



Media Release – For immediate release

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LPA calls for urgent stimulus response to protect \$2.5 billion industry

The economic stimulus package announced by the Federal Government yesterday will provide some welcome support for households and businesses, but will need to be expanded to cover other sectors of the economy as the public health response to COVID-19 continues to develop.

Live Performance Australia (LPA) has today called on the Federal Government to urgently work on a plan to support Australia's \$2.5 billion live performance industry due to escalating disruption caused by COVID-19.

"We're already seeing cancellation of events and touring programs across the country. We expect this to get worse with industry losing hundreds of millions of dollars and thousands of jobs," said LPA Chief Executive, Evelyn Richardson.

"In the event that governments upgrade their public health response to COVID-19 which forces the cancellation of live performance events, they need to in the short term urgently develop a targeted relief package to keep businesses operating.

"As a sector with high casual employment we would also urge the Federal Government to consider a program similar to Farm relief to make access to social security payments available in the event of a sector shut-down or significant loss of trade. Waiting periods should be waived.

"Consideration should also be given to extending the wage subsidy of fifty percent for apprentices and trainees to artists, performers, creatives and technical crew who are employed by companies.

"We believe it's possible to design measures that are targeted, scalable and temporary in terms of their budgetary impact, and which could be lifted once the current public health crisis is resolved.

"We also need to provide certainty for the ticket-buying public that while it's 'business as usual' for now, when things change in the future, the government will be there to support the industry through disruption.

"The impact of any forced closures will be huge and it's critical the government acts now to ensure companies survive and people stay employed. In the short term, business continuity is a priority while the recovery phase will require a stimulus package into the sector to help companies get back up and running and get consumers back out to shows and events.

"Many of our companies are vulnerable and within both the commercial and subsidised sectors, there are companies that will not have the balance sheet strength to withstand the combined impacts of box office failure and contract obligations, and some larger event cancellations may cause irreparable damage.

"Given the significant economic and social contribution of the live performance industry, including in regional areas, it is vital that government acts now to minimise business failure, loss of jobs and investment", Ms Richardson said.

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About LPA

LPA is the peak body for Australia's live performance industry. Established over 100 years ago in 1917 and registered as an employers' organisation under the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*, LPA has over 400 Members nationally. We represent commercial producers, music promoters, major performing arts companies, small to medium companies, independent producers, major performing arts centres, metropolitan and regional venues, commercial theatres, stadiums and arenas, arts festivals, music festivals, and service providers such as ticketing companies and technical suppliers. Our membership spans from small-medium and not-for-profit organisations to large commercial entities.

LPA has a clear mandate to advocate for and support policy decisions that ensure industry sustainability and future growth.