

Culture Pop

Who killed the **Aussie music festival?**



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Australia's music festival scene **is in crisis**

One by one, the Aussie music community has seen the beloved staples of festival season fall by the wayside. Now with the news that Splendour In The Grass has succumbed to the same fate, the state of festivals in this country looks to well and truly be in freefall.

The heady days of the national Big Day Out circuit feel **very** far away.

How did it come to this?



'What's really hurting music festivals' after Splendour in the Grass cancelled

Splendour In The Grass has been cancelled for 2024



Splendour in the Grass is the latest festival to call it quits for 2024, sparking concern about the future of the live music industry



What does the future hold for Aussie music festivals?



Why Are So Many Australian Music Festivals Being Cancelled?



“The Australian music festival industry is currently facing a crisis. That Splendour has cancelled is a tragedy for our entire industry and maybe this will be the wake-up call. Splendour should be the bellwether. It's the canary in the coal mine.”

Peter Noble

Director of Bluesfest

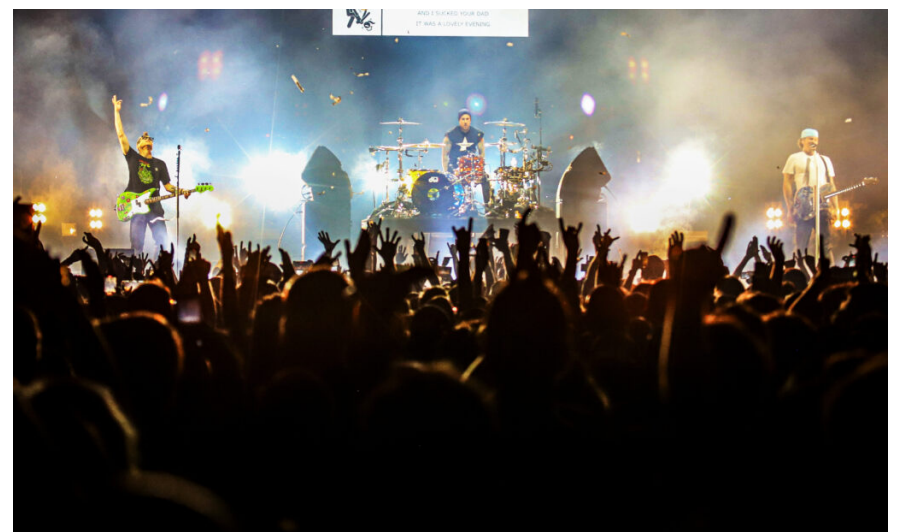
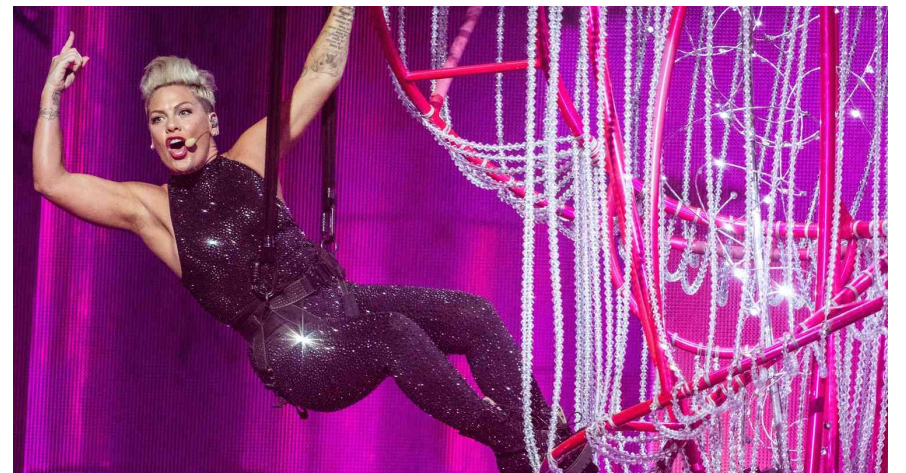
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Despite the festival fall out, there clearly remains **a huge appetite and budget for live music**

However, alongside this spate of cancellations, there's also been a raft of sell-out shows sweep the nation, from Taylor Swift and P!nk to Blink 182 and Fred Again.

These tickets were often upwards of \$200, and in the case of Fred Again, people had to get themselves and their money organised in less than 24 hours.

This shows that the appetite for live music still exists, and in fact is thriving, and that cost-of-living pressures alone can't be offered as the sole explanation - **something deeper is at play.**



The hyper personalisation of content **has cultivated the growth of niches**

While a whole swathe of the headline festivals like Falls, Groovin and Splendour have cancelled, smaller festivals like Golden Plains, Meredith et al are still going strong.

Similarly, bush doof culture is a resurgent force thriving throughout Australia. What do these smaller festivals and doofs have that these ones that folded don't?

The answer could well lie in the increasingly siloed nature of music fandom that has been facilitated by the growing capability of streaming algorithms. It's never been easier to deep dive into a niche.

"I think we are seeing the end of this multi-genre programming style, the 'there's something for everyone' approach to programming. People are developing more curated, niche taste that doesn't accord with the scatter-gun approach of larger music festivals."

"They're much more likely to save up and splurge on a Taylor Swift ticket, then go to a few music festivals across the year. So that level of passion is still there for music, but they're saving it for specific artists."
Dr Sam Whiting - Live Music Expert



Knotfest Melbourne 2023 review: explosive proof that metal is alive and well **NME**



Tickets To CMC Rocks 2024 Are Sold Out

As the 2024 edition is now sold out, it marks the seventh consecutive year of CMC Rocks selling out months ahead of time.



How bush doof music festival Esoteric won over the Victorian country town of Donald



Broken shoes and high spirits at Beyond The Valley 2024 **beat**



The idea that Gen Z is genre-agnostic is flawed – Pedestrian TV



The push back against **'The Industry'**

The other charge laid at these festivals is that they've sold out to the big corporate interest of the music industry, resulting in a loss of precious 'vibe'.

Large organisations in the music industry have come under fire from all angles in recent years, from record labels restricting the creative control of Raye, to Scooter Braun buying control of Taylor Swift's masters, the ticketing issues fans have experienced at the hands of Ticketmaster and the inflated prices pushed by labels like Live Nation.

There's a growing discontent with these big players and as we've seen with the adoption of "Taylor's Version" tracks, it's likely this has influenced people's feeling towards the festivals they choose.

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We can't write this without a nod to the line-up **which left many punters unimpressed...**



drewpallister 2w

Okay funny. So are we getting the real line up tomorrow at 8am?



1,108

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rumbo.ramone 2w

Turnstile needs to be at the Amphitheater, non negotiable



63

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c.j.mccarthy10 2w

AND THE CROWD WENT.... Mild.



693

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peter.olivieri.official 2w

I went to Splendour in 07 & 2010. Checked the line up for those years and some titans of the game were there:

Arctic Monkey's, The Strokes, Florence, Lily Allen, Spiderbait, Bag Raiders, Tame Impala, LCD SS, Band of Horses, Temper Trap, Wolf Mother, Hoods, British India, Foals, Bloc Party, Yea Sayer, Flight Facilities, Hot Chip, Mumford & Sons, Passion Pit...the list goes on. In 2011 Ye was here and Lorde played a few years later. A genuine question: has the standard of music 'changed'? This line up doesn't get me emotional like big Aus festival lines up used to. I feel something has been lost and it's to late in the evening to figure it out right now 😊

Al: Splendour has always felt like Australia's answer to Glastonbury or Coachella — broad appeal and a snapshot of music past and present. But this year that translates to a hodge podge that can't decide if it wants to skew young or old, and instead doesn't quite capture either demographic.

Al Newstead – ABC Music and Pop Culture Reporter

What could this mean for brands?

1

Highlights the importance of being proactive on updating your offer and not becoming complacent with your patronage. The AO changes at least 50% of its experience each year so that returning fans continue to be surprised and delighted

2

There's a fallacy in attributing too many problems to "financial constraints", and it could distract you from other issues you could deal with. Dig beyond the functional and financial factors beyond people's decisions

3

Stay true to your roots. How can you continue to progress and develop, while keeping faith to the soul and essence of your brand that people connected with in the first place?



Stay ahead of change

Get in touch to learn more:
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