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14 September 2021

Live Performance Federal Insurance Guarantee Fund Bill 2021 before the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee

Dear Members of the Committee,

Opera Australia, along with every arts organisation in the country, has been under enormous pressure this last 20 months. Opera Australia's recent postponements are well publicised. From 26 June 2021 to date the company has been unable to perform, postponing over 300 performances and forgoing \$36m in lost box office sales.

Moreover, there remains the potential for further losses: potential infections in the workplace; further LGA restrictions; restricted workforce; supply issues; potential future postponements and associated sunk costs; as well as the impact on sales of further border restrictions.

Opera Australia is a major provider of cultural activities across Australia, in addition to providing ongoing support for smaller arts companies. In 2019 Opera Australia presented 775 performances, attended by over 660,000. It was also the largest arts employer in Australia, with 1,495 employees, in addition to numerous contractors and providers, in that year.

Opera Australia remains the nation's largest arts employer. We support a large, fixed workforce: orchestra, chorus, lead artists, a manufacturing team of remarkable abilities. We are committed to retaining our talented workforce.

Opera Australia is highly supportive of a Live Performance Federal Insurance Guarantee. An Insurance Guarantee would provide greater industry confidence to reactivate live events. In a climate of unpredictable restrictions and variable patron confidence it can offset the significant commercial risks associated with event cancellations or postponements due to a COVID-19 outbreak or re-introduction of COVID-19 related government restrictions.

The need is urgent: the livelihoods of arts workers, the performing arts and night-time economies of the nation depend upon it.

We look forward to seeing the detail of such a scheme soon.

Yours sincerely,

Rory Jeffes, CEO

Patron-in-Chief
DR HARUHISA HANDA

 The International
Foundation for
Arts and Culture