**Greens to move to protect arts, entertainment and event industry in Senate**

Wednesday, 8 April 2020

With workers in the arts, entertainment and event industry largely left out of the JobKeeper program despite being one of the hardest hit by the Coronavirus crisis, the Greens will move an amendment to the legislation when it comes before the Senate today to plug these gaps and call for a tailored package for the sector.

“Australia’s arts, creative and entertainment sector has been smashed by COVID-19, with events cancelled, productions closed and projects shut down,” Greens Spokesperson for the Arts and Tourism Senator Sarah Hanson-Young said.

“The Government and Opposition should back the Greens amendment to ensure today’s $130 billion package does not exclude these crucial workers and Australian businesses.

“Leaving our arts and entrainment industry workers out in the cold is not good enough and will have long-term ramifications for Australia’s cultural fabric and international relations and exports.

“The Federal Government has shown a complete lack of understanding about work structures in the arts, entertainment and events industries, which is now to the detriment of hundreds of thousands of workers. Many workers have already lost their entire year’s income with projects shut down.

“The Greens, and industry groups, the union and artists, freelancers and crews have tried to explain the many ways businesses and workers in the sector are excluded by the arbitrary rules in the JobKeeper Program but the government still hasn’t budged.

“It is the nature of the arts, entertainment and events industry and the hospitality and tourism industries that workers are often transient and engaged on short-term contracts, from production to production, festival to festival.

“Even workers on some of Australia’s longest running and most loved TV shows like Neighbours and Wentworth are unable to receive the JobKeeper payment, highlighting that the intent of the Program to keep workers connected with their employers is not being achieved.

“It is unfair to penalise people who work very hard and contribute so much to our economy simply because of their work structure, and this huge flaw should be fixed today.

“The Greens amendment also calls for a tailored package for the arts, entertainment and creatives industry to provide adequate support immediately and to assist recovery after the crisis.

“The Australia Council Four Year Funding for Organisations announcement last week was another big blow for our arts sector at a time when they are already suffering. The funding the Government has cut to Australia Council over many years should be restored and increased to expand access for individuals and organisations to access grants, which will be crucial for recovery of this $112billion sector.

“The Greens are also calling for the establishment of a Content Creator Fund to set aside a grant fund of $50 million each year for the production of local content. This fund will support high quality local content, our creative industry and, importantly, allow Australians to keep telling their own stories. This goes hand-in-hand with the call for local content requirements for broadcast, radio, subscription and streaming services like Netflix, Amazon, Stan, Apple and Spotify to finally level the playing field.

“The Morrison Government has neglected the arts, entertainment and creative industry for far too long and these support initiatives were needed long before Coronavirus hit, but now they are more important than ever or there might not be an industry left on the other side of this crisis.”

The amendment in the name of Senator Hanson-Young

But the Senate is of the opinion that:

1. The arts, entertainment, creative and events industries, and hospitality and tourism industries have been severely hit by this crisis and are not getting adequate support from this Package, and the Senate calls on the Treasurer to ensure the following categories of businesses and workers are able to access the JobKeeper Program:

a) Casual workers who have not been with the same employer for 12 months;

b) Freelance performers, content creators, and crew who are engaged as direct employees on short-term contracts on a project by project basis but are not registered as a business;

c) Businesses that do not have a consistent stream of linear revenue across the year, such as those working on screen and stage productions, festivals and events, and therefore the revenue test is not applicable and should instead be for a comparable period not month;

d) Entities that are established as dedicated Special Purpose Vehicles which is common in the arts, entertainment and events sectors for individual projects, and are unlikely to meet the various tests and requirements therefore excluding many workers.

2. The arts, entertainment and creatives industry needs a tailored package to provide adequate support immediately and to assist recovery after the crisis, and this should include:

a) restoring and increasing Australia Council funding to expand access for individuals and organisations to access grants;

b) establish a Content Creator Fund to set aside a grant fund of $50 million each year for the production of local content. This fund will support high quality local content, our creative industry and, importantly, allow Australians to keep telling their own stories;

c) local content requirements for broadcast, radio, subscription and streaming services, like Netflix, Amazon, Stan, Apple and Spotify.