

West Australian Symphony Orchestra Players' Association

445 Hay St
Perth
WA 6000

12 September 2020

The Hon Paul Fletcher MP
Minister for Communication, Cyber Safety and the Arts

Dear Minister,

On behalf of the musicians of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra I would like to express our dismay on hearing the news that Opera Australia is planning a large number of company-wide redundancies including a significant portion of the world-class Opera Australia Orchestra.

The proposed orchestral redundancies will have a devastating impact on the artistic quality of future Opera Australia productions. It is well recognised that, as with any elite team, it takes years to build an ensemble of the calibre of the Opera Australia Orchestra and this quality cannot be achieved by assembling a disparate group of freelance musicians.

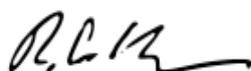
We acknowledge that OA, like arts companies worldwide, is struggling with the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic yet we find it puzzling that the management of OA has not sought to work collaboratively with its employees to find a collective solution. Here at WASO we have been working closely with our management since the beginning of the pandemic and together we have found ways to deal with the unfolding situation and the uncertain future ahead.

The current plans of Opera Australia to enforce these redundancies is particularly short sighted given that the Company is receiving the JobKeeper wage subsidy. We urge Opera Australia to meet with the employee representatives to work out a viable solution to the current crisis so that the Company emerges from this pandemic stronger and more cohesive than ever.

We call on Government to take a greater leadership role to ensure the financial health and viability of Opera Australia and the rest of the arts sector through these unprecedented times and beyond. Financial support must be delivered before it is too late, and the Australian arts community is irretrievably damaged.

Australia deserves better.

Yours sincerely,



Rachael Kirk
President, WASO Players' Association
On behalf of the Musicians of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra