Best Practice Guide for Live Music Venues in South Australia

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MESSAGE FROM MUSIC SA AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

South Australia has a long and rich tradition of live music. From new bands playing at local venues to international acts performing at sold-out concerts, festivals and events, live music makes an important contribution to the economic, social and cultural fabric in a state with life and spirit.

To support the growth of live music in South Australia, the South Australian Government established the Music Industry Council, as well as the Live Music Regulation Roundtable, which brings together music industry representatives and government representatives to discuss and address various issues affecting the live music industry. To this end, the Music Industry Council has developed the following Best Practice Guide for Live Music Venues in South Australia to assist managers of live music venues to run a safe and successful business. Music SA has played a key role in preparing the document and is committed to supporting SA’s live venues through a variety of measures, particularly hotels which host 80% of gigs performed in Adelaide and outer suburbs (Live Music Census May 2015 Music SA).

This guide is supported in more detail by a companion document entitled The Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia. Well worth a read, it provides comprehensive information on items touched on in the Best Practice Guide.

These two documents were produced as a collaborative project between stakeholders in the live music industry and the South Australian Government. In particular, the Music Industry Council, the Music Development Office and the Live Music Office. Music SA would also like to would like to thank the following organisations and individuals for their input: Adelaide City Council, the Australian Hotels Association (SA Branch), the Environmental Protection Authority, the Local Government Association, the Grace Emily Hotel, the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, APRA AMCOS, SAPOL, Consumer and Business Services (Liquor Licensing), Attorney General’s Department, Department of Premier and Cabinet, 5/4 Entertainment, SA Metropolitan Fire Service, Department of State Development, Damian Cunningham, Ryan Winter, Patrick Donovan (Music Victoria), Joe Hay and the staff of Music SA.

I trust that these documents will assist live music venues achieve best practice and ensure that SA has a thriving live music industry for many years to come. And please note, the contents of these documents will be updated as legislation and regulation in South Australia changes. Be sure to have the most recent versions downloaded.

Anne Wiberg
Chair of Music SA (SA Contemporary Music Company Limited)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>Chapter 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;Considerating Live Music? You Should!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Chapter 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;Preparing Your Venue For Live Performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td><strong>Chapter 3</strong>&lt;br&gt;Booking Music For Your Venue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>Chapter 4</strong>&lt;br&gt;Marketing Live Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td><strong>Chapter 5</strong>&lt;br&gt;On The Day: Preparing A Live Music Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td><strong>Chapter 6</strong>&lt;br&gt;Running A Live Music Show &amp; Patron Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td><strong>Chapter 7</strong>&lt;br&gt;Growing Your Business Through Live Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Further Reading and Additional Resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This Best Practice Guide provides a practical how-to breakdown for South Australian business owners who already host, or are planning to host live music.

From preparing your business properly, finding and booking bands, ensuring that events run smoothly and that your practice and procedures adhere to South Australian legislation and regulatory requirements – this is your navigation tool to fully realise the benefits and opportunities that live music can provide.

Included in each chapter is a checklist of minimum requirements, entitled ‘Get The Basics Right’, for hosting live music. It’s important to have these boxes ticked, and we’ve also included a host of resources to make the process as simple as possible. Also in each chapter the ‘Impress With The Best’ recommendations build further, ensuring your business is well on the way to fully realising the benefits of hosting live music. These can include:

- Attracting high-quality performers
- Improving patronage
- Increasing profits
- Enhancing your venue’s reputation in the live music and hospitality industries
- Sharing positive relationships with neighbours, authorities and regulators
- Increasing staff satisfaction and retention
- Reducing the number of complaints about the operation of your business
- Reducing the potential for safety and legal issues
- Creating a work environment free of harassment and discrimination
- Reducing operational costs (security, legal and repairs)
- Building your venue’s profile amongst promoters and audiences.

Working towards ‘best practice’ will also contribute to the continued growth of the live music industry in South Australia. Improving audiences, performance opportunities and our national reputation as a music city adds further value to South Australian business and culture.
According to a recently published report into *The Economic & Cultural Value of Live Music In Australia 2014*¹, in South Australia there were over three and a half million attendances to live music performances that year alone. Economically, the live music scene as a whole contributed $263.7 million to the state’s economy, taking into account associated spending on things such as food and drink, travel and accommodation².

Looking beyond the pure statistics, the report also acknowledged the “significant, and unrecognised contribution that... experiencing live music enriches people’s lives.”³

Live music in South Australia is contributing to a national industry that delivers at least a 3:1 benefit to cost ratio ($3 worth of benefits back to the wider Australian community for every $1 spent on live music). The total contribution of the live music industry in Australia is conservatively valued at a $15.7 billion.⁴

It enables the telling of SA stories through the performance of original material and live music also adds value to the visitor experience and makes a vital contribution to community vibrancy.

If you’re deciding whether or not live music is something you’d like to host as part of your business, or could be the basis of a new business you’d like to start, there are some practical questions that need answering.

Let’s start with the most basic question:

"*what do I need to host live performance?*”

If you said “a musician and their instruments”, you’re correct but you’re also getting a couple of steps ahead of where you need to begin your planning.

This checklist is a practical ‘start to finish’ list of what your business needs to consider before you book a music act and let them do what they do best.

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A CHECKLIST FOR HOSTING LIVE MUSIC FOR NEW & EXISTING BUSINESSES

1. Your Paperwork

- Do you have the suitable Development Approval from your council to host live music?
- If you plan to host music after midnight and sell liquor, have you been granted Entertainment Consent by the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner?

The buck will stop here if things aren’t in order. It’s a good thing that accompanying this Best Practice Guide is a separate booklet covering Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia. It’s best used as a reference should you ever need to arm yourself with extra knowledge. We’ll include which pages of that booklet are relevant to the topics we discuss in this Guide in the Resources header at the end of each chapter.

2. Building Considerations

- Do you have the room to host live music? Is there an area with sufficient space for a musician to perform?
- Is your building prepared to host amplified music? Has it ever been certified by an acoustic professional?
- Do you need to get approval from your local council to host music?
- Have you read the EPA Guideline for music noise from indoor venues?  
- Will the capacity of your building and your facilities practically accommodate a live music audience? For example, do you have enough toilets?

You can check these out mostly by looking around and really thinking about it. Do you have enough toilets? Is that corner really big enough to have a stage in it, and how many people could fit on it? Many of these matters are considered as part of the Council Development Approval process. Refer to the Development Approval on your building for the rest of your answers.

3. Patron Considerations

- Are your customers interested in live music? Which genres and what times would suit them?
- Will live music add to the atmosphere of your trading, or could it detract?
- How could hosting live music affect your customer experience?

It never hurts to ask around to find out if there’s a natural interest in live music amongst existing customers. If you’re a new business, then perhaps you could ask around the community you’re moving into what they think. Get a customer’s perspective on things to determine whether they will enjoy the addition of music, or if it could in fact detract from the reason they frequent your business in the first place.

Hosting Considerations

- Do you have the equipment to host live music? Or should you purchase or hire it?
- Does your venue have a suitable place for artists to park, to load in their instruments, get ready to perform and store their additional equipment while they’re on stage?
- Do you have contacts to help book bands? Or do you have the time to seek them out?
- Do you know how to attract people to see live music?
- Are you familiar with working alongside bands to promote shows and do you know what to expect of them?
- Will you need to sell tickets? Are you familiar with ticketing systems?

Trading & Local Community Considerations

- How often, and at what times of the day could you host live music? Could hosting live music disturb any neighbours?
- Have you notified neighbours of your intention to host live music?
- Have you provided contact details to neighbours where they can raise any concerns or provide you with feedback?
- Have you offered to host neighbourhood and community based events to get people involved in your venue?
- If your neighbours are concerned by noise levels, have you considered how you could reduce the impact of the live music performances you host?
- Have you considered how you will provide on-going communication with your neighbours and local community? Would a regular email or mailed newsletter be suitable?
- Have you done a budget to project how live music could impact your costs and income?

If you couldn’t answer some of these questions, then it’s a good thing you’ve got this Best Practice Guide – we can answer them for you! It’s good to know where some potential gaps may be when you’re starting, or even things that you can improve upon if you’re already hosting live shows.

**IMPRESS WITH THE BEST – CHAPTER 1 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Complete the checklist above. Simple.

**RESOURCES**

Check the following sections of the *Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia* booklet for topics covered:

- On Establishing A New Live Venue – Page 2
- The Development Approval Process – Page 2
- Applying For A Liquor License – Page 5
Building from Chapter 1, we really nut out how best to prepare your venue to host live performances. And there’s only one starting point for that – get to know your space.

No room is exactly the same and to get the best out of your venue you’ll need to tailor solutions that will suit the spaces you’re working within, with additional considerations to the style of musical acts you’ll be looking to host.

Just a note, double-check with your insurance provider that hosting entertainment will be covered by your policy before you begin booking live acts.

Referring back to that basic question, “what do I need to host a live performance?”, the most basic set up you’ll require is as follows:

**Simple Stage Set Up**

1. A suitable set of PA speakers to amplify the music coming from the stage. A basic set up includes two speakers facing the audience and one additional speaker on stage as a ‘fold back’ facing the musician, so they can hear their performance clearly.
2. A basic mixing unit with at least 4 input channels, which will help make managing your sound easier. Performers need to be able to separate the volume levels of (for example) their instruments from their vocals, to make sure that each aspect of their performance is being amplified in an appropriate and balanced way.
3. A couple of microphones, a set of microphone stands, the appropriate leads and multiple power adapters.
4. A basic lighting set up to illuminate the performance space

With this set up, you should be able to comfortably host live music for any acoustic act and basic band set up. If you’re looking to host a more serious show, here’s what else you’ll need to consider.

**HOSTING BANDS**

If your desire is to host bands regularly, then you’ll need to up the ante on your set up. Firstly, consider whether your stage is big enough to have three to four people plus all their instruments and amplifiers on stage at once? Every band has a different set up, so the more space you have the more flexible and accommodating you can be.
The following stage plot is an example of a typical stage set up:

One key thing to think about is whether it’s really appropriate for you to have a drum kit set up in the space. Generally speaking, drums create both the loudest noise and the most enduring issues from sound bouncing off surfaces, being too loud in an enclosed space for customers and also being heard outside of the venue and disturbing the neighbours. Be sure to read the Noise Management section in the Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia booklet for specifics on how to best attenuate your building.

You’ll also need to ensure there are suitable parking options, or temporary options for the band to load in their equipment to your venue. Suitable storage space for storing cases and additional equipment is also a practical necessity. It goes without saying that a more sophisticated speaker system and a more complex mixing set up will also be necessary, and you should strongly consider employing a professional sound engineer to make sure any band coming to perform at your venue can perform with the best sound possible. Audiences and musicians are savvy when it comes to knowing which venues provide the best sound.

**FINDING HELP**

If you’re truly lost on the technical side of things, speak with professionals that know how to set up a venue. Technicians from a production and audio supply, or staging company for example, will be able to recommend the appropriate equipment for your venue. Additionally, consider employing a sound engineer specifically to operate and maintain your equipment and ensure all performances at the venue sound the best they can. See the Resources at the end of this chapter for contact details of experienced technicians.
GET THE BASICS RIGHT – PREPARING YOUR VENUE FOR LIVE PERFORMANCE

- Have a suitable PA, mixing desk and lighting.
- Get a feel for a level of sound that is comfortable for patrons.
- Know when you can and cannot have live music as per the council or your licence.
- Speak to your insurance company about your set up
- Know your license capacity and don’t go over it.
- Know whether or not the sound from bands will disturb any neighbours.
- Ensure that your stage set up works within any regulations set by Council.
- Ensure you engage with APRA / AMCOS and the PPCA to find the right license for your business.

IMPRESS WITH THE BEST – CHAPTER 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Have a convenient place for bands to park, load in their equipment and store what they’re not using.
- Invest in the right speakers and mixing equipment, and employ a sound engineer to help bands get the best out of it.
- Invest in sound proofing and treating the venue correctly to avoid sound issues for the crowd. See the chapter Resources for more details.
- Invest in suitable stage lighting to add to a band’s performance.
- Keep your electronics regularly tested and tagged to ensure that everything will work smoothly for the performance.
- If you will be programming a lot of shows, we’d recommend purchasing ‘backline’ i.e. a standard drum kit, bass speaker and amplifier, guitar amp, keyboard stands, microphone stands, leads and microphones. This will make your venue an attractive option for artists.
- Venues can also provide ‘in-house production’ i.e. someone that runs the technical side of the show for the venue. Usually the in-house operator mixes sound and lighting for artists for a small fee. Larger acts often bring their own operator. It’s good to have a list of local operators and live sound engineers that are available to bands to use as required. This information can also be listed on your website and in your venue’s worksheets.
A MUST HAVE:

APRA/AMCOS Licensing & The PPCA

There are at least two copyrights in most recordings and music videos:

1. the copyright in the song (lyrics, composition etc.) – licences available from APRA AMCOS;
2. the copyright in the recording and/or music video of the song (a particular recorded performance) – 'blanket' licences are available from the PPCA, or individual licences available from the copyright holders - licences available from PPCA.

No matter what sort of live performance you’re hosting, speak with APRA AMCOS about obtaining a license for your business. APRA AMCOS are responsible for paying royalties to songwriters so musicians will love you for being registered so they can claim upon their performance. See the chapter Resources for a guide.

RESOURCES

Check the following sections of the Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia booklet for topics covered:

On Establishing A New Live Venue – Page 1
Liquor Licensing – Adelaide City Council Liquor License Policy – Page 9
(Direct download - http://bit.ly/1MgLjy)
Noise Management – Page 14
APRA AMCOS Licensing – Page 51

See Music SA’s Business Directory for examples of businesses that may be able to assist with establishing a stage set up, visit: http://bit.ly/MusicSABiz
Before you race off to your social media to reach out for bands to come and play at your venue, think a bit about your market. What sort of band will work best for your customers and the space you’ve got?

There are a number of ways to find artists who will suit your venue. As a starting point, get the word out to the music community through organisations like Music SA. Go to shows at other venues and talk to artists that perform in your area. Organise meetings with booking agents, managers and companies that hire out production and backline. Show them around the venue, explain your plan and discuss how you can work together.

Think about how you want to operate as a venue. Do you want to specialise in a particular genre or host genre-based nights? Do you want to book the music yourself or contract someone else to do it? Do you want to host local and/or touring acts? Would you prefer original music or cover bands?

ARE YOU A VENUE-FOR-HIRE OR A VENUE WHO CURATES?

There are three main ways to think about booking music. You could promote your venue as a venue-for-hire and encourage acts to approach you to perform. In this instance, your venue is effectively hired for events and your business is not responsible for booking the artist, managing the show or paying the bands. That responsibility will fall to a promoter, or the act that books your venue.

One alternative is that you could curate your musical acts. Whether that’s one artist to perform a whole event or as many artists as you can practically accommodate, it’s up to you. Otherwise you could employ or engage someone to do this curation work for you. There’s a bit more involved than just agreeing on a date, time and performance fee though, which we’ll go into further during this chapter.

You may also consider hiring a venue booker to source and curate the music for you. A good booking agent will have a long list of contacts in the local scene and know which acts can work best for your venue. They manage all the business aspects of live music and liaise directly with artists, managers and other agents on your behalf.
GET THE BASICS RIGHT – BOOKING MUSIC FOR YOUR VENUE

BREAKDOWN

**Booking Yourself**

**Pros:** direct communication with artists, can grow your network and relationships, can negotiate performance terms directly.

**Cons:** Additional administration and time spent coordinating shows, and you’ll need to grow your network yourself. It’s up to you to make sure all bases are covered.

**Booking Through Agents**

**Pros:** access to a broad range of acts and industry knowledge, less administration, generally more professional and easier to talk business with than directly speaking with artists.

**Cons:** Will cost a regular fee. Can be negotiated as part of a payment, or they may request a retainer. Less direct contact with artists and no development of personal networks.

**Booking As A Venue For Hire (Working With Promoters)**

**Pros:** Promotion of shows and administration is not your direct responsibility.

**Cons:** You’re open to take on a lot more risks. While the promoter will take care of marketing and logistics, some acts they choose to book may not attract an audience to your venue. You’ll need to ride out the highs and lows with them and you’re giving a lot more trust over to another business. The goal is mutual gain, but there are always fluctuations in consistency.

Once you’ve decided how to operate, make it public. Update your website or social media with details of how you book artists that perform at your venue. Outline the process of how artists can get a gig. Whether it’s sending in demos, links to music online or a phone call, it’s much easier for the artists if they know how you like to work in advance.

**SO, WHAT’S YOUR SOUND SYSTEM LIKE?**

This is talked more about in Chapter 5. It is a key step that, if done, can save you a lot of potential headaches. It’s best practice to always effectively communicate what your sound system and mixing desk equipment is to an act before a booking is confirmed. They will need to determine whether or not your system can accommodate their requirements. If it does not, then the act may not be the right one for your venue, or additional equipment to accommodate their needs may be hired.
PERFORMANCE AGREEMENTS

A performance agreement is a basic contract for service outlining when and under what conditions the artist will perform at your venue, including what the band will provide and what the venue will provide for the performance. A basic template, as well as a more complex template is available in the Resources at the end of this chapter. An agreement can be as detailed or simple as you require; the important thing is that everyone is on the same page prior to the show. And of course if a disagreement does occur, you’ve got the document to refer back to.

TICKETING

As a venue you will need to consider whether to charge for your shows or make them free entry. Here’s some information for you to consider both options:

FREE SHOWS

Many venues will program live music as ancillary entertainment to their core business, thus giving more benefit to their patrons. It’s a good strategy to monitor attendance relating to free shows. This can include:

- Monitor sales for food and bar takings
- Venue staff to report patron feedback
- Check Facebook engagement relating to shows
- Create a venue hashtag for social media platforms and monitor online traffic
- Take a regular head count of patrons during the show

Even if the show is free entry consider the option of issuing e-tickets, that way you collect the data on attendance. This data can be useful and used in your marketing plan and for promoting upcoming shows, building a solid live music community around your venue.

PAID TICKETS

There are three main approaches to consider if you are selling tickets:

1. physical sales direct from the venue or box-office
2. online digital ticket sales
3. door sales at the show

Most venues will use a combination of these types of tickets depending on the type of show and event.
Physical Tickets

Physical tickets bought either at a point of sale or venue box office. You will receive a hard copy ticket for the show highlighting the show information location fees and conditions of entry. These are most common for theatre shows, but some venues do rely on these tickets especially if it is a large venue.

Electronic Tickets

More commonly known as e-tickets, these are purchased online and emailed out to the customer. They are a smart and efficient way of handling both ticket sales and entry to the venue at the show.

In today’s digital and online world, it’s no surprise that close to 80% of tickets for live music shows are bought online. An additional benefit of e-ticket systems allows you to collect data or information on who is attending shows the name, contact details, email address etc. This data is very useful and can be used in your marketing and promotion plan for upcoming shows.

Most e-tickets will contain a barcode or QR code allowing quick entry when scanned on arrival giving accurate information on numbers of patrons in the venue along with attendance trends.

INFORMATION

There are many companies that offer e-ticketing solutions to venues which can give you the ability to sell and manage your own ticketing. It’s important to do some research on which will suit your venue the best. Links to some examples are below:

- Ticketmaster: bit.ly/1m1AHst
- Ticketek: bit.ly/1yA48XG
- Moshtix: bit.ly/1ckw5k
- Eventbrite: bit.ly/1OHjYK6
- Event Espresso: bit.ly/1ZdoNfC
- Sticky Tickets: bit.ly/1UFVf9j
- Ticket Booth: bit.ly/1aX43XT
- Music Glue: bit.ly/1OHk1FR
- Muzeek: bit.ly/1ObzDji

Door Sales

Venues normally place a cut off time for ticket sales from physical and digital sellers, usually three or four hours before the show starts. Unless the show is sold out then there will still be people that want to attend and this is managed by selling tickets on the door.

Door sales can be a valuable source of additional income. It is usual to charge a higher price for door sale tickets as there is no booking fee incurred on these sales.

Keep in mind that if you are selling tickets to a show, you will need to determine with the artists performing how the revenue from tickets will be split. It is unprofessional to book an act that draws a large crowd and not provide them with a reasonable share (80/20 in favour of the artist is standard) of sales income.
PAYING AN ACT

This should be detailed as part of your performance agreement when booking the show. The three most common forms of payment are:

1. **A guarantee**: the venue agrees to pay an agreed fee for the show in advance. This is the most common type of payment deal in live music.
2. **A door deal**: the venue pays the artist a percentage of ticket sales for the show.
3. **A versus deal**: the venue pays a guaranteed fee to the artist plus a percentage of the door takings once a certain amount has been reached.

Regardless of the deal, it's important to understand that artists are not employees of a venue. Working artists should always have their own ABN, and often will invoice you once they have performed. They are contracted to provide a service, which is different than being under a contract-of-service. For clarification, see the chapter Resources.

Rates of pay for musicians are best guided by the Musicians Union of Australia’s rates of pay. For a rundown of the rates, see the chapter Resources.

RESIDENT BANDS

If you like the sound of an act, or your customers really respond, then you might consider bringing them back on a more regular basis. Locking in an act that has a growing reputation can provide a strong mutual benefit to each business. Residency agreements may be different to one-off performance agreements, depending upon the terms you offer to the band.

WORKSHEETS

A worksheet is a document that venues issue to musicians, the booking agent or the band manager in the weeks leading up to a live music show. It provides more details about the upcoming event and is based upon what was agreed to in the initial performance agreement. A worksheet usually includes details such as:

- The location of the venue
- Contact details for the venue manager
- What time the musician should load their equipment into the venue
- What meals and drinks are provided to the musician (commonly called the ‘rider’)
- What production is supplied by the venue (i.e. lighting, sound, stage management)
- Times for sound check and set times, including breaks in the performance
- Details for where the artists can store additional belongings during their performance.

See the chapter Resources for a worksheet template.
INSURANCE

Check whether or not your business insurance policy covers you for operating live music performances before proceeding with booking shows.

It’s also best to check whether the musicians you book have their own public liability insurance. Performers operate in an environment where there is the potential to affect third parties (members of the public, sub-contractors, etc) who may be physically injured or have their property damaged. Public liability insures the insured against the risks involved in musicians performing at your venue.

GET THE BASICS RIGHT – BOOKING MUSIC FOR YOUR VENUE

- Know your customers and book artists they’ll enjoy.
- Prepare a performance agreement prior to each show.
- Know who to talk to if you’re struggling to find good bands.
- Make sure payment details are clear. If the band invoices you, be sure to pay them in a timely manner.

IMPRESS WITH THE BEST – CHAPTER 3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Regardless of whether you work with a booker, a promoter or book directly, grow your networks to make sure the bands performing at your venue not only suit your crowd, but help grow your business.
- Utilise the performance agreement and worksheet templates provided in the Resources to ensure you communicate and prepare effectively for each show.
- Work with a ticketing company to manage ticketed shows.
- Check whether the musicians you book have their own public liability insurance.
- Market your shows effectively (more on that in the next chapter)

RESOURCES

For a list of Live Music Office endorsed templates to assist with establishing a stage set up, visit: http://bit.ly/1NUPqTm

For the Musician’s Union of Australia’s pay rate guide, visit: http://bit.ly/1NBKXoB

For an ATO clarification upon employees vs. contractors, visit: http://bit.ly/1PtstIH

For a comprehensive list of live music templates, visit the Music SA resources page: http://www.musicsa.com.au/resources/
Gone are the days when you could pop up a banner out front of your business that said ‘live music’ and people would come in droves. In fact, those days never really existed. If you’re serious about making live music work for your business, you’ll need to be serious about marketing it.

Firstly, and we keep coming back to this – know your customers! Target people who are most likely to come to your venue and enjoy the music. That could be people living in the local neighbourhood, or people who like the atmosphere of your business. You may need to target a broad range of customers. Regardless you can always do some research by asking your customers what they think.

GETTING INTO THE MARKET

Without beating around the bush, the live music market is highly competitive so to be a cut above the rest, you should consider at minimum getting the following things correct:
GET THE BASICS RIGHT – MARKETING LIVE MUSIC

Free Opportunities

• **Gig Guides** – At the end of this chapter we’ve included this handy list of guides that will list your event for free. It’s a start.

• **Social Media** – social media needs to be utilised correctly to cut through the amount of competition you have for attention online. There’s a guide in Resources to help you wrap your head around utilising it to promote for free.

• **Your Website** – if you’ve got a website, include your entertainment listings in a prominent position. Ensure they’re always up to date, because there’s nothing worse than being behind the times.

• **Ask Bands To Help Promote Their Shows** – it doesn’t matter how the show was booked, obviously a good idea to have the artist tell their fans they’re playing at your venue. But a word of warning – by no means make this your only strategy and put it all on the band to bring a crowd. You need to work with them.

• **Start A Mailing List** – collecting emails of people who are interested in knowing what’s on at your venue might take you a bit of time to administer, but there are a host of online tools that can help you manage a mailing list. That way you can keep them informed of what is coming up and when their favourite act is coming through. Ensure you maintain a regular consistency of mailing (once a month is fine). Professional templates can be downloaded for free for most mailing list programs.

• **Digital Gig Guide Platforms** – platforms such as BandsInTown, Songkick and NXTGIG can provide a low-cost and easy way to promote your live performances.

• **Music SA Venues Directory** – Register yourself on the venues directory on the Music SA website to promote your venue to a wide database of musicians and live music consumers.

Low Cost

• **Posters And Flyers** – whether they’re put up in house or distributed around the neighbourhood, posters remain a relatively low cost means of promotion. Let us be clear though – don’t use Microsoft Word to design a poster Ever! Get a designer to help you set up a professional template that looks good, catches the eye, is easy to edit that will reflect well on your brand.

• **Sponsored Social Media Posts** – Social media advertising, when done right, can reach a very specific audience and present a point of sale directly in front of them. Again, it’s not the only strategy you should employ but it can be helpful as part of an overall marketing strategy.

IMPRESS WITH THE BEST – MARKETING LIVE MUSIC

• **Engage a Publicist or Marketing Specialist** – professionals who know how to attract customer’s attention may cost you, but if you’re really looking to succeed they can make a big difference in spreading the word about your venue and the acts you have performing.

• **Regularly Advertise In Relevant Publications Or On Radio** – again, this is about knowing how to reach people who will come to your show.
CHAPTER FOUR

Media often has a broad reach that can help you grow the brand of your business, but just because they’re reaching a large audience doesn’t mean you’re reaching the right audience for your venue. Be savvy about how frequently you invest and which media you invest in.

- **Arrange Broader Distribution Of Your Promotional Material** – poster and promotional distribution companies can help promote your shows to people sitting in cafes or pubs, for example, and place your brand in places where people are looking for information on things to do. We’ve listed the pick of the bunch in the Resources for this chapter.

- **Engage a Graphic Designer** – If you’re serious about standing out from other shows, you should look to find a designer to work with to create all of the artwork you use to promote your music.

- **Work With A Ticketing Company** – As mentioned in the previous chapter, if you run ticketed events regularly, working with a ticketing company is a good idea. They will often add booking fees to ticket prices to pay for providing their service, but they can save you a huge amount of time in administration and also assist with data collection, growing your contact lists, and general promotion for shows.

- **Partnering With Large Events**: There are always large events that your business can partner with to increase awareness, reach new audiences and generally get seen. South Australians especially love to see performances under big name umbrellas such as the Adelaide Fringe and local events such as the Semaphore Music Festival. We’ve got a list of the sorts of events and organisations that help take music to the broader South Australian population in the Resources of this chapter.

**ON-GOING PROMOTION IDEAS**

There’s a reason why age-old strategies like promotional giveaways and loyalty programs are still included in marketing strategies to this day. Well-executed promotions can add value to the show experience for your customers, increase their positive association with your brand and help keeps things lively and exciting.

**GET THE BASICS RIGHT - PROMOTING LIVE MUSIC AT YOUR VENUE CHECKLIST**

- Know your target demographics and discover effective ways to reach them.
- Get a designer to look over your posters and artwork.
- Are you in gig guides?
- Is your website up to date?
- Is your social media up to date & consistent?
- Does your artwork for shows stand out?
- Can you become a part of bigger events, such as registering as a Fringe Venue or to participate in Council arts initiatives?
- Are you running promotions or competitions to grow your customer base and promote repeat customers?
- Have you requested the booked acts to promote the event to their audience directly?
- Make sure you are registered on the Music SA Venue Directory on the Music SA Website. It’s free!
IMPRESS WITH THE BEST – CHAPTER 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Work with a publicist or marketing specialist to promote music shows.
- Work with a graphic designer to create your promotional material.
- Incorporate Search Engine Optimization on your website so you will appear more frequently in Google searches for live music in your area.
- Work with a ticketing company to manage ticketed shows.
- Find apps and mobile platforms such as NXTGIG, which people use to see what’s on around them, and ensure your music shows are featured.

RESOURCES

For a crash course in Social Media for live music, visit:
Phosphene Productions  http://bit.ly/1Pg7fzg

For street marketing distribution in Adelaide, consider:
Mad Promo  www.madpromo.com.au
Passing Out Distribution  www.passingout.com.au
Poster Impact  poster-distribution.com.au

To promote your show in South Australia, consider utilising the following gig guides (you may need to sign up as a user or contact an editor in some instances):

Rip It Up  http://bit.ly/1MEC6TW
Live At Your Local  http://bit.ly/1NO8m7Y
BandsInTown  http://bit.ly/1MqBUUu
Songkick  http://bit.ly/1HKZ06o
Eventfinda  http://bit.ly/1NtyeBu
Around You  http://bit.ly/1NtyYq
NXTGIG  http://bit.ly/1WVrZeW

For information on major South Australian events your venue can participate in, visit:
Adelaide Fringe  bit.ly/1W77jFB
Semaphore Music Festival  bit.ly/1PPDza9
Adelaide Cabaret Fringe Festival  bit.ly/1VV6kuA
Feast Festival  bit.ly/1L9Uij1
CBD Traders Associations  bit.ly/1K5Cma5
Events SA  bit.ly/1PkZIdq
Country Arts SA  bit.ly/1mM6kLu
Adelaide City Council  bit.ly/1rATii4
SA Tourism  bit.ly/1PdWljO
Umbrella Winter City Sounds  www.umbrellafest.com.au
South Australian Living Artists  http://www.salafestival.com/
The most important aspect of running a successful live music show is preparation. Everything that goes on behind the scenes before the show will set the stage for musicians to come in and showcase their full talents.

While we've spoken about worksheets and performance agreements in Chapter 3, there are a number of other fundamentals you'll need prepared.

### Equipment Load In & Stage Preparation

If possible, it's best to organise with the artist to load in and set up their equipment before customers arrive to minimise the disruption to your trading. This will also enable you plenty of time to solve any unexpected set up issues that may occur. Once all of the equipment is in position, be sure that all of the power cables or leads connecting the equipment are kept neat and tidy and out of the way. Tape down stray cords and tape together multiple cords running to the same points.

### Get The Sound Check Right

Regardless of how good your sound system is, or how good the act is, a good show hinges on how well the sound is mixed. While a simple acoustic set up can be quick to sound check, a skilled engineer should always sound check a band. Sound check should ideally occur before the audience is present. Always request a stage plot and inputs list from the artist.

**GET THE BASICS RIGHT – SOUND CHECK CHECKLIST**

- Ensure that you have enough input lines in your sound desk to accommodate the set up of everything on stage.
- Line check everything on stage to ensure all the cables connecting instruments to your mixer are working properly.
- Check that all microphones and instruments are working correctly. In transport, some of the tuning of the instruments may have altered, so take the time to get the tuning correct.
- Check how each instrument sounds when played together and ensure that you’re able to hear each instrument in the mix. Always use a professional sound engineer or qualified person to perform this check.
- Once everything is sounding good and the music volume is within approved sound levels for your venue, record the settings on a piece of paper (you can save them in the desk if it’s digital).
CHAPTER FIVE

Signage

This is an aspect of a live show you may not consider crucial, but in fact is looked upon very well by legislators and regulators – and it’s especially helpful to patrons. If you’re serving liquor, your license must be on display. You’ll need exits and toilets clearly signed, as well as non-smoking areas. You can only designate a non-smoking area, not a smoking area. If you have any in-house rules for patrons, make sure they’re in plain sight. In some Council districts, it is also a requirement to have signage at the exit to your venue asking patrons to respect the neighbours and keep things down when they leave.

Final Administrative Checks

Make sure that everything that was detailed on the worksheet is checked off. If the show is ticketed, then ensure that any guest lists and pre-sold ticket lists have been printed off and are with door staff. If you are selling tickets on the door, prepare a float for the night. If there is merchandise being sold, ensure that it is set up and that a float is prepared for sales staff also. And if you have hired security staff for the evening, make sure they are fully briefed with your in-house safety procedures and protocol, and that they sign the security register on arrival.

GET THE BASICS RIGHT – PRESHOW CHECKLIST

☐ Check that all your in-house equipment is working a-ok.
☐ Roster on enough staff to cater for your expected crowd.
☐ Have all of your administration in order; knowing the stage set up, playing order, set times, rider and any requests communicated from the band.
☐ Allow plenty of time for load in and sound check to be completed.
☐ If the show is ticketed, have door staff and a float prepared in advance.
☐ If the band wish to sell merchandise, have a table prepared.
☐ Use your communication channels to share with those interested in coming to the show what time it will start and when each band will perform, as well as any additional promotions you may be running as part of the event.
☐ Ensure all of your equipment is operational and safe. Safework SA Guidelines for these checks are included in the Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia booklet.
☐ Prepare signage to communicate any house rules your patrons must abide by.
☐ Keep the stage set up neat and tidy.

IMPRESS WITH THE BEST – CHAPTER 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

• Communicate set times prior to the show night.
• Delegate a venue manager to take care of the final administration and be the in-house point of contact for acts and live music staff.
• Have an in-house engineer who knows the acoustics of your venue and sound equipment well, to assist with preparing the stage and to perform the sound check. It should be noted that on occasion, a band will arrange and pay for their own engineer.

RESOURCES
Check the following sections of the Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia booklet for topics covered:

Work Health & Safety – Page 22
See Music SA’s Business Directory for examples of businesses that may be able to assist you with finding a sound professional: http://bit.ly/MusicSABiz
As you’ll no doubt have noticed by this point, this Guide talks a lot about preparation. A live music performance can be a dynamic environment to work in so ensuring that employees are fully versed in protocol and procedures for dealing with whatever comes their way is key. Every now and then, the unexpected can happen; having a level head and dealing calmly and appropriately with any issues that arise can save you a lot of trouble.

Consider this chapter a checklist to ensure you have your bases covered. See the Resources at the end of this chapter as well, because there are a few regulatory details worth covering.

**Before Patrons Enter**

Depending on your venue, you might have crowds lining up outside prior to a show which will need to be managed. This may require crowd control staff, your own staff or a combination of both. Be practical to make sure that crowds enter your venue in an orderly fashion. Queuing and its control is referenced in Adelaide City Council’s Liquor Licensing Policy that you’ll need to consider if you’re trading, which are included in the Resources.

**Upon Entry – Checking Identification**

If you’re a licensed venue, then you’ll need to ensure that during times you’re serving alcohol your staff or crowd controllers are checking identification to ensure that you’re trading legally.

**All Ages Events / Where Minors Are Present**

Legally, minors may be at a venue where alcohol is sold between 8am and midnight so long as they are accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. There are some specific trading details outlined in the *Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia* booklet that you’ll need to be across if you are hosting all ages events. We’ll link you to them in the Resources.

**Crowd Control Requirements**

Councils and the Liquor Licensing Act 1997 both have some things to say on requirements for crowd control that you need to be
across which we’ve highlighted in the Resources of this chapter.

**Delegating Responsibility**

If you were to practically breakdown the key points of managing a live show, they would be:
1. Have someone managing the sound, stage and lighting equipment
2. Have someone managing the audience
3. Have someone managing the bar/food service
4. Have someone managing the door
5. Have someone managing the merchandise

There are some legal requirements that affect this, such as your requirement to have a Responsible Person on at all times if you are selling liquor or additional specific license requirements depending upon the terms of your trading. We go into detail regarding things like the Late Night Trading Code, General Codes Of Practice and Adelaide City Council regulations in the *Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia* booklet, and we’ve outlined what you’ll need to read in the Resources of this chapter. The reality is that the better you can delegate responsibility amongst trained and able employees, the smoother the event will run. Training a member of staff to be a Venue Manager to oversee each of these five management aspects is certainly best practice.

**Get Trained Up**

Training manuals remain a legal requirement in South Australia, addressing everything from venue safety procedures to managing patrons, responsible service of alcohol and handling complaints. It’s a legal requirement to maintain an up-to-date staff induction and training manual. Having your live music procedures as part of this manual will help ensure that your staff are all, quite literally, on the same page when it comes to hosting live music.

**Noise Management**

We’ve spoken a lot about how important good sound is to a successful show. The same goes for managing your sound levels throughout an event to ensure that patrons and employees have their hearing cared for and to minimise the risk of disturbing neighbours by keeping sound within approved levels. The *Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia* includes guides for effective noise management as outlined by the Environmental Protection Authority of SA and Safework SA.

If a show is likely to be particularly loud, or you have a very powerful in house speaker system, make earplugs available to patrons or employees who are worried about their hearing.

**Dealing With Unruly Patrons**

Remaining calm when a patron is aggravated is crucial to dealing with the situation. If someone has become too excited, it’s best to
pull him or her aside and ask them to calm down before you go yelling at them to get out. However, behaviour that endangers patrons or detracts from their live show experience is unacceptable. As the venue owner, you have the right to eject an individual who has violated either the law or your house rules. If the issue is serious, you can also bar them from returning to your premises. A comprehensive guide for dealing with unruly patrons is included in the *Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia* booklet.

**Crowd Safety & First Aid**

Practically, when there are punters enjoying a live show, drink spillage and the occasional injury can occur amongst the excitement. On top of the preparations you’ve made to ensure the stage set up is neat and cables secured, if the show is encouraging some dancing or jumping around be sure that the crowd are monitored closely. Have a crowd controller or your venue manager on hand to watch things in the front row, ensure that any drink spillage is cleaned up immediately, if glassware is present, that it is collected efficiently and that if first aid is required that it is administered in a timely manner. It’s also an excellent idea to designate a ‘safe’ area away from entertainment for you to be able to treat injuries or for any patrons or employees who wish to take a moment to remove themselves from the performance.

**Sexual Discrimination & Live Music**

Nationally, organisations such as LISTEN and peak industry bodies are driving a campaign of zero tolerance towards sexual discrimination, harassment and assault at live music shows. Everyone has the right to be safe and free from harassment while at your venue. Creating a safe environment can only benefit your trading and business operations. We encourage you to take the time to look over the breakdown of Sexual Discrimination and Live Music in the *Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia* booklet. Some key points to note include:

- To actively prevent instances of sexual harassment and assault at a venue, adoption of a zero tolerance policy for all forms of sexual harassment and assault, between patrons, staff, performing artists, security, of any other person engaged to work at, or visiting the venue is required.
- Recognition that sexual harassment and assault is any behaviour that is directed at a person based on their gender, sexuality or gender identity (actual or assumed).
- Recognition that women are primarily the target of sexual harassment and assault by men, however both can occur to any person, regardless of gender or sexuality.
- All staff should be trained in how to identify and respond appropriately to incidents of sexual harassment or assault, including making sure that the person who is complaining or alleging sexual harassment should complete and sign an incident report form, with details for you to follow up the incident.
CHAPTER SIX

Handling Complaints During Events

Complaints inevitably occur, but at times when you’re especially busy it can be difficult to drop what you’re doing and ensure the complaint is properly addressed. It’s crucial to have a lodging system in place and to take the time to record any complaints at the time they occur. Even if you cannot deal with the complaint at the time, ensuring that the patron is heard and understands that management will address them appropriately at a suitable time can help diffuse tension and prevent a complaint from escalating to the point where it may require a formal legal response. Complaint handling procedures are detailed in the Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia booklet, as well as what to expect should a complaint escalate to involve a conciliation hearing.

Ensure The Live Music Wraps Up Within Designated Trading Hours

Your development approval, or your liquor license, will outline trading conditions including the hours when hosting live music is appropriate. We’ve all heard stories of nights where the band plays until the morning because everyone is having such a good time, but the reality is that it is a legal requirement nowadays for the music to end in a timely fashion. If you are to host live music beyond midnight, you are required to hold specific Consent to do so from the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner. Make sure performers are aware of the cut off time and ensure it’s enforced by employees. Don’t be afraid to cut the sound and bring up the house lights if you’ve run over time – it is a legal trading requirement of your business.

Provide Public Transport Information

Ensuring that patrons are able to access your venue through simple means, and especially leave safely after a show, is important for a number of reasons. From a policing perspective, it minimises the risk of people becoming frustrated and potentially aggressive outside your venue and it prevents crowds from forming on footpaths and roads that could lead to safety and amenity issues. But really, if public transport, taxis and cycle parking are readily available then it makes your venue more attractive as a place to go because there’s an easy way to get home! We’ve included a run down on this in the Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia booklet.

That’s All The Serious Stuff – Now The Most Important Thing!

Any music show has its own energy, and a lot of that comes down to how the staff and the venue are presenting during the event. If you’ve got your fundamentals covered, then it’s all about the service that you provide to the punters that can top it all off. Plenty of smiles and a relaxed vibe from staff can go a long way to making the crowd feel relaxed and welcome, and encourages them to return again.
PAYMENTS & POST EVENT PRACTICE

After each show, it’s important to compile all the relevant information relating to payments to finalise what each act is getting paid. This will depend on the original deal that was agreed to. For door deals, the venue is responsible for providing this information to artists and making payment (minus agreed deductions).

Settlements usually include a break down of pre-sale tickets, door ticket sales, ticket prices, the venue’s commission, the cost of any production that was supplied and bank details. If an external ticketing supplier has been used, attach the ticketing report to the settlement. Provide a printed version of the settlement to the artist or their representative after the show. Also email a soft copy.

We’ve included a template settlement sheet in Resources at the end of this chapter.

GET THE BASICS RIGHT - RUNNING A LIVE MUSIC SHOW & PATRON MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

☐ Roster a Responsible Person on at all times (if you, as the licensee, can’t be present).
☐ Ensure you have a fully stocked first aid kid available.
☐ Make sure that any promotions you are running do not encourage excessive consumption of alcohol.
☐ Ensure that all staff are inducted with the appropriate training.
☐ Ensure you’ve rostered on enough staff and, if possible, ensure you have the 4 key aspects of live shows highlighted in this chapter all covered.
☐ Keep an incident register if issues do arise so you can follow them up later.
☐ Always have water available for patrons.

IMPRESS WITH THE BEST

• Have a risk management strategy in place and trouble shooting plan if things go pear shaped. See the chapter Resources for a guide.
• Plan ahead - speak with your local police station if you believe that the audience for the band performing may require some monitoring. Hiring security may also be an option to ensure the night runs without any issues.
• Debrief with staff after each show and discuss how the event ran, discuss any successes and issues, as well as things which can be improved on.
• Designate a ‘safe’ area in your venue in case any patrons or staff need to remove themselves from the show. Try to ensure you have clear lines of sight to all angles of the room so you can monitor how the event is going.
• Make sure your employees are friendly, smile and have fun. It’s a music show!
Check the following sections of the *Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia* booklet for topics covered:

Handling Noise Complaints – Page 21
Venue Safety – Page 25
Work Health & Safety – Page 31
Dealing With Unruly Patrons – Page 37
Hosting Underage & Youth Events (if applicable) – Page 41
Providing Transport & Service Advice – Page 45
Sexual Discrimination Best Practice – Page 46

For the most recent update of the late night trading code visit: http://cbs.sa.gov.au/assets/files/Revised_Late_Night_Code_1_Feb_2016.pdf

For a list of Live Music Office endorsed templates to assist with post show settlement, visit: http://bit.ly/1NUPqTm or www.musicsa.com.au/resources
As the live music industry continues to evolve, live performance remains its backbone. Keeping customer satisfaction at the fore of your business model is key to continued development.

AS IDENTIFIED BY THE REPORT *THE ECONOMIC & CULTURAL VALUE OF LIVE MUSIC IN AUSTRALIA 2014*:

Examined collectively, the most commonly identified factors influencing live music attendance among respondents (patrons) were access, then cost and interest. Producers, on the other hand, most commonly identified programming as influencing attendance, followed by some combination of band draw; cost; promotion; venue reputation; venue environment; and the weather. Programming and the ability of a band to draw a crowd are clearly related and could be combined, however some venues identified both as distinct factors influencing attendance. Producers appear to have only identified factors that can be directly observed and, at least to a degree, controlled or allowed for in planning live music events. For example, access was not identified by venues suggesting this is either unobserved or wasn’t commented on as it was outside of venues’ direct control. This discrepancy suggest access to venues may be an important consideration for policy makers and a beneficial area for future research, particularly given our findings that audiences appear willing to travel to experience live music.\(^6\)

A venue’s reputation grows through a combination of successful bookings strategy, promotion, providing an enjoyable environment, ease of access both in terms of location and in terms of price points for customers. All of the factors identified here (with the exception of the weather) have been addressed by this Guide. Our intention is to cultivate a South Australian standard of best practice, executed consistently and with professionalism to ensure the success of live music business for the benefit of the industry as a whole.

GET THE BASICS RIGHT – GROWING YOUR BUSINESS THROUGH LIVE MUSIC

- Operate within the letter of the law, as outlined in the Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia booklet.
- Treat the musical aspects of your business with the same diligence you would all other aspects of your trading.
- Ensure that you engage APRA AMCOS to find the right license for your business.
- Maintain your customers’ interests at the forefront of your booking strategy.
- Utilise the templates provided by the Live Music Office and/or Music SA, outlined in the chapter Resources of our Guide.
- Create a safe and accessible live music environment, free of violence, harassment and discrimination.
- Regularly test all equipment.
- Regularly update staff training manuals.
- Maintain positive relationships with neighbours to your business.
- Look after artists well by providing a good stage and sound set up, parking, rider and support staff.
- Address customer complaints in a timely and respectful manner.

IMPRESS WITH THE BEST

- Aspire to regularly achieve the full set of recommendations outlined in this Guide.
- Build relationships with local authorities and residents to ensure they not only become customers, but they know they can come directly to you should any issues associated with your venue arise. See the Resources in this chapter for further details.

RESOURCES

Check the following sections of the Regulatory Framework for Live Music Venues in South Australia booklet for topics covered:
- Building Relationships With Local Authorities & Residents Page 19
- Additional Resources – Page 53
Live Performance Australia (LPA)
LPA is the peak body for Australia’s live entertainment and performing arts industry. LPA’s activities centre around workplace relations, policy and strategy, and membership services and events. The LPA website includes useful links to industry codes and guidelines, including Safety Guidelines for the Entertainment Industry.
Visit http://www.liveperformance.com.au

Music SA
Music SA is a not for profit company for the South Australia music industry; an independent and non-partisan body established to support contemporary music across all genres. Music SA has a wealth of information for musicians & venues, including links and resources regarding grants and funding, education and training, and promotional opportunities.
Visit http://musicsa.com.au

Australian Music Industry Network (AMIN)
AMIN advocates on the behalf of its members and state and territory music industry associations. The AMIN website features several handy fact sheets and checklists for both venues and musicians.

Renewal SA
Renewal SA provides case management services for Small Bars and runs City Makers which provides funds to help with building compliance issues such as noise, fire safety, heritage and accessibility. Visit https://renewalsa.sa.gov.au/

Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA)
The MEAA is a union and professional organisation that covers people working in the media, entertainment, sports and arts industries. The MEAA offers a range of services to members, including legal advice and industrial representation.

Arts Law Centre of Australia (ALCA)
The ALCA is a not-for-profit company that provides legal advice and information on a range of arts related matters, including contracts, copyright, defamation, insurance and taxation. Visit http://www.artslaw.com.au/
Live Music Office
The Live Music Office works to increase opportunities for live music in Australia by identifying and advocating for better policy & regulation. Established by the Federal Government, in partnership with APRA AMCOS, the Live Music Office was set up to review the impact of policy frameworks on the Australian live music sector. Templates & resources are available for artists & venues. Visit http://www.livemusicoffice.com.au

Australian Hotels Association SA Branch
The Australian Hotels Association (South Australian Branch) is an integral part of the South Australian hospitality and tourism industry and represents and protects the commercial interests of hoteliers throughout South Australia. The AHA|SA staff consists of a number of highly credentialed professionals who are experts in their chosen fields. This ensures the AHA|SA is well equipped to give members the highest possible level of service including advice, events and training. www.ahasa.com.au