

A New Approach (ANA)

8 January 2024

COVID-19 Response Inquiry Panel
Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Response Inquiry

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A New Approach (ANA) welcomes this opportunity to make a submission. ANA is the national think tank focused on arts and culture, ensuring Australia secures its place as a cultural powerhouse. Through credible and independent public leadership, ANA helps build an ambitious and innovative policy and investment environment for arts, culture and creativity.

ANA research shows that arts and culture have an inseparable and transformative presence in the lives of everyday Australians.¹ Our research also shows cultural and creative industries faced substantial COVID-19 impacts. In September 2020, 'arts and recreation' businesses were still the most likely to be operating under modified conditions; by June 2021, they were the most likely to be expecting difficulty in meeting their financial commitments over the upcoming three months.²

This submission focuses on the following terms of reference: Broader health and social supports; financial support for individuals; mechanisms to better target future responses to the needs of particular populations; and support for industry and businesses. In our role as a philanthropically funded, independent think tank, ANA is ready to provide further information about the response in this submission and would welcome the opportunity to discuss. We confirm that this submission can be made public.

Warm regards,



Kate Fielding, CEO, A New Approach (ANA)

¹ This was a nationwide study exploring attitudes towards arts, culture and creativity amongst middle Australians. In rooms and Zooms around the country, ANA brought together people from low to middle income households, living in outer suburban and regional areas, in every state and territory. Kate Fielding, Aakanksha Sidhu, and Angela Vivian, "Intergenerational Arts and Culture: Lessons across Middle Australia" (A New Approach (ANA), October 2023), <https://newapproach.org.au/analysis-papers/intergenerational-arts-and-culture-lessons-across-middle-australia/>.

² Angela Vivian, Kate Fielding, and Tim Acker, "The Big Picture 3: Expenditure on Artistic, Cultural and Creative Activity by Governments in Australia in 2007–08 to 2020–21" (Canberra, Australia: A New Approach, March 2023), 59, https://newapproach.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/A-New-Approach-ANA_Big-Picture-3_-_Expenditure-on-Artistic-Cultural-and-Creative-activity-by-governments-in-Australia-in-2007%E2%80%932020%E2%80%9321.pdf.

Broader health and social supports

ANA suggests continuing to **explore opportunities to apply arts and culture to tackle mental and physical health issues** arising from pandemics. Our research highlights substantial evidence that use of arts and culture in clinical settings consistently improves physical, mental and emotional health.ⁱ The evidence includes a world-first 2016 Australian study showing that weekly 2-hour 'doses' of creative activities could enhance mental wellbeing in a general population. Likewise, a World Health Organisation review of 900 research publications found evidence that applying arts has benefits in health communication, engagement with healthcare, mental health and healthcare costs.ⁱⁱ This would benefit many Australians, including cultural and creative industry workers. **Health and wellbeing were key issues of COVID-19 for these workers**, as a House of Representatives Inquiry confirmed through a survey of 4,871 workers.ⁱⁱⁱ

Financial support for individuals

ANA welcomes the provision of financial support for cultural and creative industry workers during the pandemic. The House Inquiry confirmed **financial support was crucial for those employed full-time, part-time, or casual on a regular and systematic basis for more than 12 months**.^{iv} COVID-19 had an immediate and significant impact in cultural and creative industries, with employment dropping by an estimated 872,000 people from March to May 2020, before rising by estimated 446,000 from May to September 2020.^v The section below highlights a need to financially support a fuller range of cultural and creative industry workers.

Mechanisms to better target future responses to the needs of particular populations

In 2020, the Bureau of Communications and Arts Research (BCAR) noted 'up to around 90 per cent of the cultural and creative sector workforce could be eligible for JobKeeper'.^{vi} However, ANA suggests mechanisms to better target future responses to the needs of two particular populations engaging in the cultural and creative industries:

- **certain casual and short-term workers.** ANA considers workers losing employment and income because of a pandemic generally deserve access to financial support, through industry-targeted and/or general support programs. The House Inquiry highlighted casual and short-term workers in cultural and creative industries (consistent with such workers in other industries) were ineligible for JobKeeper.^{vii} These workers did not have these financial supports while unemployed and were later more likely to remain unemployed. In 2020, BCAR noted casuals with less than 12-month tenure (42,400 people or 7 per cent of cultural and creative industries workers) and short-term employees on a fixed contract (9,700 or 2 per cent) did not qualify for JobKeeper.^{viii} However, workers in cultural and creative industries who were also in the 'arts and recreation services' sector (where 36.9 per cent were casual workers in 2020, as the Parliamentary Library found) were much more likely to miss out on JobKeeper.^{ix}
- **participants and workers in cultural and creative activity.** ANA supports the Bureau of Communications, Arts and Regional Research's continuing refresh of the Cultural and Creative Activity Satellite Accounts, which unlock potential in the national statistics to quantify cultural and creative activity and track how it changes over time. This essential

work will help overcome shortcomings the House Inquiry identified in data on cultural and creative activity during COVID-19.^x

Support for industry and businesses

ANA welcomes support for cultural and creative industries that pandemics disrupt. **During COVID-19, direct government expenditure remained a modest proportion of total income in cultural and creative industries.** In 2020-21, sales and services accounted for 87 per cent of total income, while COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 direct government expenditure accounted for 5 per cent each.^{xi} COVID-19 direct government expenditure included support such as JobKeeper.

Endnotes

ⁱ Kate Fielding, Iva Glisic, and Jodie-Lee Trembath, “Transformative: Impacts of Culture and Creativity,” Insight Series (Canberra: A New Approach and The Australian Academy of Humanities, November 2019), <https://newapproach.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/2-ANA-InsightReportTwo-FullReport.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ Daisy Fancourt and Saoirse Finn, *What Is the Evidence on the Role of the Arts in Improving Health and Well-Being? A Scoping Review*, WHO Health Evidence Network Synthesis Reports (WHO Regional Office for Europe, 2019), <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK553773/>.

ⁱⁱⁱ House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts, “Sculpting a National Cultural Plan: Igniting a Post-COVID Economy for the Arts” (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, October 2021), 95, https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Communications/Arts/Report.

^{iv} House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts, “Sculpting a National Cultural Plan.”

^v Office for the Arts, “Submission on Australia’s Creative and Cultural Industries and Institutions” (House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts, October 2020), 24, <https://www.aph.gov.au/DocumentStore.ashx?id=893d5a4e-6a97-424a-9ebd-4a303b6fa882&subId=695135>.

^{vi} Bureau of Communication and Arts Research, “Characteristics of Employment and Business Activity in Cultural and Creative Sectors—Fact Sheet,” July 2020, 4, https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/sites/default/files/characteristics-of-employment-and-business-activity-in-cultural-and-creative-sectors_0.pdf.

^{vii} House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts, “Sculpting a National Cultural Plan,” 90.

^{viii} Bureau of Communication and Arts Research, “Characteristics of Employment and Business Activity in Cultural and Creative Sectors—Fact Sheet,” 3.

^{ix} Geoff Gilfillan, “Recent and Long-Term Trends in the Use of Casual Employment,” Research Paper Series, 2021-22, November 24, 2021, https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp2122/TrendsCasualEmployment.

^x The House Inquiry concluded in 2021 that ‘comprehensive data on how this wider cultural and creative cohort has been affected by the pandemic is unclear’. House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts, “Sculpting a National Cultural Plan,” 95.

^{xi} Kate Fielding, Angela Vivian, and Sari Rossi, “To Scale: Mapping Financial Inflows in Australian Arts, Culture and Creativity,” Insight Report (Canberra: A New Approach, 2023), 19, https://newapproach.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/ANA-64088-To-Scale-Report_Combined_AW.pdf.