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State's most prestigious band comp ready to rock at Selina's

Live music provides the soundtrack to our lives. It provides social, cultural, and emotional value to us as both a community and individuals. As an industry, live music also accounts for 65,000 full-time and part-time jobs across the country and according to expert studies, for every dollar spent on live music, three dollars of benefit is returned to the wider community.

Over the past few years, live music was all but decimated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2020 alone reports show the Australian live music industry lost \$1.4 billion.

Now, as music venues continue to re-build post-pandemic, the local pub has a strong role to play in supporting the resurgence of our live music industry.

Long known as both an incubator of raw local talent, and home to stages that host some of the country's most beloved touring acts, local pubs have always been synonymous with live music.

This year, the Australian Hotels Association NSW has taken a new approach to its Rockin' the Puburbs band comp, including a live grand final at none other than the iconic Selina's Entertainment Centre within the Coogee Bay Hotel.

"We felt it was important this year to make sure that the connection between live music and local pubs played an important role in the campaign," AHA NSW Director Liquor and Policing John Green said.

"In past years the competition has been mostly online but post-pandemic, it's never been more important to support our live music industry in every way possible. One of the best ways to do that is with boots on the ground – turning up at gigs.

"So for us, it made sense to do this live and what better place than Selina's which has been showcasing some of the country's best live music acts for decades."

After a grueling statewide search, and hundreds of submissions received from some of the state's most talented musos, judges have now selected five finalists to compete in the live grand final event.

Finalists include:

- Dande and The Lion – Manly, NSW
- Jamie Lindsay – Central Coast, NSW
- LamBros. – Northern Beaches, NSW
- Roar Sky Harvey – Marrickville, NSW
- Wicked Things – Sydney Inner West, NSW

The finalists cross a number of musical genres, with Dande and The Lion a dual female-fronted band showcasing an electric mix of synth pop and indie rock, to Central Coast country singer Jamie Lindsay who kicked off his career as one of the Top 10 finalists in the prestigious Tamworth Country Music Festival's 'Star Maker.' LamBros., made up of brothers Connor and Harry Lambrou, brings an extremely unique sound to the event blending genres through the use of instruments such as the didgeridoo, distorted acoustic guitar and a thumping homemade hybrid drum-kit. Inner West bands Roar Sky Harvey and Wicked Things bring the rock with a mix of hard riffs and soaring vocals.

"We have been thrilled by the level of talent and diversity of our Rockin' the Puburbs entrants," Green said.

"These five finalists represent a number of musical genres from indie to country, rock, and folk.

"While these are very different styles of performance, they are a perfect representation of the diversity of music found in pubs right across NSW."

The five finalists will battle it out, live on stage in the Rockin' the Puburbs Grand Final event to be held at Selina's – Coogee Bay Hotel, from 7pm on Thursday, 23 February.

Guest judges on the night will include The Hon. John Graham MLC and 24-Hour Economy Commissioner Michael Rodrigues with others to be announced soon.

The winner will take home a \$15,000 prize package including an East Coast pub tour, dedicated tour publicist and cash.

Limited free tickets for the Grand Final are available to the public via <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/rockin-the-puburbs-grand-final-tickets-483537743407>

Image caption: Dande & The Lion. Photo credit Craig Wilson – Swamphouse Photography

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