



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP

Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$4 million lifeline to sustain Opera Australia during the pandemic

Opera Australia has been allocated \$4 million from the Morrison Government's \$35 million COVID-19 Arts Sustainability Fund, to support the ongoing viability of this vitally important national arts company.

The Morrison Government established the \$35 million Sustainability Fund in June 2020 as part of the \$250 million Creative Economy COVID Support Package. With additional funding added since then, the total amount committed to the package now stands at \$430 million.

The purpose of the Sustainability Fund is to provide support to systemically significant major arts companies, should they face a risk of not being able to sustain themselves to reach the end of the pandemic and return to normal operations.

Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, said Opera Australia employs more than 400 arts workers, including costume makers, crew, and set designers.

"Opera Australia has the largest annual revenue of the arts companies supported by the Australia Council. It is the biggest employer amongst them. In a normal year it presents a large number of high quality productions in Sydney, Melbourne and other cities, trains many people who go on to work elsewhere in the arts in Australia and globally, and it has specialised resources and capabilities that, if lost, would be a blow not just to this company but to Australia's entire arts ecosystem," Minister Fletcher said.

"The Morrison Government is committed to a sustainable and vibrant creative sector, which is why we acted quickly in establishing this fund last year to support Australia's leading arts organisations to continue employing hundreds of workers, provide unsurpassable experiences to Australian audiences, and drive economic activity in their communities."

The Government's decision to commit this \$4 million of funding comes after the recent announcement from Opera Australia that the Sydney lockdown has required it to postpone *Phantom of the Opera*, which had been intended as a major revenue-generating production in the second half of 2021.

To date, grants have been provided to ten organisations under the Sustainability Fund.

This \$4 million funding commitment is in addition to support the Morrison Government continues to provide via the Australia Council to Opera Australia and the Opera Australia Orchestra, in partnership with the NSW and Victorian State Governments.

CEO of Opera Australia Rory Jeffes said he greatly appreciates the Federal Government's recognition of the important role that Opera Australia represents in the sector, with all the flow on effects that benefit the broader world of live performance.

"The desperately needed support through the sustainability fund announced today does not solve the difficulties we face but is certainly a boost to morale in these dark days - and allows us to be more confident of at least the immediate future," Mr Jeffes said.

The Morrison Government is investing more than \$1 billion into the arts and creative sector in 2021-22.

Following this funding commitment to Opera Australia, almost \$15 million remains in the Sustainability Fund, which is still open and accepting applications.

For more information on the Sustainability Fund, please visit: <https://www.arts.gov.au/funding-and-support/arts-sustainability-fund>

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Ten organisations have already been supported through the Sustainability Fund:

Organisation Name	Funding Amount
Melbourne Symphony Orchestra	\$3,000,000
Melbourne Art Foundation	\$330,000
National Institute of Dramatic Art	\$3,750,000
Museum of Contemporary Art	\$2,000,000
Australian Brandenburg Orchestra	\$1,140,000
Queensland Ballet	\$1,900,000
The Wheeler Centre	\$500,000
Belvoir	\$500,000
Sydney Theatre Company	\$2,013,163
Opera Australia	\$5,035,600