



Speech By
Bree James

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

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ADJOURNMENT

Far North Queensland, Live Music

 **Ms JAMES** (Barron River—LNP) (9.11 pm): I rise to speak on an issue that is close to my heart and vital to the cultural, social and economic life of our region—the future of live music in Far North Queensland. Music has been a huge part of my life. I have been watching my dad perform on stage since I was a toddler, and by the time I was 14 years old I had got my first pay cheque after being a sax player and a vocalist in his band. Playing and singing at venues with my father and my husband over the last 30 years has been one of the highlights of my life. I know with absolute conviction that live music keeps the heart of a community beating. Nothing connects people faster than a shared song. There is nothing better than being in an audience or being on a stage when hundreds or thousands of people are singing along with all of their hearts.

Live music turns strangers into a crowd and a crowd into a community. You do not just hear live music, you feel it. Sadly, live music in Far North Queensland is dying. The current regulations are constraining musicians and harming our local venues. Under current regulations, live acts are forced to stay within unrealistic 75-decibel caps that are often exceeded by passing traffic. Even a lawnmower is louder than 75 decibels. Any attempt to exceed those levels requires expensive acoustic reports and infrastructure upgrades that many small venues simply cannot afford. Even those that do comply are still vulnerable to penalties due to vague terms like 'unreasonable noise' which can be applied inconsistently and based solely on subjective complaints. The results are venues giving up, gigs being cancelled and musicians losing work and fighting over a handful of venues that can meet the sound regulation requirements.

I have held round tables and spoken directly with venues and musicians across the Far North and the message is clear: the current regulations are hurting the live music industry and the hospitality industry. Local music creates jobs, drives tourism and brings people together and live music keeps people in a venue longer. On the weekend I attended Savannah in the Round, a fantastic regional live music tourism event that proved just how important live music is to our region. Over 32,000 people attended. Sixty artists performed. This matters. Ten years ago live music was part of the weekly line-up, not only in the Cairns city centre, the Esplanade, Mondo's, the Pullman and John's Blues Bar but across the northern beaches. Live music was everywhere and tourists and locals loved it. You could walk from venue to venue listening to live music.

A few months ago I started a petition on my website. There are over 500 signatories. I have met with the Attorney-General. I have met with Minister O'Connor and OLGR. I appreciate their time. I have also met with the Night-Life Economy Commissioner, John Collins, who is a venue owner and was the bass player of Powderfinger. He and I have both agreed to not stop fighting until we fix this issue for our fellow musicians. I know with every part of who I am that live music is not just entertainment; it is connection, culture and community. The day the music dies is not a lyric; it is a warning.