



MEDIA RELEASE

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Musicians' union welcomes \$250 minimum fee for gigs

The introduction of a \$250 minimum fee for government subsidised gigs in Victoria will put much needed money into the pockets of musicians.

Musicians Australia (part of the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance) has welcomed inclusion of the \$250 minimum fee in the latest package of support for the live music industry by the Victorian Government and congratulates their comprehensive response to the needs of the live music industry.

Artists and musicians booked to play at gigs, festivals, concerts – or even busking spots - funded through the Victorian Government's Live Music Restart must be paid at least \$250 each. This is the first time a \$250 minimum fee has been put in place in Victoria and can be applied as direct payments or guarantees to mitigate the risk to artists where they promote their own shows.

"For almost two years, work has been non-existent for performing musicians, but even before the pandemic, too often gigs were unpaid," said Kimberley Wheeler, the president of the Victorian branch of MEAA Musicians.

"If you pour beers at a pub or wait tables you'll get a minimum wage by law but if you're standing in the corner of the pub, holding a guitar and singing, you can be playing for peanuts.

"So it's great to not only see government funding to help the live music sector get back on its feet, but to also have a commitment from the state government requiring paying musicians a minimum wage."

The director of Musicians Australia and MEAA Musicians, Paul Davies, said Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia had all now endorsed the union's minimum fee of \$250 in principle or in practice.

"The NSW upper house has also adopted a minimum fee but it is yet to become law because the Perottet government has failed to follow through.

"Australia's largest state must act immediately to introduce the \$250 minimum fee or risk being left behind as a centre of live music by the other states."

The announcement has also been welcomed by Music Victoria.

"This commitment goes straight to the heart of our industry – our musicians," said Music Victoria chief executive officer Simone Schinkel.

"While it's tied to funded activities, it's also the start of a much bigger conversation, that we at Music Victoria will continue to progress with society at large. Our aim is to ensure that the holistic value of music is widely understood and appreciated, resulting in greater sustainability of music industry careers."

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Victorian Minister for Creative Industries Danny Pearson said the state government was proud to back the payment for the Live Music Restart Package.

“Without musicians, Victoria’s amazing music scene doesn’t exist,” Mr Pearson said.

“Our \$20 million Live Music Restart Package is getting the music industry back to business. We are supporting venues, festivals and events that create work for thousands of musicians and music workers, and bring incredible live music experiences to audiences across the state.

“Every performer in every performance funded through this package will be paid a minimum of \$250 – it’s the right way to get Victorian music on the road again.”

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