



News release

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Live theatre tax incentive to support creative future made in Australia

The introduction of a 40 per cent tax offset for the costs of live theatre production would support the creation of more than 4,000 new jobs and add almost half a billion dollars in industry value.

According to new modelling prepared for Live Performance Australia – the peak body for the live arts and entertainment industry – the tax offset would support the creation of 168 new theatrical productions across the commercial and not for profit sectors.

The tax offset would also produce a positive net tax position for the Commonwealth Government.

Live Performance Australia is calling for the introduction of the Live Theatre Tax Offset to attract more private investment into live theatre making in Australia and to help establish an ongoing source of funding alongside existing revenue from ticket sales, sponsors and donors, and public funding.

‘Australia is currently not a competitive destination for investment in live theatre due to the absence of any production tax incentives, and we are missing out on private investment that instead is going to the UK or US’ said Evelyn Richardson, Chief Executive of Live Performance Australia (LPA).

The LPA proposal is based on schemes already in place for the screen and digital games industries in Australia, as well as the Theatre Tax Relief scheme which has operated in the UK since 2014.

‘If we want to see more Australian made live theatre on our stages, with more job opportunities and career pathways for Australian performers, production and technical crews, then we need a game-changing investment in our creative future,’ Ms Richardson said.

LPA and leading Australian theatre producers are visiting Canberra today to discuss the proposal with a number of MPs across the Federal Parliament.



Carmen Pavlovic, CEO of Global Creatures (*Moulin Rouge The Musical, Strictly Ballroom, Muriel's Wedding*) said: 'We're in a global contest for the significant sums of investment that are required to bring successful shows to Australian audiences.'

'We need to make Australia a much more attractive destination for investors in live theatre, or they will continue to put their money into UK and US-made productions where there are better incentives to do so.'

'A tax offset for the Australian theatre industry could replicate the success of the film and television sectors, fostering a thriving industry that promotes Australian stories at home and abroad, commanding international respect and prominence,' Ms Pavlovic said.

Torben Brookman, Director of GWB Entertainment (*Death of a Salesman, Groundhog Day, Miss Saigon, Matilda, Lord of the Rings*) said: 'A tax incentive scheme is vital to stimulate more local and international private investment in the Australian live theatre industry.'

'Without tax incentives, work that could be done here, from creative development through to set design and construction, is going offshore to the UK or US where production costs are reduced through tax incentive schemes.'

'Making more live theatre in Australia also presents huge export opportunities, particularly in Asia, through touring and the licensing of Australian-made theatre to other producers.'

Fiona Allan, CEO of Opera Australia said: 'I have seen first-hand the transformational impact of the Theatre Tax Relief scheme for both the not for profit and commercial sectors in the UK.'

'Against a backdrop of declining government funding, it has been fundamental to the long term outlook for the industry, as well as driving new partnerships between publicly funded and commercial organisations.'

'Tax offsets for production reduce the risk involved in bringing performances to the stage, underpinning the financial sustainability of theatre makers and supporting the career paths for their performers and creative teams.'

Anne Dunn, Executive Director and co-CEO of Sydney Theatre Company said: 'A Live Theatre Tax Offset helps theatre companies to be more adventurous in their programming and present works for a more diverse range of audiences.'

'It would enable us to better afford investing the time and money that is needed to support the development of new and innovative Australian work that connects with audiences.'

'Encouraging more private investment in Australian live theatre will help us deliver on the ambition set out in the National Cultural Policy, *Revive*, for more Australian stories being told in more places.'

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