taken over. I mean they've changed the whole landscape . . . once it was just The Big Day Out. . . . But you know, all the other festivals started to come in [and] was just too saturated. (n2)

This increase in festival activity has resulted in an increase in performance opportunities for musicians, as well as an increase in opportunities for audiences to see high-profile international acts. This increase also positively impacts local musicians, with an increase in the opportunities to perform alongside higher profile artists, develop new audiences at home, and develop connections with the national and international live music industries (n1). However, more broadly this competition has seen the landscape of the sector change. Although an initial increase in competition saw festivals expand their offerings to audiences (such as an expansion of event duration, engagement with a range of environment, and art initiatives and the like), it has now reduced offerings into smaller-scale "boutique" events. This downturn in the number of events, and reduction in offerings at the events still being staged, ultimately reduces the opportunities for local musicians to perform at the events and impacts the ways in which they can navigate their live music performance careers.

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