

Support available to ACT artists during COVID-19

Last updated 6 April 2020

Australia Council Support

2020 Resilience Fund

\$5 million has been redirected to three funding streams:

- *Survive* - small grants for individuals, groups and organisations to offset or recoup financial losses due to cancelled activity.
- *Adapt* - grants for individuals, groups and organisations to adapt their practice and explore new operating models.
- *Create* - grants for individuals, groups and organisations to continue to create artistic work and develop creative responses in a time of disruption.

Organisations that currently receive multi-year funding from the Australia Council (including VACS) are not eligible to apply. Applications for the Resilience Fund open on Friday 3 April 2020.

Relaxing reporting requirements and other grant conditions

The Australia Council are adopting a flexible approach to current grants. This includes:

- Removing requirements on meeting audience KPIs
- Bringing forward payments
- Delaying or simplifying reporting requirements
- Varying the purposes and outcomes of funding
- Extending timelines for projects
- Allowing organisations to use money provided for a deliverable to be repurposed to pay essential bills such as wages, rent or utilities.

Online learning series

Creative Connections – a professional development webinar series for the cultural sector. The content will be delivered by industry experts and cover topics such as crisis management & communication and arts in the digital age, assisting the sector to navigate the immediate and long-term impacts of COVID-19. Sessions will be recorded and published on the Australia Council website.

First Nations' roundtable

Weekly First Nations' roundtables for artists, creatives and organisations for updates and discussion of the implications of COVID-19 for our First Nations independent and small to medium sector, live performance and public gatherings. Roundtables will be held each Friday from 2pm-3pm. You can watch past roundtables and register for upcoming ones [here](#).

Other sector roundtables

The Office for the Arts and Australia Council have launched a weekly COVID-19 Support workshop with peak arts bodies including the COVID-19 Business Liaison Unit, the Australian Banking Association and the Department of Social Services.

Digital support

Facebook Group [Arts and creative industry: digital support](#). A professional development resource for artists and organisations who may not have the technology, skill sets or bandwidth to present their work online through live streaming or other methods.

artsACT Support

HOMEFRONT – Funding for Canberra artists

Funding of up to \$10,000 per artist will be available for Canberra artists from 30 March to support arts development and the sustainability of their arts practices over the next 6-9 months. This is across all artforms including screen artists. This includes research and development, making of new works or sharing of works via online platforms, and artists fees and living expenses to undertake arts activities. Artists may also apply for the creation and development of works to be exhibited or performed in public venues in the future, when it becomes safe to undertake these activities. A total of \$500,000 will be available.

Rent Relief

The ACT Government will not charge any rent, for a six-month period from 1 April 2020, to community groups occupying ACT Government owned properties. Community groups will not need to contact the ACT Government for this to take effect.

Additionally, the ACT Government will provide up to \$500,000 in funding to the head-licensees of arts facilities to enable the waiving of fees for sub-licensees for 6 months. It is anticipated that this will support 65 smaller arts organisations.

Other Federal Government Support

Jobkeeper subsidy

A flat rate of \$1,500 a fortnight per eligible employee will be paid to employers to keep their staff in jobs. Employers (including self-employed individuals) are eligible if they can demonstrate that their annual turnover has decreased by 30%, or 15% for ACNC registered charities. Employees are eligible if they are full-time, part-time or long-term casual (over 12 months) and were employed on 1 March 2020. This subsidy is available to Special Category Visa Holders.

Income support payments

Temporary expansion of eligibility to income support payments and establishing a new, time limited COVID-19 supplement of \$550 per fortnight. These changes apply for the next 6 months. This supplement will be paid to both existing and new recipients of Jobseeker payments, Youth Allowance Jobseeker, Youth Allowance Students, Austudy, ABSTUDY, Parenting payment, Farm Household allowance, Special Benefits.

Expanded access will allow sole traders, the self-employed, contract workers and casual workers to apply for income support payments with reduced means testing, reduced waiting times and flexible job seeking arrangements.

Payments to support households

Two separate \$750 payments to social security, veteran and other income support recipients and eligible concession card holders. The first payment will be available to people who are eligible payment recipients and concession card holders at any time from 12 March 2020 to 13 April 2020 inclusive. The second payment will be available to people who are eligible payment recipients and concession card holders on 10 July 2020.

Access to superannuation

Eligible individuals will be able to apply to access up to \$10,000 of their superannuation before 1 July 2020 and a further \$10,000 from 1 July 2020.

Tax support

The Australian Taxation Office will provide administrative relief for certain tax obligations for

taxpayers affected by COVID-19. This includes payment deferrals and remitting interest and penalties.

Instant asset write-off

The instant asset write-off threshold has been increased to \$150,000 and expanded to include businesses with an aggregated annual turnover of \$500 million or less. This applies from 12 March 2020 to 30 June 2020, for new or second-hand assets first used or installed ready for use in this timeframe.

Deferred loan payments

The Australian Banking Association has announced that all small businesses affected by COVID-19 will be able to access a six-month deferral on loan repayments.

Cash flow for employers

Small-to-medium enterprises and not-for-profit organisations with annual turnovers of \$50 million or less will receive a cash payment equal to 100% of the tax withheld on salaries and wages following lodgement of their March 2020 BAS. Two additional payments, equalling half of the first payment, will be made following the lodgement of their June 2020 and September 2020 BAS. The minimum amount payable across all payments is \$20,000 and the total maximum amount payable is \$100,00.

Small-to-Medium Enterprise Guarantee Scheme

Small-to-medium enterprises with a turnover of \$50 million or less will be eligible to receive unsecured loans for working capital. The Government will provide eligible lenders with a guarantee of 50% for loans with the following terms:

- Maximum loans amount is \$250,000 per borrower.
- The loans will be up to three years, with an initial six-month repayment holiday.
- The loans will be in the form of unsecured finance, meaning that borrowers will not have to provide an asset as security

[Advice](#)

FAQs for artists affected by COVID-19 from [Arts Law](#)

The Department of Social Services has a hotline 1300 653 227 and web [advice](#) on support for workers who lose income because of COVID-19 health measures

The Treasury Business Unit also has [advice](#) on all other financial measures for small businesses

The [ATO](#) has further information on support for individuals and small businesses

[Australian arts amidst COVID-19](#) Facebook group

[Health and safety](#)

Health and safety advice relating to COVID 19 for organisations employing staff is available through the [Department of Health](#)

[Arts Wellbeing Collective](#) is an organisation promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in the performing arts industry

[Support Act](#) is a charity delivering crisis relief services to musicians and music workers that impacts their ability to work including mental health resources through their wellbeing helpline

If you or someone you know needs help or support contact [Lifeline](#) on 13 11 14 or [Beyond Blue](#) on 1300 22 4636