

SUPPORTACT

The heart & hand of Australian music

Support Act welcomes Federal Government funding for COVID-19 response

For release: Thursday, 9 April 2020: The Board, management and staff of **Support Act** have today welcomed the \$10 million funding package announced by the **Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development, Michael McCormack** and the **Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP**.

"Since COVID-19 shut down live performances across Australia last month, unprecedented numbers of musicians, road crew and other music workers have been turning to Support Act for crisis assistance," said Chairperson **Sally Howland**. *"Despite dozens of online fundraising campaigns by hundreds of artists over recent weeks, the organisation has been stretched to the absolute limit by these cries for help so today's announcement will be a game changer for the entire music community."*

The funding will enable **Support Act** to provide crisis relief to artists, crew and music workers who have lost their jobs and income as a result of COVID-19, and to upscale and extend access to the **Support Act Wellbeing Helpline** to all members of the arts industry.

"We applaud the Government for the assistance packages they have already provided - the JobSeeker and JobKeeper benefits will go a long way to providing a safety net for the majority of people in the music industry affected by the COVID-19 crisis and we encourage all eligible artists, crew and music workers to register for these benefits asap," said **Clive Miller, CEO Support Act**.

"This additional funding from the Government will enable us to ensure that Support Act can provide short term financial support to those artists, crew and music workers who fall through the cracks for any reason and are unable to access Government Benefits; and those who are injured, unwell or have a mental health issue that is preventing them from being able to work."

Mr Miller also acknowledged the increasing need for mental health and wellbeing support across the music industry.

The **Support Act Wellbeing Helpline** is a free, confidential phone counselling service that is available to anyone working in Australian music who is concerned about any aspect of their mental health and wellbeing. Since its establishment in June 2018, it has provided more than 1,100 hours of counselling support to people in the music industry; and more recently to performing arts workers in Australia as part of our partnership with **Arts Wellbeing Collective**.

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"An immediate first step as a result of receiving this funding will be to extend access to the Helpline to all members of the arts sector," Miller said.

The **Support Act** Board is also meeting today to establish an industry task force to help ensure that the funds are administered in a timely and efficient manner.

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For further information, please contact:

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Notes to the Editor:

Support Act is Australia's most prominent music industry charity. It was established with support from founding members, **ARIA PPCA** and **APRA AMCOS**, and incorporated as a public company limited by guarantee on 7 August 1997. It was granted charity status in 2000. The **Support Act Wellbeing Helpline** was established in June 2018 with financial support from **The Tony Foundation** and **Levi's**. It is delivered in partnership with **AccessEAP**.