



THE HON PAUL FLETCHER MP

Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$5.5 million lifeline to sustain three leading arts organisations

Three leading arts organisations across Australia will share in \$5.5 million from the Morrison Government's \$50 million COVID-19 Arts Sustainability Fund, to support their ongoing viability through the pandemic.

Circus Oz and Design Tasmania are the newest recipients of grants, with Opera Australia receiving a third grant from the Fund.

The Government's decision to commit another \$5 million of funding to Opera Australia comes after the recent announcement that the company will have to cancel their season of the *Ring Cycle*, a further blow after the postponement of *Phantom of the Opera* last month.

Minister for Communications, Urban Infrastructure, Cities and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, said this funding will provide a lifeline to these major arts employers and will support them in their recovery from the devastating impacts of COVID-19.

"We know the arts sector continues to face challenges unique to their industry, which is why we acted quickly in establishing the Sustainability Fund last year to support Australia's leading arts organisations and keep their artists employed." Minister Fletcher said.

"This targeted assistance will provide critical support to Circus Oz, Design Tasmania and Opera Australia, as these leading arts employers make sure they are still in operation and ready to deliver world-class performances to audiences across Australia, when we emerge from the pandemic."

The Morrison Government designed the \$35 million Sustainability Fund in June 2020 to provide a pathway to recovery for significant Australian arts organisations. With additional funding added since then, the fund now stands at \$50 million – part of the \$475 million Creative Economy COVID Support Package.

Rachel Healy, Creative Economy Taskforce member and Co-Artistic Director of the Adelaide Festival, said she encourages any small to medium arts organisation in receipt of multi-year funding to consider an application to this essential funding program.

"These organisations need financial assistance now so they can retain highly skilled staff and quickly scale back up to deliver creative events and activities for the benefit of all Australians when it is safe to do so," Ms Healy said.

To date, more than half of the \$50 million Sustainability Fund has been allocated to support 12 organisations, keeping more than 2,000 artists and arts workers employed.

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

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