

Overworked, underpaid, but ready to rock

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Live music creates \$1.2 billion of economic activity in Australia each year

Australia's musicians are a happy bunch, despite many being poorly paid, having little job security, working long hours – and drinking heavily.

The Musicians' Well-being Survey, conducted by Dr Stacey Parker from the School of Psychology at The University of Queensland, reports that

92 per cent of the 204 [musicians](#) surveyed reported mid to very high levels of general life satisfaction.

Sixty-two per cent reported that they drank to dangerous levels and 42 per cent said they had experienced conflict with co-workers.

"The respondents earned an average \$776 per week, with 45 per cent earning below minimum wage and 58 per cent working more than 48 hours per week," Dr Parker said.

"An overwhelming 91 per cent of musicians were in a precarious work situation for their main music-related work, with 87 per cent supplementing their income with a second job.

"At the time of the survey, one in five musicians indicated they were contemplating leaving the industry. Fifty-five per cent reported experiencing job insecurity and uncertainty."

Dr Parker said live music created \$1.2 billion of economic activity in Australia each year.

"Significant government funding is allocated to the creative industries, but it is heavily focused on organisations," she said.

"Little is directed at supporting the welfare of artists.

"Their creativity and dedication stimulates a broader economy, but musicians have lower levels of income than the average Australian.

"It's as if we expect them to do it for love alone."

Dr Parker said the survey showed only a minority of musicians sought help to cope with stress.

One respondent said: "By day I am a very sad and lonely individual, but by night I am the most vibrant person in the room and everyone wants to know me.

"After answering the questions of this survey, I realised just how bad my mental health had gotten and plan to seek help."

Dr Parker said 82 per cent of respondents reported high to very high job autonomy and 60 per cent reported high to very high social support from co-workers.

She said professional musicians would benefit from a dedicated support organisation, apprenticeship and mentoring programs, and more direct funding to artists rather than to projects.

The [survey](#) data was collected in 2010/2011 and the musicians worked in rock, jazz, classical, pop, folk, indie, contemporary, world and country music.

Various roles were represented, including orchestral players, club/restaurant performers, session musicians, solo performers, group players, conductors and producers.

More information: The briefing report is available online: www2.psy.uq.edu.au/~uqspark8/B...anWellbeingStudy.pdf

Provided by University of Queensland

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