

# TRANSCRIPT

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

### Inquiry into the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Tourism and Events Sectors

Melbourne—Wednesday, 14 April 2021

#### MEMBERS

Mr Enver Erdogan—Chair

Mr Bernie Finn—Deputy Chair

Mr Rodney Barton

Mr Mark Gepp

Mrs Bev McArthur

Mr Tim Quilty

Mr Lee Tarlamis

#### PARTICIPATING MEMBERS

Dr Matthew Bach

Ms Melina Bath

Dr Catherine Cumming

Mr David Davis

Mr David Limbrick

Mr Andy Meddick

Mr Craig Ondarchie

Mr Gordon Rich-Phillips

**WITNESSES**

Mr Joe Toohey, (Co-convenor) Executive Director, Regional Arts Victoria, and

Ms Simone Schinkel, (Co-convenor) Chief Executive Officer, Music Victoria, Arts Industry Council (Victoria).

**The CHAIR:** The Economy and Infrastructure Committee public hearing for the Inquiry into the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Tourism and Events Sectors continues. Please ensure that mobile phones have been switched to silent and that background noise is minimised. I wish to also acknowledge the traditional owners of the land, and I pay my respects to their elders past, present and emerging. I wish to welcome any members of the public that are watching via our live broadcast. I would like to also introduce my fellow committee members that are present with us here today. I will start on the left then: Mr Lee Tarlamis, Mr David Davis, Ms Wendy Lovell, Mrs Bev McArthur, Ms Sheena Watt, and via Zoom we have Mr Tim Quilty.

To all witnesses: all evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the *Constitution Act 1975* and further subject to the provisions of the Legislative Council standing orders. Therefore the information you provide during this hearing is protected by law. However, any comment repeated outside the hearing may not be protected. Any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the committee may be considered a contempt of Parliament. All evidence is being recorded. You will be provided with a proof version of the transcript following the hearing. Transcripts will ultimately be made public and published on our committee's website.

We welcome your opening comments but ask that they be kept to a maximum of 5 to 10 minutes to ensure we have plenty of time for discussion and questions. Could you please give your name for the benefit of our Hansard team and then begin your presentations. Over to you, Joe and Simone.

**Mr TOOHEY:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, committee, for hosting us today. My name is Joe Toohey and joining me today is Simone Schinkel, and we are the convenors of the Arts Industry Council of Victoria. We also acknowledge that we are speaking to you today on Kulin country. We extend our respects to elders past and present, including any who might be here today or listening on the live stream.

In our brief opening comments I am going to start by outlining some of the current challenges that we have experienced in the arts culture sector before Simone presents some of our recommendations, all of which focus on where we are sitting currently. In our submission we note the challenges around economic and financial impacts, mental health, social and cultural equity, digital delivery, staffing and risk mitigation and the priority of arts and culture, as well as balancing capacity restraints and density limits. The three themes of uncertainty, inequity and what we summarise as a transition-to-normal challenge really underpin all of these challenges.

Uncertainty results from the loss of casual staff from arts organisations, the risk of further breakouts and subsequent lockdowns and the inability to secure underwriting from insurance brokers in combination, creating a huge challenge for event providers in 2020–21. By inequity we mean that the reopening phase that we are slowly going through now will present different challenges to different communities. As an example, the move to online events during the pandemic has actually greatly benefited a lot of deaf and disabled audiences. As we begin to open up again, however, the requirement to make decisions or choices and the discontinuation of some digital offerings and the increasing capacity of live performances might actually present a risk of excluding these audiences once again.

Finally, on the transition phase both in terms of the easing of some restrictions and the winding down of a number of government support programs, many government support programs to date have been designed as emergency measures or after-the-fact supports, and what we need now are transition measures through 2021. For example, many music venues simply will not be able to profitably deliver events until density restrictions are completely—not partially—lifted, and they must try and navigate this next phase with most government support now winding down. Because our sector is predominantly comprised of small players either working as sole traders or casual and contract staff working gig to gig and job to job, many are also navigating a rather complex environment alone or with limited support. I will now hand to Simone to address how we might tackle some of these challenges.

**Ms SCHINKEL:** Thanks so much, Joe. Now, committee members, I would like to preface our recommendations by acknowledging that our submission is quite broad in its scope, which is in part due to the

remit of the Arts Industry Council of Victoria members. Our recommendations are offered in the spirit of the continually evolving and changing contexts in which we find ourselves and the need to continue addressing the gaps as they emerge. We welcome a role in working with the committee and with government to make sure that targeted support is delivered to the right areas through the right channels and at the right time. So with all that in mind, the Arts Industry Council of Victoria believe that it will take a multipronged approach and quite a significant period of time to effectively tackle the challenges and impact of the pandemic on the events and tourism sector. Just in the way of events, the Arts Industry Council members deliver a wide variety in size and scale and type of event, which we try and capture in our submission. The reason it is going to take a multipronged approach and such a significant period of time is because we are actually still a very, very long way off from operating in what is anywhere near a COVID-normal way.

The eight key opportunities that AICV members have collectively identified that we believe will assist, whether that is in 2021 or beyond, include, firstly, as you have already heard today, clear and consistent health guidelines across sectors, across settings and that align nationally. That would provide a much more predictable operating environment and one that is actually conducive to recovery. And then if operating is still severely impacted by the health directives or is to become impacted by snap lockdowns, the government has a role to play in offsetting this impact. Ideally this might come in the form of a wage subsidy or, to take me to point number two, a business interruption fund that underwrites the pandemic insurance risk—another point you have already heard here today. Number three: expanding Support Act and the Arts Wellbeing Collective initiatives to cover the entire arts and event sectors and to include tailored streams that are culturally safe. Number four: the state government's creative strategy renewal is due in mid-2021, and this is actually a well-timed avenue through which support can be strategically channelled across the next few years. Number five: targeted initiatives that ring fence support for groups that do not typically receive support in open funding programs. Number six: the inclusion of events and the creative industries in the pilot secure working scheme that is about to be rolled out and the continuation and expansion of Working for Victoria and the Jobs Victoria Fund. Number seven is the adaption and/or expansion of Business Victoria's technology adoption and innovation program, as that can provide avenues for sector-wide learning in this new digital space. Finally, number eight: recovery programs need to allow for the longer term cultural and financial recovery of the sector. This is beyond any one-year budget commitment; rather think in terms of bushfires. This is a generational commitment to rebuilding that will be needed.

To end, I simply want to reiterate that we welcome a role in working with the committee and with government to make sure that targeted support is delivered to the right areas through the right channels and at the right time. Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you for that, Simone. I might actually start off with the first question, and then I will go over to Mrs McArthur, Ms Lovell, Mr Tarlamis, Mr Davis, Sheena Watt and Mr Tim Quilty in that order, just giving all the committee members an opportunity. We will stick to two questions each at a maximum because of the time constraints we have today.

You raised a good point about the different jurisdictions and the different comparisons of what is needed to be done. Would you be able to provide, I guess, a comparison of the support the Victorian government has provided to the arts sector compared to other jurisdictions? Because I did notice early on in the pandemic, in May last year, there was the Victorian government experience economy survival package, and over \$32 million just from that announcement went to supporting creative agencies in our state. How would the support provided by the Victorian government compare to the other states or territories? Or you could not comment on that?

**Ms SCHINKEL:** Well, more recently, and in a very specific initiative now in my role as CEO of Music Victoria, we did see \$15 million in live music venue support early on. In comparison, New South Wales has just announced theirs, and of course all the venues are comparing themselves based on caps. Now, the conversation is, 'Did you want the money early'—you know, like we got—'or do you want it later and for it to be more?'. So there are differences and challenges about both approaches, I guess, to date. In a broader sense, do you want to comment?

**Mr TOOHEY:** Yes. I think we are on the record in providing comments to other inquiries that the overall targeted creative industry and arts support in Victoria compared to other jurisdictions was pretty positive. There were a number of programs announced—some of the ones that you mentioned—and a number of different time phases over the programs as well that complemented economy-wide measures that were being introduced as

well. I have not updated my understanding of what is happening in other states in the last few months since we last spoke to that inquiry, but that at the time it was a pretty favourable comparison is my recollection from that.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much, Simone and Joe. You have answered the question I had. I might pass over to my fellow committee member, Mrs McArthur. Do you have a question?

**Mrs McARTHUR:** Thank you, Chair, and thank you, Joe and Simone. I am interested to know about these organisations that you represent. Are they funded in any way by government? And are you funded by government?

**Mr TOOHEY:** Our individual organisations are, yes, but the arts industry council does not receive any separate funding. We see it as part of our remit to work together on cross-sector challenges like this.

**Mrs McARTHUR:** So for the overriding organisations that you represent, have your staff all been kept in a job?

**Mr TOOHEY:** Yes, at our organisations we have benefited from JobKeeper and a range of other programs, that is right.

**Mrs McARTHUR:** Right. And so how much is the total amount of money that you have received from the state government, say, in your industry?

**Mr TOOHEY:** I would have to take that question on notice, sorry, for all of the members. I can only talk for mine.

**Mrs McARTHUR:** We just heard from the events industry that of course they have not got a cent out of government. You have been supported by the state government. What do you think is the most important thing in terms of certainty moving forward? Do we need to have a realisation that we have to live in the real world and that maybe sporadic and short-notice lockdowns are not the way to go when industry needs to plan quite a way in advance?

**Mr TOOHEY:** Yes. Having listened to some of your other witnesses this morning, I think it has been a fairly consistent theme that the biggest challenge at the moment, I guess, is planning and uncertainty. And I note that whenever those lockdowns have been in place there has subsequently been announced some kind of business support fund program or something, which is great, but that does not help you when you are planning for an event in October. So I think why you are hearing quite frequently about the benefits of some kind of business interruption or cancellation insurance program is the ability to predict and plan that that support might be there given that we are not able to secure that from insurance providers any further.

**Mrs McARTHUR:** So do you think it has been reasonable that rural areas that have had not a case—many places in my electorate, maybe in Wendy's as well, have never had one COVID case throughout this entire period—have not been able to proceed with events because of all the rules that have affected metropolitan areas particularly and so numbers have been limited or ceased altogether? Is that fair do you think?

**Ms SCHINKEL:** Well, the live music industry was getting by because of JobKeeper, but now there is no more JobKeeper. There is no COVID in the community, but we are still trading at 30 per cent of licensed capacity because of the one per 2 square metres density quotient. That is not sustainable, and yes, the risk is not there.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you for that, Mrs McArthur. I will just remind committee members: two questions, then we will get another opportunity to go around. Ms Lovell, and then Mr Tarlamis.

**Ms LOVELL:** Thank you. You just acknowledged that the biggest challenge has been planning and uncertainty, which is what we have heard from everyone this morning. You have also acknowledged that there is no ability to get insurance to cover the cost of a last-minute cancellation due to a lockdown or something. Do you believe the state government should be underwriting those costs? With your industry and the events industry, there is a significant amount of money that goes into preparation for an event—bumping in, et cetera. It is cancelled at the last minute. Do you believe that the state government should be underwriting that if they cancel it at the last minute?

**Ms SCHINKEL:** Yes, absolutely actually, because I think the balance that needs to be achieved is that we need to plan. We are willing to commit to it. And also we have tried to look at this in a commercially viable way and seek support as a collective of industries, saying, ‘This is the new challenge that has been presented to us’, and we are not getting any support from insurance companies basically. So we need that next level.

**Ms LOVELL:** Yes, absolutely. I do not know whether it has affected you, but it has certainly affected my electorate; I have an electorate that borders with New South Wales and South Australia—the effects of border closures on the industry. Do you have any comments to make about that?

**Mr TOOHEY:** I might tackle that. So my day job is as the Director of Regional Arts Victoria, and yes, it has been challenging. My dad lives in Albury and my mum lives in the Indigo Valley, and particularly that initial phase—

**Ms LOVELL:** My constituent.

**Mr TOOHEY:** There you go, there you go. I am sure she says hello. My dad saw it in the business that he was operating in, which was not events. They relied critically on being able to have people servicing a cross-border region. I mean, the reality of the way that people live, including how they attend events, is not actually about state borders really or local government borders. That was a particularly challenging time. I have to say that it has not come up more recently since some of those adjustments were made to the way that people could move within those regions, but absolutely people are against those hard borders. That was a significant bit of feedback that we were getting in those spaces there. Absolutely.

**Ms LOVELL:** Thank you.

**Ms SCHINKEL:** The events and entertainment industry is a national industry. That is how we work. That is how we run. Borders are irrelevant in day-to-day business-running, so it is presenting huge unforeseen challenges that have not been faced before, trying to navigate these sorts of border closures.

**Mr DAVIS:** Not for 100-odd years.

**Ms SCHINKEL:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** I might pass over to my committee member Mr Tarlamis to ask a question.

**Mr TARLAMIS:** I do not have any questions at the moment, if you want to—

**The CHAIR:** Yes. I will put it on notice. I might ask an additional question a bit later. Mr Davis.

**Mr DAVIS:** I just want to return to the rules. I have closely looked at the different restrictions in all of the different states, especially the ones we would compare ourselves with—New South Wales and Queensland—and it is still the fact, isn’t it, that even with the changes made on the weekend, we are still be most restrictive of any state.

**Ms SCHINKEL:** The process is extra difficult and takes extra time. And the most recent announcement was made at the last minute and came into effect at midnight that night. So in terms of communication of the new guidelines, restrictions, rulings et cetera, I cannot get that out to my members in time to make any difference immediately.

**Mr DAVIS:** And we have still got these restrictions that mean the density and, as you say correctly, the process are very cumbersome in Victoria compared to other states. Has your sector sought to work out the cost of that process?

**Ms SCHINKEL:** I know one artist manager has reported a 20 per cent increase in cost for COVID compliance—changes of flights and, you know, factoring in quarantine periods on their work.

**Mr TOOHEY:** We also delivered some funding programs on behalf of state and federal government, and in the most recent one people could apply for 10 per cent extra in their grants just to meet COVID safety costs. So it is a real expense that is being acknowledged and is coming back to us, certainly at our organisation.

**Mr DAVIS:** And I come back to the point—and I think Beverley made a very good point—just about the amounts of state and national support. I mean, the bulk of the industry support has actually come through JobKeeper until now; is that true?

**Ms SCHINKEL:** I would have to take that on notice and do the calculations officially.

**Mr DAVIS:** Maybe you can take that on notice, as she has sort of requested. And then there has been some state support. Some companies and so forth have actually got no state support, as I understand it, and so they are left—

**Ms SCHINKEL:** And there are so many different parts of our ecology that work in different ways and with different functions. So most recently the circuit-breaker action business support was ineffective in helping any musicians who are sole traders and do not meet the 75 grand GST threshold. So there is always a group that misses out for whatever reason.

**Mr DAVIS:** So that sole trader money, you would have thought, would be ready-made for some artists, as you say, but actually—

**Ms SCHINKEL:** They missed out.

**Mr DAVIS:** they just missed out.

**Ms SCHINKEL:** Yes.

**Mr DAVIS:** Is there a single suggested state support for those smaller sole traders or musicians and others who are perhaps on their own? Is there a single way that you recommend that they can get some additional support through this next period?

**Ms SCHINKEL:** We have been reflecting on even the gaps that JobKeeper had because, again, lots of individuals were not eligible for it. I might have to get back to you again, but we were looking at the—is it the ANZSIC codes that are correlated? That we think is probably the best way forward to really look at what people's jobs are and how they apply to an industry.

**Mr TOOHEY:** It is a great suggestion. One of the others I would add is we are actually delivering a Working for Victoria program for the arts and culture sector at the moment. The difference with that program is that we have employed an artist rather than contracted them as a sole trader. I know that that is a temporary measure, the Working for Victoria program. There is something to that model that is exciting and could be further explored, where there is an opportunity not just to offer open application funding programs where you have minimum requirements but where industry bodies or other arts organisations could be encouraged to engage people as employees rather than as sole traders or contractors, which means that we are required to put in the submission and do the work, and we do not have to do the test of whether they are a sole trader or a casual. We engage them because they need the work, and then they can do the work for us. One of our recommendations was that that program has actually got great potential for the arts and culture sector going forward, we think.

**Mr DAVIS:** And finally, the galleries, and there are lots of regional galleries and others that I think have been hit quite hard. Do you want to make some comment about what can be done to help them?

**Mr TOOHEY:** One of the main recommendations that we have made on multiple occasions is that any state or federal government programs that exclude local government and universities will heavily impact on galleries. A big chunk of them are owned by local government or universities. So that has been a common refrain that has come from all of those bodies. A number of the supports that have been offered would have been excellent for those institutions, but they could not access them because they were owned by local government. We note in there as well that a lot of them found—as you might expect to happen during a disaster, during a pandemic—their staff redeployed or stood down or put elsewhere, and they are basically in a position now where they are all retraining new teams because they lost all of their casuals and contractors.

**Mr DAVIS:** So state government, to be clear, could have actually supported some of those regional galleries directly?

**Mr TOOHEY:** By including local government as eligible for those programs—correct.

**Mr DAVIS:** Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. I might pass over to Ms Watt if she has a question and then to Mr Quilty after.

**Ms WATT:** Thank you very much for your contribution. I note really the very wide membership of the organisation, and trying to find a question that covers all of that I think is going to be a tough one. I must confess mine will not do that. I am keen to further explore this issue of industry support for affected industries, and as you say, universities and local government were also two of the most high profile industries left out of JobKeeper. So is there any particular response from you on what that has actually meant, the inability for local government-owned and -run facilities like theatres, galleries and others, and the impact of that? I am interested if you have any reflections on that, and I do have a follow-up question, Chair.

**Mr TOOHEY:** I might go first with that, if that is okay. I spoke to a couple of local government-run venues in the last week, and they are—as I just briefly mentioned then—retraining entirely new teams. I went to one of their first events out of lockdown, and it was a bit of a teething exercise for them. You know, there are people who are entirely new to the organisation. There are people who perhaps are actually lost to the sector because they could not get work during the pandemic and went and found employment elsewhere, and there is going to be a challenge there of skills shortages. One of the things that I note was mentioned in one of the earlier presentations was that the impact of that is a lag—if people are spending their time upskilling and training new people, we have got to now expect that their ability to deliver on events is not a light switch. It does not tick over. So I think this is an outcome, I guess, of their inability to access support last year. I do not have any really concrete recommendations about what to do about it now, except to know that it is happening. It is a consequence of those decisions.

**Ms WATT:** And just quickly a follow-up. The Working for Victoria program, you have talked a little bit about that. I do know that there has been considerable take-up with local government around Working for Victoria, so has that particularly impacted—positively, I would hope—some of your member organisations in local government around the state?

**Mr TOOHEY:** Yes, a number. So the Australian Museums and Galleries Association was able to get some support for employing people in regional galleries and museums. Some of them were local government owned, I understand. So, yes, they were able to find some employment through that program and, as I mentioned before, Regional Arts Victoria, in my day job, is delivering an artist in schools program. Schools don't pay, noting that schools, too, were pretty heavily impacted by the pandemic. It has been an exciting one to be a part of.

In speaking to that local council venue last week, they did also mention that council—I am trying to think of a diplomatic way to say it, maybe I will just say it. Her view was that a lot of local governments had been a bit slow to realise the potential of that program to deliver arts and culture outcomes, and maybe it came on board after they had already made decisions about what to do with their arts and culture staff.

**Ms WATT:** Thank you.

**Ms SCHINKEL:** I might just add to that, that I think one of the challenges is again the artificial sense of boundaries in having one council supported through Working for Victoria and the neighbouring one not, and yet artists and our sector cross those boundaries all the time. So just knowing where to position yourself and how to support those jobs and those skill sets beyond one boundary is the challenge.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, Simone. I might go over to Mr Quilty, who is online, so you can watch him from the big screen. Mr Quilty.

**Mr QUILTY:** This has already been partly answered, but I wonder if you have any specific suggestions or measures that could be targeted to regional players and small players in the industry that the government should do?

**Mr TOOHEY:** Do you want to talk about the small venues?

**Ms SCHINKEL:** Yes. I can talk to small venues. At the moment we are allowed 100 people or more in our house, with no QR code check-in, no social distancing, and yet Whole Lotta Love, in Brunswick, my local bar, can have 30 people, and yet they are heavily regulated. They have got their liquor licensing, they have got their

check-in, they have got their event managers of events, this is what they do as a day job; and, yes, we are just cut off at the knees in terms of that sort of consistency for the smaller players. The best they have got is me, actually, presenting here and having those conversations, because they are a one-person-run place, and so they just do not have those direct lines to government to make a real change or to have their challenges heard.

Do you want to talk regionally, Joe?

**Mr TOOHEY:** Look, the only thing I would add is that a lot of the organisations that we would deal with are volunteer-run organisations. They are built off the back of the energy of the local community in those arts and culture festivals. We are seemingly spending a lot of time now talking with them just about how to do a COVID-safe event. It is complex and challenging, and a lot of people will say, 'It's not worth my effort'. So programs that help provide that support and that guidance rather than just a template that you have to kind of navigate your own way through—I think people need to be able to have somebody sit with them really a lot of the time and work through those programs so that their valuable volunteer time is going towards what they actually signed up for, which is an arts event.

**The CHAIR:** Mr Quilty, do you have any more questions? No? I just had one question, actually, from the discussions we have had. I think it is important. What I am hearing is that we might need probably a national approach, because a lot of the events in this space, the arts sector, do not just operate within municipal or state borders, especially for the regional towns. Would your sector like to see, I guess, uniformity across approval mechanisms or density quotas—that information, I guess—across the nation? Is that what you are calling for, not just across the state?

**Ms SCHINKEL:** Yes, absolutely. But we also do not want to be caught in the crossfire of people trying to sort that out. I mean, we do need to support the Victorian sector right now. The time that those things take to negotiate should still be pursued, but it does not get you off the hook for right now.

**Mr DAVIS:** It needs movement now.

**The CHAIR:** If time permits, I might allow one more question to committee members if they have one.

**Mr DAVIS:** I have got one.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, Mr Davis. One last question.

**Mr DAVIS:** We heard earlier about the events sector and how they had not been able to get clear contact with DHHS—or DOH, as it is now. Is that the experience of your sector as well? Have you been able to meet freely with the Department of Health to discuss how to do these things?

**Mr TOOHEY:** No, we have typically gone through Creative Victoria—or DJPR, I think, is the wider department.

**The CHAIR:** The DJPR, okay.

**Mr TOOHEY:** That is right. And the liaison has come into government that way. That has been my experience. Simone, I do not know about yours. I mean, some health representatives have occasionally come to those meetings, but it has been made very clear at all of the meetings that I have been at that the health priorities and guidelines will win the day. They will trump all of those conversations.

**Mr DAVIS:** But the issue we had with events is that they could not get to health to talk through these specifics and unique aspects.

**Ms SCHINKEL:** So Music Victoria has been able to do that, but only in the last month. I have only been in the position for five weeks, and we have done it in that time. But it is still not explicitly clear, and especially for the smaller players it is harder to get that conversation with health going. We can present, but we need the feedback loop to allow us to take on board what they are most nervous and—

**Mr DAVIS:** And modify and understand and—yes.

**Ms SCHINKEL:** Yes. So it needs to be a continual process that we are still pursuing. Also the events partnership framework—that is an avenue that some of the bigger end of town and commercial operators can

pursue. And some have from our sector, but I guess, yes, it is not equal for all in terms of real conversations with health.

**The CHAIR:** Thanks, Simone. Any other committee members? I have got Ms Watt and then Mrs McArthur. Mrs McArthur first, sorry.

**Mrs McARTHUR:** Surely what we need is Victoria open for business. Surely what we need is an end to this ability of state premiers to decide on a whim that we will shut a border or we will not allow an event to go ahead. Surely your industry just needs to get on with doing what they normally do, don't they? We cannot continually ask the taxpayer to keep everybody on the drip, can we? You need to just get back into business and on your horse and, you know, on with the event, don't you? Isn't that what we really need here?

**Mr DAVIS:** On the stage, as you—

**Mrs McARTHUR:** On the stage. Off the horse and onto—there might be a horse on the stage as well.

**Ms SCHINKEL:** Well, for music we are essentially commercially viable in a good time. You know, like, its actual reliance on government support is so minimal usually, but given that we cannot trade, or we are so limited, it is impossible.

So I mean, just specifically speaking now from Music Victoria's point of view, we want to be at 100 per cent and just operating. If we need a snap lockdown, let us do it, but we cannot live so nervously, I guess, because we have got nothing supporting us while we are taking these hesitant, slow steps forward—so 100 per cent and then some business interruption if we do need a snap lockdown.

**The CHAIR:** Ms Watt, did you have a question?

**Ms WATT:** Yes, I did have a question. As Victorians we are enormously proud of our arts industry, and part of that is that we share it with other parts of Australia and indeed the world. Do you have any reflection on your members, including their practitioners, and to what extent they have been able to perform interstate? I know obviously internationally is very challenging, but where is that one at, frankly? It brings back money into the Victorian economy, so what is going on with your members and interstate performances, tours, exhibitions, whatever it is?

**Mr TOOHEY:** 'Trepidatious' is the way that I would describe the focus.

**Mr DAVIS:** That is a new word.

**Ms WATT:** That is a good one.

**Mr TOOHEY:** Thank you. I am glad to get a new one on the record. It is possible to do it; the risk, as we have talked about before, is that we might be midway through a tour in Queensland and be locked out of our home state for 14 days. You cannot have a 14-day break in the middle of a tour. It just does not work. So when I say 'trepidatious', I would say that those experiences and some of those lockdowns and some of those things that have happened in the last little while add up. So the experiences that are in our part of the sector in terms of national touring have been pretty limited, and in our organisation, which normally does a couple of national tours a year, we are wholeheartedly and completely within Victoria in our touring program this year just because it is a bit of a risk mitigation exercise. There are others that are doing it and are willing to take that risk, but for those that are not, that is a little bit about why that might be the case. Internationally obviously is kind of a bit of a moot point at the moment.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you for that. On that note I just wish on behalf of the committee to thank the Arts Industry Council of Victoria and you, Simone and Joe, in particular. You have been very informative and very helpful to our committee's inquiry. If we have further questions, because I know there were a couple of question on notice from committee members, would you be happy to respond to those if the secretariat was to send them through?

**Ms SCHINKEL:** Yes, certainly.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you very much.

**Mr DAVIS:** Given that you are a body that is made up of quite a few constituent parts, it may be that some of your other parts want to make highly specific points, and they should feel free to do that.

**Ms SCHINKEL:** Also we have encouraged our individual members to make submissions as well.

**Mrs McARTHUR:** And you will get back to us with those figures.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you.

**Witnesses withdrew.**