

Queensland Symphony Orchestra Player's Committee

Thursday, 10th of September 2020

The Honourable Paul Fletcher MP
Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts

Dear Minister,

I write to you on behalf of our musicians in the Queensland Symphony Orchestra (QSO), and also in support of all those in our industry suffering at this time. Arts companies are struggling for survival at the moment, and without the ability to generate income through ticket sales and fulfilling partnership obligations, it's imperative solutions are found.

The Arts industry is arguably one of the hardest hit industries during this COVID pandemic. It has been well documented that we were one of the first industries to be shut down, and will be one of the last to be back to business as usual. It is also well known that cultural and creative activity generates a staggering \$111 billion dollars into the Australian economy, representing 6.4% of the Gross Domestic Product¹.

The musicians in Australian orchestras are of the highest calibre. We hone our specialised skills over years of hard work, practice and effort. Those of us masterful enough to secure a position in one of our fine orchestras has done so because they have proven they work as part of a team. Just like a sporting team we are not easily replaced or substituted by understudies on game day.

Opera Australia Orchestra has recently faced redundancies. Whilst acknowledging all arts companies will need to adapt to see us through this crisis, redundancies are not the answer. Uniquely skilled and irreplaceable people will be lost from the industry in favour of a casual workforce and we will be poorer as a result. The \$35million Arts Sustainability Package announcement was a welcome relief but the implementation has been too slow. We implore you and your government to act swiftly to ensure Australia's cultural future is secure. What is Australia's most iconic building, the Sydney Opera House, without an Opera Company?

At QSO we are coping with the ongoing crisis through the combined efforts of management, staff and musicians. We continue to operate in the spirit of collaboration with a supportive and transparent management who consistently consult with all stakeholders. We wish the same for our colleagues in Opera Australia Orchestra, indeed all our colleagues across the country, and hope that with support from the Arts Minister, their positions are secured so that they may continue to enrich the lives of all Australians.

Player's Committee President on behalf of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra Musicians



Lauren Manuel

¹<https://www.communications.gov.au/departmental-news/economic-value-cultural-and-creative-activity>