

‘Crippling long-term effect’: Arts industry leaders want roadmap to full theatres, venues

By Nick Miller

More than 200 of Melbourne’s leading figures in the arts, entertainment and hospitality have signed an [open letter](#) pleading with the Chief Health Officer and government to ease venue restrictions as quickly as possible in the wake of the “circuit breaker” lockdown.

They say they urgently need a roadmap and timeline to return to pre-lockdown settings, in order to plan and survive. The recent fourth extended lockdown in Melbourne has further devastated these industries, the letter says.



Missy Higgins, Natalie Bassingthwaight and Julia Morris have signed an open letter to the Victorian government asking for a roadmap back to pre-lockdown settings.

“Melbourne has long prided itself on being the food, cultural and entertainment capital of Australia but the repeated lockdowns, coupled with a very slow return to viable venue operational capacities, are having a crippling long-term effect and have brought our industries to the brink of collapse,” the letter says.

“Our sectors are facing financial ruin due to a lack of trust, understanding and meaningful dialogue. For social, creative and economic reasons we must be trusted to literally stand on our own two feet. Trust us, we won’t let you down.

“We appreciate the need to respect epidemiological science and the need for the occasional imposition of restrictions. However, we urge you to consider the application of the science in sanctioning a return to the levels of business

operations that applied immediately prior to the reimposition of blanket restrictions on Thursday 29 May.”

The letter was written by Live Nation’s Roger Field and includes the signatures of high-profile names including Missy Higgins, Natalie Bassingthwaite and Julia Morris, music industry leaders Paul Dainty, Matt Gudinsky and the heads of Mushroom Group, leading theatre producer Michael Cassel, the owners and managers of many of Melbourne’s most popular music and hospitality venues, the managers of many of the city’s leading theatre venues, and the heads of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Theatre Company and The Australian Ballet.