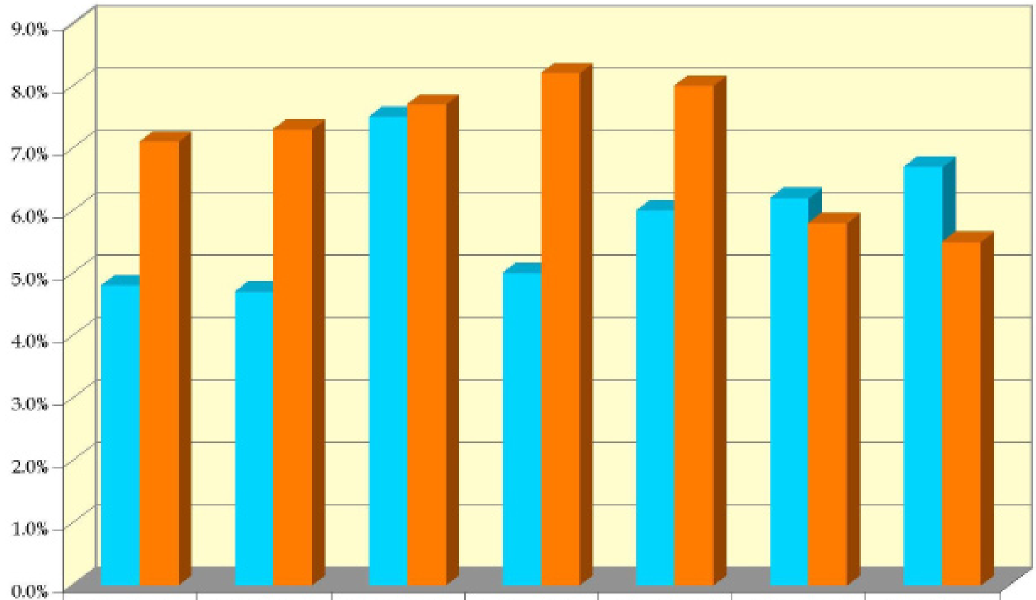
STATE OF PLAY

executive summary

Using our major indicators - the number of advertised gigs for musos and DJs in the Street Press and the $ expenditure advertising those gigs in the free and commercial press, Melbourne's live music scene has grown every year since 2000.
In that year, an estimated $10 Million was spent advertising 46,993 gigs.
In 2007/2008, an estimated $20.7 Million was spent advertising 70,008 gigs.



	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
$ Advertising Growth	4.8%	4.7%	7.5%	5.0%	6.0%	6.2%	6.7%
Gig Number Growth	7.1%	7.3%	7.7%	8.2%	8.0%	5.8%	5.5%

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Using our traditional indicators - the number of live music performances advertised in the street press, advertising dollars spent promoting those gigs in the major print media plus the results from our extensive Consumer & Musicians' surveys and data collected from radio stations and venue operators, we are lead to conclude that statistically, Melbourne's live music scene continues to grow and, in 2008, enjoys continuing good health.

Whilst there have been factors negatively impacting on live performance over the 9 years of our study, the evidence is clear that this vibrant sector has not only adapted to a changing environment, but has in fact prospered with an average annual rate of growth of 6-7% since 1999.

LIVE GIGS

- In the twelve months, September 2007 to August 2008, there were 77,088 listed/advertised performances in Melbourne venues featuring solo artists/duos/groups and DJs. This represented an increase of 4,007 (5.4%) on 2006/7's total of 73,492.
  Since 2001, over 25,000 additional live performance have been created, with an average annual rate of growth of 6.9% per year.
- There were 37,070 listed performances by musicians (9,352 solo/duo; 28,718 group) - an overall 5.8% (2,045) incease on 2006/7's total of 35,025.
- There were 40,018 listed performances by DJs - a 4.2% increase (1,610) on 2006/7's total of 38, 408.
  So, although there were 3,526 more DJ gigs in total listed for the year, this was the second time in the last six years that the rate of growth in Musician-based gigs exceeded that for DJs.

PRINT MEDIA - GIG ADVERTISING

- Over $ 20.7 Million (excluding GST) was spent in 2007/2008 on advertising/promoting live music gigs in the music-specific print media (street press) and music entertainment sections (Age *EG*, *A2, Sunday Age* and Herald Sun *Extra HIT*) of commercial newspapers.
  This represents a $ 1.2 Million increase (6.3%) on the 2006/2007 total of $19.5 Million.
  (The growth rate for paid advertising is entirely consistent with the growth recorded in total performances, averaging 5.6% since 2001)).
- The $ $6.44 Million spent in the street press represented an increase of 7.5% on 2006/2007's total of $5.55 Million. *Beat*'s $3.58 Million represented a 7.7% increase, and *InPress's* $2.86 an increase of 7.3% on the corresponding period last year.
- The $ 14.2 Million spent in the major newspapers in 2007/2008 was 5.7% up on last year's $13.5 Million. An increase of 5.6% for the Age *EG* ($3.3 Million), 6.5% for the Herald Sun's *HIT* ($4.9 Million), 4.1% ($3.4 Million) for the Age's *A2* and 6.3% ($2.5 Million) for the *Sunday Age*'s *M* Magazine.
- During the period of reporting - 2000-2008 - over $ 113 Million in paid advertising has been spent promoting 347,000+ live performances.

CONSUMER SURVEY

- **Radio:**
  After briefly being unseated by Fox FM in 2006/7, perennial winner Triple J (favourite for 8 or the 9 surveys) was voted the favourite radio station (23%), followed by Fox (13%) and RRR (12%) .
  When all listening is considered, the loss of audience noted in recent years continues across all stations. However, Melbourne's support for public/community radio continues to distinguish the local market in an industry dominated by national networks.
  Although it's share is down from a high-point in 2004/5, Gold 104 continued it's somewhat surprising popularity among original music fans (the majority of our respondents).
- **TV:**
  Perennial favourite Rage was voted No.1 by 35% of our audience. MTV (16%) was a distant second, with Channel V in third place (15%). Music reality TV (Idol etc) at 5% has had little impact on our respondents, and Video Hits has lost significant ausdience. Newcomer J TV made a promising debut.

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- **Music Print Media:**
  Beat Magazine (34%) maintained its dominant position as the most popular music print media. Perennial runner-up *InPress* (23%) regained that position having been briefly supplanted by this year's third-placed *Rolling Stone* (16%) in 2006/7.
  Despite significant threats from digital/electronic competitors, the traditional print music media continue to perform strongly, albeit it with slowly declining audience share.
- **The Internet:**
  Broadband access/connection continues to grow across all age groups, from a 'low' of 75% in the under 18s to a high of 87% among 19-24 year olds. Although P2P Sharing - at 71%, continues as a dominant activity, the most outstanding change has been the 80% usage (up from 55% last year) of social networks - MySpace, Facebook, YouTube etc. This has seen a significant rise in music website visits - 75% - up from 50% two years ago. 61% pay nothing for the music they download and only 18% pay for it all.
- **Gig Information:**
  While fans are increasingly using websites (48%), Email (35%), SMS (23%) and social networks (46%) to get information about gigs, 'traditional' sources continue to be used. In fact, Beat (70%), InPress (44%), posters (35%) and word of mouth (64%) all recorded significant increases on last year's results. Radio (36%) and TV (8%) have been the big 'losers' in terms of their declining use as informatyion sources.
- **Live Gigs - Attendance & $$ Info:**
  92% of those surveyed attended at least one live performance per month (89% last year).
  Of those, 72% attended between 2 and 6 gigs per month (average 5). Far more than the much smaller numbers recorded by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for other performance-based artforms - ballet, orchestras, theatre.
- In 2007/8, live music goers spent an average $29 per month on entry to club/pub gigs and an extra $78 on food, drink, transport etc. An increase of 15% on 2006/7.
  The corresponding figures for concerts/festivals were - $102 for tickets, $135 on 'extras'. Increases of 15% and 20% respectively.
- **Venues:**
  Despite the popularity of Bars (65%), Concerts (71%), with Festivals (68%) as preferred venues for seeing live performances, their rise has NOT been achieved at the expense of pubs (71%) which amazingly have maintained the audience share (69%) recorded in the 2000 survey. Cafes and restaurants (27%) continue to gain popularity - up from 11% in 2004/2005.
  The figures would seem to confirm the evidence (see Gigs section) of the significant increase in live music gigs created during that period.
- Long time favourite, The Corner was again the most popular pub venue (25%), from the The Espy (17%) and the Hi Fi Bar (12%), with The Tote and Northcote Social Club close behind (14%).
  The Forum (38%) was a clear winner as concert venue from Rod Laver (20%) and Festival Hall (15%).
- **Support for Australian Music:**
  74% of music fans think the percentage of Australian music on commercial radio should be increased (66% last year) - 5% decreased, 21% stay the same. 62% think the % of new music (last 12 months) should be increased - 6% decreased and 32% stay the same.
- **Government Funding/Assistance:**
  As in previous years, respondents identified venues and recording asssistance/support (52%) as priorities for funding/assistance.
  Local tour support (61%) was the issue attracting the most support. Late night transport made a dramatic first entry attracting 53% support.

MUSICIAN'S SURVEY

- **Profile:**
  The 130 'indie' musicians surveyed were typically 18-30 years old (80%), have been in the industry an average 6 years and 77% have released commercial recordings which they sell mainly at gigs (85%) and through their own website (90%). 28% are full-time, 42% part-time and 30% casual and perform an average of 3-4 paid gigs per month - earning an average of $100 for duo/solo work and $300 for band gigs.

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- **Musicians & Business:**
Of the 70% who identified themselves as full or part-time, 87% are self managed, 49% have an ABN (up from 35% last year). Only 15% are registered for GST. 26% are "not sure" what business structure they're operating and only 26% have any formal business training (as opposed to 60% for music training).
- Given the high level of self-management, it is interesting (worrying?) that 60% rate their industry knowledge as 'Below Average' (35%) or 'Poor' (25%), and only 10% as 'Excellent'.
- Again, given that we targetted the 'indie' sector where it is reasonable to assume a high degree of self-composition - and therefore royalty generation from live performance/'broadcast', it is surprising that only 35% of respondents are registered APRA members - better than last year's 12% however!
- **Musicians & The Internet:**
95% having access to broadband (up from 71% last year). 90% have their own website where they offer - Videos (39%), CDs for sale (61%), Audio Samples (80%), Free Audio Downloads (47%) and Merchandise (25%). Only 8% offer paid downloads. 97% have a MySpace page and 55% a Facebook profile.
- Indie musicians would appear to be no more 'sensitive' to the industry's copyright piracy messages than general music consumers, with 74% involved in downloading music and 71% in P2P file sharing - MP3 being the preferred format.
- Although they still use traditional word of mouth and street press free listings (preferring *Beat*) to promote gigs, web-based methods are increasingly dominant. When asked to identify issues impacting on their ability to play gigs/earn income, noise-related 'development' dominated the responses.
- **When asked to comment on the live gig scene compared to 12 months ago, 44% voted for 'Growing', 34% for 'The Same' and 22% for 'Shrinking'. 41% reported 'Increased' gigs, 30% 'Decreased', and 29% 'The Same'. This confirms data and opinion from all other sections of the 2008 Report.**

VENUE SURVEY

- Although pub venues utilise the 'traditional' promotional tools - posters (85%) and the Street Press (90%), they are increasingly turning to the internet to promote gigs, with 92% of those surveyed having their own site. The most significant development was the 'debut' of social networks (MySpace, Facebook etc) as a means of promoting gigs - used by 75%.
- Many of the venues surveyed have issues which impact on their operation as live music presenters - 50% Noise-related problems, 40% Parking, 30% Health and Safety regulations, 25% Building/Development issues and 25% Zoning/Local Govt regulations.
- **Smoking Ban** - 25% of venues reported 10-20% increase in audience; 20% reported 10% decrease; 55% reported no discernable difference.
- **Venue Assistance/Support:**
A number of our most prominent live music venue operators were interviewed for their opinions on the state of the live music industry.
The vast majority confirmed the 2008 Report's findings in terms of a 'healthy' level of activity for the previous 12 months - eg " ...... nearly went under 5 years ago. Now it is stronger than ever and continuing to grow. And the bands are getting better too!"
When asked to comment on how local/state government could best asssist their business, there were two suggestions (apart from lower taxes on beer!) that featured in the majority of answers -
1. Increased support for local festivals and artists. 2. A stronger, better resourced music industry body.
- **Health of the Scene:**
The response from venue operators was remarkably similar to that of musicians - both confirming the data collected and presented in the Advertising & Gig sections of the Reoprt.
When asked to compare their live music audiences with 12 months ago, 35% voted for 'Increased', 25% for 'Decreased' and 40% for 'The Same'.

RADIO SURVEY

Melbourne's radio stations report an average 35% Australian content - ranging from 48% at PBS to 25% at GOLD. Community stations devote an average 14% of programming to exclusive Australian music shows, while commercial FM manages an average 3.8%. All stations are active sponsors/promoters of live gigs, and with 58% reporting increased promotional activity, and 34% the same level as last year.