

**Additional information from Adelaide Fringe - hearing 3 July 2023
received 4 July 2023**

Thanks for your time and energy in such robust discussions during the Senate, Environment and Communications References Committee hearing in Port Adelaide July 3rd 2023.

We would like to provide the following information in regards to the conversations today, it was difficult to participate on the phone at times.

We are excited to see the Cultural Policy take shape, we are particularly excited about the following initiatives;

- First Nation First and the introduction of a First Nations-led Board for Creative Australia
- Works of Scale presents a great opportunity and we are keen to hear more on this framework.

Some further information on our discussions:

- We need to see Festivals represented in the framework and understand more holistically the part they play in the cultural eco-system. There is currently no Head of Practice that represents Festivals in Creative Australia, other counterparts like Creative New Zealand have this as a key part of their leadership models. This supports us as an industry to have someone who can advocate and collaborate with us within Creative Australia. Festival Australia funding was mentioned but this prioritises regional outcomes. We would like to see festivals funding available and especially festival funding that had criteria of delivering opportunities for Australian Artists. Adelaide Fringe is the biggest arts festival in Australia but we receive no funding from the Federal Govt. We are hoping to be able to access support in the new landscape.
- This year Adelaide Fringe sold 1 million tickets, the box office is how the artists and venues recoup their funds in Fringe so ticket sales are crucial. Fringe aims to be affordable and inclusive - the average ticket price is \$36 which makes it hard for artists and venues to break even without some additional funding. Federal Funds would have a huge impact.
- In response to why Adelaide Fringe was so successful this year it's important to note that the growth of Fringe has been delivered year-on-year; a game-changing intervention 7 years ago was our digital transformation with a new ticketing system that was focused on easy customer journey which has driven ticket sales growth. And this year was specifically successful because of the extra investment from the State Government - we were able to disperse this State funding to artists to help them put on their shows in Fringe and we also invested in initiatives to grow tourist numbers. We attracted 45,000 cultural tourists who bought a lot of tickets and also spent a lot in the wider economy.
- In regards to the skills shortage and filling the gap with migrants and temporary skills, the current option many people use is the Temporary Activity Visa (subclass 408) Entertainment Activities stream. Unfortunately this restricts entrants to only working for one organisation if they intend to stay in Australia for longer than 3 months. The nature of the industry is such that the entrant would work at multiple Festivals within one entry period. For example a box office staff member or sound technician could work Perth Fringe World in January, travel and work in Adelaide Fringe Feb and March and then go onto work at Melbourne International Comedy Festival in April – a very regular circuit but 4 months is required. This is currently not a viable option under this VISA type it also prohibits different Festival's from employing a specific skill, for example riggers who are used in the build and pack down of site but not in its open operations could be shared amongst many Festivals such as Adelaide Fringe Adelaide Festival and WOMAD who are all

requiring this specific skill within a 8 – 10 week period. I would request a revision of the Temporary Activity visa (subclass 408) Entertainment Activities stream in order to find a more suitable and flexible approach to employment within the Festivals industry, this is especially relevant in the current skills shortage and with the rising cost of travel for specific skills entrants the sector must collaborate to use appropriate resources.

Many thanks,

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