



ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL 2 OCTOBER 2019

Item 4.3 Petition - Removal of ban on use of speakers by buskers

A Petition containing 276 signatures, was received from Port Melbourne resident Jacob Hapeta.

The Petition states the following:-

I humbly submit this petition in regard to the council ban on buskers use of speakers. The blanket ban on the use of speakers by this council is not supported by the Melbourne Council, right next door and is not supported state wide.

The following is a copy of the Melbourne Council Guidelines regarding sound management:

Sound from busking in the public realm has the potential to disrupt business trading, affect workplace performance and detract from public amenity. Even though on-street sound from busking contributes to the vibrancy of the city, it can be the cause of great discomfort for others when it is excessive. Amplification is permitted while busking in the city in order to balance the needs of a performer to be clearly heard against the reasonable amenity expectations of passers-by or people living or working in proximity. Amplification enables performers to:

- Save their voices from strain and damage.*
- Amplify quieter instruments which are not easy to hear above ambient sound levels.*
- Supply a backing track which provides rhythmic assistance, musical accompaniment or music backing for street theatre performances.*

Amplification will only be permitted with battery powered devices. Mains powered amplification is strictly prohibited. Generator powered batteries are prohibited.

It is my understanding that buskers must have and use a sound level app in their smart phone that measures the sound level and a reasonable level is allowed and set. As a musician the use of a speaker is integral to my art. I busk in the practice of my art. The use of sound equipment is not a matter of loudness alone but of clarity and smoothing out sound generated from instruments and vocals. Guitar and voice for instance are not as loud as a set of bagpipes or a trumpet. The voice is a fragile instrument that cannot take abuse without risk to health. A speaker allows the voice to be audible without risk to health. I have gathered the 276 signatures on this petition over the last few weeks while demonstrating the use of my speaker on Saturday mornings and the occasional Wednesday morning and have been grateful and overwhelmed with the support of the community. I make myself available to speak to this petition and humbly seek to submit it to council.

The Petition of the following named citizens draws the attention of the Council to conditions placed on Buskers in the city of Port Phillip in that they may not use speakers to enhance their performances to a suitably audible level. The council has placed a blanket ban on the use of speakers for buskers. All instruments and the human voice are not equal in their audible levels. A trumpet for instance is much louder than a singer with a guitar. That is the reason amplification was invented, that is to even out those audible levels within a group performance. We your humble petitioners believe that the blanket ban on speakers has the effect of limiting the acts of performers who wish to practice their art thru busking. A busker by definition is a street performer practising their art in the informal space of the street. This has been a time-honoured method for artists to practice their art all over the world for centuries.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives the Petition and requests that officers investigate the matter and prepare a response for a future Council meeting.

TRIM FILE NO: F19/1

ATTACHMENTS Nil