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Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
Department of the Senate
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We are writing in support of the proposed Live Performance Federal Insurance Guarantee Fund referred to in the *Live Performance Federal Insurance Guarantee Fund Bill 2021*, or a similar measure.

CDP Theatre Producers is a small-medium independent commercial production house based in Sydney but touring widely throughout regional, rural and metropolitan Australia. We create, perform and tour works, primarily for young audiences, and are proud to have played to millions of Australians since our company was founded in 1990. CDP has one of the most extensive touring footprints in Australia – our works have been seen everywhere from Sydney Opera House to Carnarvon WA or Ayr QLD.

As a small independent commercial producer, our tours cover a range of funded or commercial arrangements. Some are supported by Federal Government schemes such as Playing Australia (where their regional nature makes them unviable without support), some by RISE, and many are not supported by funding but delivered on a wholly commercial basis.

We were the first professional company to tour interstate after the 2020 national lockdown, and one of the first to recommence professional performances at all; We are very grateful to our partner venues throughout Australia for their flexibility and their willingness to take managed risks to make these things possible

While we have used a wide range of strategies to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 related disruptions (lockdowns, border closures and capacity restrictions), no internal strategy can effectively reduce risk to manageable levels in a the current – and post-lockdown – operating environment. While we are very grateful to the NSW Government for its recent Industry Support packages, which have mitigated some of our losses in our home state, we have nonetheless suffered substantial losses relating to activity in other states. While the Office for the Arts have been wonderfully supportive and flexible in relation to tours funded under the Playing Australia program, these represent only a portion of our activity and tours which would normally not require any government support at all are at serious risk of not proceeding.

In the absence of an insurance scheme (or similar), all participants in the touring landscape face significant barriers to confirming activity; given the lead times involved in live events and touring, this absence of certainty leads to the very real risk of live performance calendars being empty well into next year. The higher costs and lower revenues involved in touring to regional Australia means that these impacts could very easily flow into 2023, leaving Regional Australia well behind the cities in recovery.

An Insurance Guarantee Fund would make an immediate difference to confidence within the live events and touring sectors, encouraging artists, crew, producers, presenters and venues to commit to future activity and contributing to the recovery of the sector. As Australia continues to progress on the roadmap to reopening, risks to the fund should decline, meaning that a relatively small investment could have an enormous positive impact on the sector and lead to much better performance outcomes for Australian audiences whether they be in metropolitan, regional or rural areas.

We commend the proposal to the Committee.

Regards

Andrew Threlfall
Director

Yolande White
Director