



**AUSTRALIAN
LIVE
MUSIC
BUSINESS
COUNCIL**

Competition and Consumer Amendment
(Unfair Trading Practices) Bill 2026

Submission to the Inquiry into the
**Competition and Consumer Amendment (Unfair Trading Practices)
Bill 2026**

May 2026

Submitted to: House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics

Submitted by: Australian Live Music Business Council (ALMBC)

Contact: contact@almbc.org.au | www.almbc.org.au

Executive Summary

The Australian Live Music Business Council (ALMBC) strongly supports the Competition and Consumer Amendment (Unfair Trading Practices) Bill 2026 (the Bill). The provisions it introduces directly address long-standing consumer harms that affect ALMBC members and their customers in the live music market every day.

The ALMBC has been advocating for the reforms contained in this Bill since the original Treasury consultation process, and our formal submission to that process documents in detail the specific practices in the live music and ticketing market that this Bill is designed to address.

Our specific areas of interest include:

- the prohibition of any hidden fees in ticketing
- the prohibition on conduct that unreasonably manipulates or distorts consumer decision-making
- the regulation of dynamic pricing for live music tickets
- the right of consumers to purchase tickets without being compelled to create an account
- ticketing transparency and safe holding of ticketing payments
- the proposed extension of unfair trading protections to small businesses, who make up the vast majority of ALMBC's membership

The ALMBC makes five core recommendations, set out in full at Section 6 of this submission.

1. About the Australian Live Music Business Council

The Australian Live Music Business Council (ALMBC) is the national peak body for Australia's grassroots live music industry. ALMBC represents over 2,000 members drawn from every part of the live music supply chain, including concert and festival promoters, venues, booking agents, artists, technical crew, ticketing companies, merchandise companies, production and infrastructure providers, catering companies, and many more.

ALMBC was established in 2020 to give a collective voice to the thousands of sole traders and small businesses that form the backbone of Australia's live music ecosystem. Our advocacy spans federal and state levels of government, and we have made formal submissions to Treasury on unfair trading practices in the live music and ticketing market, to the 2024 Parliamentary Inquiry into the live music industry, and to various other regulatory consultations affecting the sector.

The live music industry contributes significant employment and cultural value to the Australian economy. ALMBC members and their customers are directly and materially affected by the unfair trading practices this Bill seeks to address.

ALMBC Board Members

Name	Board Role	Company	Sector
Howard Adams	Chair & Secretary	Corner Soul	Legal
Angie Dunbavan	Deputy Chair	Red Chair	Promoter
Kylie Thompson	Treasurer	Sorrento Strategic	Accounting
Sharlene Harris	Director	ALH Group	Venues
Brian Chladil	Director	Oztix	Ticketing & Promoters
Stephen Wade	Director	Select Music	Artist Booking Agents
Jarrad Thessman	Director	Midnight Assembly	Events & Production
Andrew Bassingthwaight	Director	Xcelerate	Insurance & Risk
Hayley Ayres	Director	360 Artist Logistics	Promoters & Events
Larissa Jane Ryan	Director	Hutch Collective	Artist Development
Rod Smith	Director	Corner Group	Venues
Ben Tillman	Director	Yours & Owls	Agents & Promoters
Letisha Ackland	Director	Balya Productions	Logistics & Production

2. Overview of the Bill

The Competition and Consumer Amendment (Unfair Trading Practices) Bill 2026 was introduced in the House of Representatives on 1 April 2026 and, if passed, will commence on 1 July 2027. The Bill amends the Australian Consumer Law (ACL) to introduce:¹

- a general prohibition on unfair trading practices that unreasonably manipulate consumers or distort their decision-making environment and cause or are likely to cause detriment
- stronger disclosure obligations to combat drip pricing, requiring mandatory fees to be disclosed clearly and prominently whenever a price is displayed
- new subscription contract requirements including clear cancellation pathways and renewal notices

The ALMBC made a formal submission to the Treasury consultation that preceded the introduction of this Bill. The Bill's provisions are substantially consistent with the reforms ALMBC advocated for in that process, and we welcome the Government's decision to move to legislation.²

3. ALMBC's Position

The ALMBC broadly and strongly supports the Bill. The provisions it introduces represent a significant step forward in consumer protection for Australians attending live music events, and will go a substantial way toward addressing the commercial harm currently being done to ALMBC members by unfair practices in the ticketing and promotions markets.

The ALMBC agrees with the Government's stated intent that *"good businesses should succeed by offering better products and better service, not by building more cunning traps."* The live music industry's long-term health depends on audience trust, and that trust is being systematically eroded by opaque, manipulative practices in the ticketing market in particular.³

The recommendations in this submission are directed at strengthening the Bill and ensuring it operates effectively for the live music industry, and at identifying the areas where further reform is still needed.

¹**Competition and Consumer Amendment (Unfair Trading Practices) Bill 2026.** Parliament of Australia, 2026. https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bld=r7468

²**ALMBC Submission to Treasury: Unfair Trading Practices in the Live Music Industry.** Australian Live Music Business Council / Australian Treasury, 2024. <https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2025-04/c2024-602157-almbc.pdf>

³**Banning Unfair Trading Tricks and Traps.** Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP, Assistant Minister for Treasury, 2026. <https://ministers.treasury.gov.au/ministers/andrew-leigh-2025/media-releases/banning-unfair-trading-tricks-and-traps>

4. Key Issues for the Live Music Industry

4.1 Hidden Fees in Ticketing

The live music ticketing market is one of the clearest examples of hidden fees (including drip pricing) harm in Australia. ALMBC has documented and publicly raised concerns about major ticketing companies adding fees that are not disclosed. These fees are often hidden completely, unexplained, poorly labelled, and can represent charges up to three times those levied by independent ticketing operators for the same tickets.⁴

The impact of this practice is felt not just by consumers. ALMBC members who operate independent ticketing services or compete with major operators are placed at a structural commercial disadvantage: their all-inclusive pricing appears more expensive at the point of display than a competitor's drip-priced ticket, only for the consumer to encounter equivalent or higher total fees by the time they check out.

The Bill's requirement that any and all fees be disclosed clearly and prominently whenever a price is displayed is exactly the reform ALMBC has been calling for. We strongly support this measure to ensure there is no room for companies to include hidden fees and we urge the Committee to ensure the drafting is robust enough to capture all hidden and add-on fees in the ticketing context, including:

- booking fees
- service fees
- facility charges
- any other mandatory fee currently withheld until the point of checkout.

ALMBC also recommends that ACCC guidance issued under the Act specifically address the ticketing sector, given its well-documented history of drip pricing practices and hidden fees.

4.2 Dynamic Pricing

ALMBC has consistently argued that dynamic pricing for live music tickets should be prohibited or, at minimum, subject to stringent regulation. Dynamic pricing exploits consumer cognitive biases around scarcity and urgency, distorts the decision-making environment, and damages the long-term relationship between fans, artists, and the broader industry. International examples, including the widespread controversy surrounding Oasis ticket sales in the United Kingdom, have illustrated the reputational and commercial damage this practice causes.⁵

⁴**ALMBC: Unfair Trading Practices.** Australian Live Music Business Council, 2024. <https://almbc.org.au/unfair-trading-practices/>

⁵**The Future of Ticketing: Can Transparency and Technology End Scalping for Good?**. Australian Live Music Business Council, 2025. <https://almbc.org.au/the-future-of-ticketing-can-transparency-and-technology-end-scalping-for-good/>

While the Bill does not introduce a specific ban on dynamic pricing, ALMBC submits that dynamic pricing as currently practised in the live music market is capable of constituting an unfair trading practice under the general prohibition, given its reliance on artificial urgency cues and its tendency to cause financial detriment to consumers.

ALMBC's preferred position is that dynamic pricing for live music tickets be subject to a specific prohibition. If the Government is not prepared to introduce a specific prohibition at this time, ALMBC recommends at minimum:

- mandatory display of the standard ticket price alongside any dynamic price, so consumers can see the uplift clearly
- mandatory disclosure that dynamic pricing is in operation at the point the consumer first views the ticket
- a minimum consideration window preventing consumers from being forced into purchases under artificial time pressure
- an obligation to refund the price difference if a further release of tickets at lower prices occurs after a dynamically priced sale

ALMBC also recommends that the ACCC include dynamic pricing in the live music and entertainment market as a priority enforcement area under the general prohibition from the date of commencement.

4.3 Forced Account Creation

ALMBC has consistently advocated for the right of consumers to complete a ticket purchase without being compelled to create an account with a ticketing platform. Forced account creation serves the commercial interests of large ticketing companies by generating valuable consumer data, while providing no legitimate benefit to the consumer completing the purchase. It also creates a barrier to purchase that disproportionately affects less digitally confident consumers.

ALMBC submits that forced account creation as a condition of purchasing live music tickets constitutes an unfair trading practice under the general prohibition, as it unreasonably distorts the consumer's decision-making environment by creating friction that serves the business rather than the consumer. We recommend that the ACCC include forced account creation as an illustrative example of conduct likely to be captured by the general prohibition in any guidance published under the Act.

We do, however, understand that it is important for the resale market, to know who is the owner of the ticket.

4.4 Unfair Contracting Practices Affecting Artists and Contractors

ALMBC's submission to the 2024 Parliamentary Inquiry into the Live Music Industry identified a range of unfair contractual practices that affect artists and contractors (e.g. production, stall holders and more) working in the sector. These include festival and event promoters entering into arrangements with artists and crew that do not

provide fair recompense when an event cancels, leaving the financial risk carried almost entirely by sole traders and small business contractors.⁶

This can also include some fees charged by major venues in their contracts with artists and booking agents. While the Bill is primarily directed at consumer-facing conduct, ALMBC notes the deep relevance of these practices to the broader unfair trading framework. The same power imbalance that allows large operators to exploit consumers operates identically in their dealings with small business contractors across the live music supply chain.

ALMBC strongly welcomes the Government's announced consultation on extending unfair trading practice protections to small businesses and franchisees, and urges that the live music industry be engaged directly as part of that process. We expand on this point at Section 5 below.

4.5 Ticket Resale and Secondary Market Manipulation

While outside the strict terms of the Bill, ALMBC notes that ticket scalping and resale at inflated prices represents one of the most significant ongoing consumer harm issues in the live music space. ALMBC has been publicly advocating for transparent, fan-friendly ticketing legislation and for industry-wide adoption of technology solutions capable of eliminating scalping entirely.

We encourage the Government to use the momentum of this Bill to progress complementary reforms addressing secondary ticket market manipulation, including the regulation of resale platforms and the introduction of all-in pricing requirements for the secondary market.

4.6 Ticketing Safety

While also outside the strict terms of the Bill, ALMBC reiterates the importance of ticket income being held in trust, as is required in other industries such as (real estate, travel and more), in order to eliminate consumer risk and to:

- protect small businesses from insolvency or cancellation scenarios
- discourage unsustainable or speculative promotions
- make ticket companies compete on service, not on cash advances
- build long-term confidence in live music.

This follows previous statements and submissions made by the ALMBC.⁷

⁶ALMBC Submission to Parliamentary Inquiry into the Live Music Industry. Australian Live Music Business Council, 2024. <https://almbc.org.au/almbc-parliamentary-inquiry-submission/>

⁷ALMBC Statement on the Cancellation of Bluesfest 2026 <https://almbc.org.au/almbc-statement-on-the-cancellation-of-bluesfest/>

5. The Small Business Protection Gap

Whilst the Bill responds to the imbalance of power between major companies and the consumer very well, the ALMBC's primary concern with the Bill as currently drafted is that it does nothing to reduce the power imbalance between major companies and small business. This means that sole traders, micro-businesses, and small businesses, who make up the vast majority of ALMBC's membership, are not protected under the general prohibition in their interactions with larger commercial counterparties.

ALMBC members routinely face the same asymmetric practices in their business dealings as individual consumers face in theirs. The commercial impact on a sole trader booking agent or stall holder subjected to exploitative contractual terms by a major operator is similar to the impact on an individual consumer, except the financial implications may be substantially higher, with miscalculations sometimes leading to the forced closure of small businesses.

In ALMBC's submission to the Treasury consultation, we drew specific attention to this gap and the way it affects the many sole traders and micro-businesses across the live music supply chain.¹

The Government has announced targeted consultations on extending protections from unfair trading practices to small businesses and franchisees. ALMBC strongly supports this extension and asks the Committee to recommend that the Government:

- progress the small business consultation urgently, with a view to introducing complementary legislation on a timeline consistent with the Bill's 1 July 2027 commencement
- engage the live music industry directly as part of the consultation process, given the high proportion of sole traders and micro-businesses in the sector
- consider whether the threshold for 'small business' protection should be calibrated to the commercial realities of the live music industry, where many operators work at low scale and turnover

6. Recommendations

ALMBC makes the following recommendations to the Committee:

1. **Support the Bill's passage** and encourage its timely implementation from 1 July 2027, noting that the ACCC has already commenced enforcement action under existing ACL provisions against practices the Bill will prohibit.
2. **Strengthen the drip pricing and transparency provisions** by ensuring the drafting captures all mandatory add-on fees in the live music ticketing context. Direct the ACCC to issue sector-specific guidance for the ticketing industry.
3. **Direct the ACCC to treat dynamic pricing** in the live music and entertainment market as a priority enforcement area under the general prohibition, and to publish guidance addressing the circumstances in which dynamic pricing constitutes an unfair trading practice.
4. **Direct the ACCC to include forced account creation** as an illustrative example of conduct likely to be captured by the general prohibition in any consumer guidance issued under the Act.
5. **Progress the small business consultation urgently**, engage the live music industry directly as part of that process, and introduce complementary legislation on a timeline consistent with the Bill's 1 July 2027 commencement.

7. Conclusion

The Competition and Consumer Amendment (Unfair Trading Practices) Bill 2026 is a meaningful and long-overdue step forward for consumers and for the long-term health of Australia's live music industry. ALMBC has been advocating for many of the reforms it contains for several years, and we welcome their introduction strongly.

The live music industry depends on consumer confidence. When fans feel exploited by hidden fees, manipulative pricing, and opaque checkout processes, they reduce their participation in live events. That harms artists, venues, promoters, and every part of the live music supply chain. Getting this right is not just about consumer protection, it is about the cultural and economic future of one of Australia's most distinctive and beloved industries.

The ALMBC thanks the Committee for the opportunity to make this submission and is available to provide further evidence or clarification on any matters raised herein.

Australian Live Music Business Council

contact@almbc.org.au | www.almbc.org.au

May 2026