

Creative Economy Taskforce

Statement—10 September 2021

The Creative Economy Taskforce strongly endorses the importance of vaccinations for Australia’s reopening. Vaccinations are the pathway to getting shows back on, workers back in jobs and communities enjoying the activities which lift our spirits, keep us connected and boost the economic recovery. In addition, national consistency and clarity on when businesses will be able to resume operations is urgently needed to retain skilled workers and to factor in the long lead-times for delivering live performances.

Australia’s cultural and creative industries are critically important for the economy, contributing \$115 billion and employing over 600,000 Australians. The sector has been hit hard by COVID-19 impacts such as restrictions on mass gatherings and venue capacities, domestic and international border closures, and recurrent snap lockdowns.

The Creative Economy Taskforce welcomes the Government’s additional investments in the cultural and creative sector and broader economy as being critical lifelines through this difficult period. The sector has innovated and adapted as much as possible within ongoing constraints, and will be able to fully reopen in a viable manner when there is more widespread vaccination coverage.

In accordance with the National Plan to transition Australia’s National COVID-19 Response, national agreement on reopening parameters is essential to provide confidence and certainty for all businesses, including minimal restrictions on capacity that are consistent with other industries such as sport. A nationally consistent pathway for reopening is especially important for businesses involving tours and skilled workers from multiple jurisdictions.

Live performances are only financially viable at full capacities, which can be managed in a COVIDSafe manner as already demonstrated in various Australian locations. The arts and entertainment sector also has long lead-times for planning, securing creative talent and creative development such as rehearsals. The sector therefore requires certainty about future health settings now to be ready to launch events when higher vaccination rates are achieved.

Australia can learn from best practice models overseas, especially in Europe and North America, where many countries are normalising “living with COVID” and reopening with full capacities at events and minimal restrictions, such as face masks and proof of vaccination upon entry.

The Creative Economy Taskforce is encouraged by the take-up of vaccinations by people across Australia and urges those who are not yet vaccinated to consider doing so as soon as they are eligible. Once we reach the nationally agreed rates of vaccination coverage, we can all get back to doing the activities which bring us joy and contribute to our economy.

The Creative Economy Taskforce is composed of eminent leaders within Australia’s cultural and creative sector who provide advice and support to the Government on the creative economy, particularly as Australia rebuilds from the effects of COVID-19. Further information is available at www.arts.gov.au/covid-19-update/creative-economy-taskforce.