

# **AI could be nail in the coffin for Australia's live music industry**

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Australia's music industry continues to evolve as technology rapidly advances, but there are growing concerns about the emergence of AI-generated music and its potential to impact the viability of careers in music-making.

A parliamentary inquiry into the challenges and opportunities within the Australian [live music](#) industry is currently underway, with a University of Melbourne team, comprising Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology experts Dr. Suelette Dreyfus, Dr. Greg Wadley, Dr. Chris Ewin and Emma Baillie, making a submission highlighting how AI could jeopardize the livelihoods of home-grown musicians and threaten the viability of the nation's live music scene.

"Live music is a 'unifying glue' of society. In an era of social fragmentation due to [social media](#), the federal government needs to prioritize strengthening this industry which not only contributes to the happiness of individuals but also the richness and diversity of culture," Dreyfus said.

Machine learning models are already able to produce authentic sounding music that's difficult to distinguish from music made by people. While this technology is still in its early stages, these computer programs can produce a greater volume of work far quicker and at a far lower cost than musicians.

Dr. Wadley explained that as most music artists are no longer able to solely survive off record/CD sales or income earned from streaming

services, they largely rely on live music gigs to earn a living. If music listeners lose their [emotional connection](#) to the human creators of music, their motivation to come to live performances may be reduced, Wadley said.

Artists now face the possibility of losing audience exposure if big tech companies that own music streaming services, change their algorithms to prioritize AI-generated music or even generate their own music.

"What if these businesses steer listeners to tailored music that's purely AI-generated, effectively putting audiences in a 'music filter bubble,' devoid of any human songwriting. Reducing the ability of artists to connect with listeners will significantly affect their bottom line, and it's the emerging, lesser-known and community artists who would ultimately pay the biggest price," Dreyfus said.

The submission recommendations include calls for greater protections for the live music industry to safeguard the pipeline of musical talent and ensure there are pathways for emerging artists to hone their craft and build audiences.

The authors suggest the ACCC review Australian artists remunerations arrangements under digital platform services and to examine the potential impact of AI-generated music on the sector.

The submission also details how the cultural value of music could be at stake.

"AI-generated music has little to no cultural value as it lacks genuine emotion, which is the essence of humanity. A blind study has shown people preferred AI-generated [classical music](#) to that created by humans, however this may be due to the lack of transparency around how AI music is made. Ultimately, music fans will be worse off if AI ends up

dominating the industry," Ewin said.

"The distinctively Australian character of local performers is unlikely to be replicated by AI-generated music, which trains its models on global datasets," Baillie said.

AI-generated music stands to join a set of factors threatening the future of Australia's live music industry, including changes in social habits, cost of living pressures, increases in venue insurance costs as well as weather events such as fires and floods.

Provided by University of Melbourne

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