

# An Open Letter To Greg Hywood

May 6, 2017

We are former arts editors of Fairfax who are appalled at plans to cut coverage of the arts and axe the jobs of its specialist journalists.

Arts journalism requires deep and detailed knowledge of our culture. For generations, Fairfax has fostered this and has been a leader in its coverage of our cultural debates and artistic endeavours.

Arts coverage is not the cherry on the cake to be dispensed with when the economic going gets tough but essential to a vibrant, healthy, civilized society.

We need arts coverage that provides insight into the cultural forces that shape the social and political landscape. Arts reporting provides a vital bridge between artists and audiences, allowing readers to make informed choices about the cultural offerings in their city and the ideas that inform them.

Informed, properly resourced arts coverage lifts the lid on the business and financial side of our arts companies and cultural institutions, providing scrutiny of how public money is being spent and how decisions are being made in some of our most important state and national institutions.

Governments recognise that arts and cultural events are big drivers of the economy - surely Fairfax can also see the economic value of robust and well-informed reporting of those events.

Arts coverage – a review or interview – is often the only enduring record of a performing arts event. Without this, creative voices are silenced and our culture is diminished.

The arts are about ideas – at times these are surprising, unruly and confronting. Downgrading arts coverage to simply celebrity red-carpet events robs Fairfax's platforms of their intellect and creative heart.

Cultures are valued by the art they produce, and remembered by the art they leave behind.

Let not Fairfax be remembered as the news organisation that killed our culture.

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