Australian Government

Australia
Council
for the Arts

re-activate:
beyond
step three

Getting the arts and cultural industries moving again is
essential to national economic, social and cultural recovery.

Contents

Disclaimer: This document should be read in conjunction with the
Australia Council for the Arts' *Re-activate framework* available on our website.

Protocols for the arts and cultural industries

Introduction

Necessary distancing measures to protect Australians from COVID-19, including restrictions on public gatherings and travel, have caused significant disruption to social and economic life.

The Arts and cultural industries have been heavily impacted but are creating new ways to continue to practice, engage and re-open.

Many organisations and sectors within these industries have developed their COVIDSafe Plans to comply with the national *3-step framework for a COVIDSafe Australia*. Preparing for the easing of restrictions beyond the national Framework will be essential to the arts and cultural industries, particularly live performance, exhibitions, and touring. Just as sports people must train prior to the return of competition, so too must creative businesses prepare for resuming and reopening.

Re-activate: beyond step three has been developed in consultation with over 15 arts and cultural peak bodies, 80 individuals and public health professionals.

Purpose

Re-activate: beyond step three sets out protocols for the arts and cultural industries to consider in preparation for moving into the next phase of Australia's response to COVID-19.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Australia Council's *Re-activate* resources which provide a COVIDSafe planning framework and includes national, state and territory guidelines, Safe Work Australia guidelines and relevant industry plans. Creative businesses can use the protocols outlined in this document to inform the development of their COVIDSafe Plan or the evolution of existing plans.

All information contained in this document is accurate as at the time of writing on **16 June 2020**. Due to the rapidly evolving nature of COVID-19 responses, this should be read in conjunction with latest advice from government and health authorities.

Terminology

'Creative workforce' and 'creative business' is terminology that has been used throughout this document.

They describe the following:

— Creative workforce – describes creatives, administrators and other roles that contribute to the arts and cultural ecology. It includes paid staff, contractors, volunteers and casuals.
— Creative business – includes groups, sole traders, freelancers, commercial enterprises and not-for-profit arts and cultural organisations.

The virus in Australia

At the moment, the prevalence of COVID-19 and incidence of new cases is very low in Australia, and extremely low in the majority of the population.

The effective reproductive number (Reff) of the virus that causes COVID-19 in Australia is currently less than 1.0, and much less than 1.0 at sub-national and community level.

At the time of writing, the risk of COVID-19 is very low – but not zero – so maintaining vigilance is essential, as it is likely that COVID-19 may sporadically appear in the community in very small numbers, and isolated transmission and outbreaks may continue to occur for some time.

Industry standards

The following industry standards have been designed to comply with COVIDSafe best practice and guide development of protocols.

1. Prioritise the health of participants, professionals, volunteers, audiences, customers and the broader community.

2. Follow the advice of Australian and relevant state/territory and local governments, and public health authorities.

3. Apply physical distancing and other risk mitigation measures to all outdoor and indoor spaces including rehearsal rooms, theatres, galleries, green rooms, box office, amenities, recording studios, community arts spaces, etc.

4. Assess the physical environment to ensure precautions are taken to minimise risk to the creative workforce, audiences and visitors.

5. Comply with the defined public health directives, which may include contact tracing measures and the isolation of an individual or group, and close contacts.

6. Communicate to creative workforce, audiences and visitors about safety strategies in place to build awareness and confidence in policies as well as to encourage compliance.

7. Comply with directives of public health authorities in the event of a localised outbreak where a return to restricted activity may be required.

8. Engage with, and obtain approval from, respective jurisdictions if seeking exemption from restrictions or approval for recommencement of activities.

9. Decide when to resume operation or practice based on practitioner/ organisational priorities and in line with jurisdictional guidelines.

10. Consider these standards in conjunction with developing a COVIDSafe plan before resuming or re-opening.

Protocols

Five protocols should guide the arts and cultural industries in resuming activity and reopening venues.

They are consistent with government health advice and generally understood community behaviours which have been implemented in response to COVID-19.

In some instances, it may be necessary to adapt these protocols or develop additional protocols for specific sectors within the arts and cultural industries. These activities may require comprehensive site or event specific plans (i.e. outdoor festivals, large indoor theatres, non-ticketed greenfield events).

1. Promote and facilitate **pre-screening** to prevent potentially infected staff, contractors, artists, participants and audiences from attending.
2. Alter organisational practices to support **physical distancing** in line with government health guidelines or exemptions.
3. Enhance **cleaning and hygiene** practices to reduce risk of infection.
4. Establish and maintain procedures to support **staff, contractor and volunteer safety**.
5. Develop and implement **contact tracing and outbreak management** protocols for employees, contractors, audience members and visitors.

These protocols have been guided by the assumption that any relaxation of physical distancing in the future will require an increased focus on key mitigation procedures of testing, tracing, and containment while maintaining commitment to hygiene and infection control measures.

Importantly, creative businesses that hire or use a venue that they do not own, will need to comply with the venue operators COVIDSafe plan. Venues may include schools, community facilities, local government owned spaces, theatres, rehearsal space, creative studios etc.

Pre-screening

Pre-screening is an important control measure to prevent potentially infected audience members, contractors and third-party suppliers, staff or artists from participating or attending.

Pre-screening also helps to increase confidence that creative businesses are implementing COVIDSafe measures.

— Creative businesses should pre-screen in line with identified public health processes.
— In addition to identifying potential infection, creative businesses should support health authorities in contact tracing.
— Ticketing outlets and creative businesses will need to enhance record keeping capacity as needed to store necessary data such as pre-screening and contact details, whilst maintaining confidentiality and compliance with privacy legislation.

Audience, participant and visitor pre-screening

— **Ticketing** systems may be able to collect and store audience, participant and visitor contact details prior to attendance or participation. Consider enhancing existing systems to harness this functionality. This may also include a short questionnaire about potential exposure, overseas travel, contact with persons who have tested positive, and reminders not to attend if experiencing any cold or flu symptoms. Where possible, send reminders prior to known longer-term bookings to ensure compliance and awareness.

— **Website and social media** should be used to communicate information about business changes and responsibilities of audience, participants and visitors in relation to pre-screening; awareness that they must not attend if they have any symptoms that may be consistent with COVID-19; conditions of entry, including the organisation, group or sole trader's right of refusal on arrival in the instance of non-compliance.

— **On arrival** consider the use of a verbal questionnaire and/or temperature or thermal scanning. Prominent display of posters about right of refusal of entry or inclusion if audience, participant or visitor refuses or does not comply with conditions of the COVIDSafe Plan.

— **Privacy** policies of creative businesses will need to ensure compliance with relevant regulations. Details should be recorded but not shared unless specifically requested by government for purposes of public health. Comprehensive record keeping systems should be in place and be kept for two months.

Staff, contractors and volunteers pre-screening

— Creative businesses should ensure their workforce are aware that they must not attend the workplace if they have any symptoms potentially consistent with COVID-19, such as cough, fever, sore throat, fatigue, shortness of breath, flu-like symptoms or related illness. For more information on symptoms, visit the [Department of Health](#).

— Where possible, options for working from home or volunteering in lower risk environments should be discussed with at-risk people including:

  — People aged over 70
  — People aged over 65 with a material medical condition
  — Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people aged over 50 with a material medical condition
  — People with material medical condition
  — People who are immunocompromised.

— Where possible the workforce should be screened prior to attending work and, at a minimum, be screened upon arrival. This may include verbal questioning, observational screening, print or electronic questionnaire and/or temperature or thermal scanning upon arrival.

Physical distancing protocols

Due to the nature of COVID-19 and the spread of the virus through close contact with an infected person or touching a contaminated surface, the most effective way to slow transmission of the virus is through physical distancing and hygiene practices.

Creative businesses should implement and facilitate practices which support appropriate physical distancing aligned to advice from the public health authority.

It is the responsibility of each organisation, group and sole trader to remain up to date with health advice and to ensure compliance, above and beyond the details outlined in these protocols. The following physical distancing recommendations and practices apply to all creative businesses, staff, contractors, audiences and participants.

Current rules are different across state and territory borders in terms of density per square metre and these should be adhered to unless an exemption has been approved.

— Creative businesses, groups and sole traders should implement measures to support physical distancing and remind people of their personal responsibility. Steps will need to be taken to ensure staff, contractors and volunteers avoid intentional physical contact in the workplace, which includes no shared food or physical contact such as hugs and shaking hands.

— Where possible creative businesses, groups and sole traders should adapt rehearsal schedules, performances and opening times to minimise potential contact between artists, audiences, participants and visitors.

— Signage including opening times, directions and capacity should be prominently displayed.

— Where possible, creative businesses, groups and sole traders should implement measures to minimise close personal contact. This may include:
  — limiting face-to-face contact to 15 minutes where possible
  — ensuring people are not in an enclosed space for longer than necessary
  — using technology where possible to minimise the risk of exposure
  — ensuring that staff and customers adhere to allocated seating plans
  — complying with all directions relating to room capacity and numbers
  — ensuring people do not to move furniture and equipment which has been positioned to maximise physical distancing
  — preventing people from congregating in corridors or restricted spaces
  — ensuring that physical distancing limitations apply to elevators and stairwells, including service elevators
  — physical floor markings and barriers should be utilised where possible to ensure physical distancing in high traffic areas.

Creation, rehearsal and performance

— Creation, rehearsal and performance of works (i.e. dance, circus, theatre, music) by professional artists and creatives should be treated as work, and therefore physical distancing restrictions apply where practicable.

— Unnecessary interaction with performers outside the production piece should be minimised to reduce the risk of transmission.

— Rehearsal spaces, stages and equipment should be cleaned and sanitised between each use.

— All contact tracing and hand hygiene requirements to be followed.

— 'get in, rehearse, get out' – come ready to rehearse and avoid time in dressing rooms.

— Any preparation that can be done before attending the rehearsal space should be.

— Careful management of limited body-to-body contact.

Audience, participants and visitors

— Audiences, participants and visitors should maintain appropriate physical distancing from other groups and individuals within a venue or space where possible

— A group booking (family, household or other group) may be managed as equivalent to one individual. As with individuals, each group will be required to maintain appropriate physical distancing from other individuals and groups who are not part of their direct group.

— General admission areas should implement ticketing systems that allow for the allocation of groups and individuals to be allocated space based on physical distancing practices. This would normally involve the allocation of seating but could also include markings on floors for the standing of individuals or groups.

— Where performances are occurring, seating should be allocated, removed, or moved to allow for groups to be seated according to their ticket allocation.

Queues

— Where possible, avoid queuing. If this is not possible, venues should ensure that markers and/or physical barriers are installed to remind audiences, participants and visitors to maintain a safe physical distance between individuals and/or groups.

— Venues should ensure that indoor lines and queues will be planned to only allow audiences, participants and visitors up to the maximum allowable capacity of the indoor space.

— Where possible venues should create unidirectional flow of audiences, participants and visitors, to reduce face-to-face interaction.

Touring

— Intrastate touring where state borders remain closed will be considered where those touring parties can be considered a self-contained social bubble that would be considered similar to a household unit.

— All touring would comply with the various venue or facilities COVIDSafe plan.

Cleaning and hygiene protocols

Audience numbers will gradually increase as restrictions are eased which will mean that cleaning routines will also need to be increased.

While touchless solutions will reduce the degree to which surfaces are contaminated, the day to day of many creative businesses and venues will mean staff, contractors, artists, audiences and participants will interact with high-touch surfaces including:

— doors
— elevator panels
— handrails
— chairs and table-tops
— countertops at box office and serving areas
— vending machines.

Hand hygiene

— Venues should prominently display signage highlighting the importance of hand hygiene with instructions on how to perform correct hand washing, as well as cough and sneeze etiquette
— Creative businesses should provide easy access to hand hygiene products such as alcohol-based hand rubs and/or a sink with soap and water:
  — entry and exit points to venues
  — toilets and bathrooms
  — eateries
  — prior to contact with high-touch surfaces.

— Creative businesses will need to provide paper towel, alcohol based sanitising wipes and other items to assist with personal hygiene for the cleaning of potentially contaminated surfaces or items.
— Creative businesses should provide waste bins for the appropriate and timely disposal of contaminated products and arrange regular disposal to reduce the likelihood of cross contamination.

Touchless and disposable solutions

— Wherever possible, creative businesses should provide touchless solutions for interactions including ticketing, payment, vending and booking.
— Wherever practical, and in appropriate circumstances, creative businesses should use environmentally sustainable disposable items in place of reusable items.

Enhanced cleaning

— Staff, contractors and sole traders are encouraged to perform hand hygiene prior to touching any high-touch surfaces to reduce the prospect of contamination.
— Creative businesses should ensure that all skin-touch surfaces are cleaned regularly using products that meet requirements for effectiveness against COVID-19 and in line with relevant guidelines including:
  — seats and chairs wiped and cleaned after each use
  — toilets, basins and bathroom facilities cleaned regularly with an increased frequency where practical
  — refer to the Department of Health: Environmental cleaning and disinfection principles for COVID-19 for further information.

People safety protocols

In addition to adhering to COVID-19 social and community health guidelines, Boards and staff are responsible for ensuring a safe workplace. In the context of COVID-19, the responsibility for staff safety belongs to both the Board/business owners/ operators and individual staff member, contractor or volunteer.

— Organisations are required to establish and implement procedures which comply with criteria established by Safe Work Australia.

— Where possible, organisations should implement rostering and workforce rotation programs to reduce the risk of clusters of infection. This may include staggered start/stop times and break times, and two or more consistent work teams (e.g. A and B team)

— Organisations should ensure that the creative workforce have undertaken COVID-19 training prior to returning to work. Staff may be required to participate in additional training and to sign-off that they have agreed to the COVID-19 safety procedures.

Organisations' responsibility

To support a safe working and volunteering environment, creative businesses should:

— suggest that the creative workforce download and activate the COVIDSafe mobile application on their personal devices

— provide appropriate personal protective equipment

— provide training on COVID-19 contamination prevention and management

— suggest that the creative workforce receive the influenza vaccine in line with Government recommendations

— identify and offer redeployment opportunities to less audience and visitor facing roles for vulnerable staff, contractors and volunteers wherever possible

— encourage working from home (or other COVIDSafe remote location) wherever practical

— the workforce should be consulted in the developing of COVID-Safe risk assessments and may be represented if required.

Deliveries and third-party suppliers

People making deliveries, and other contractors who need to attend the workplace, should be given clear instructions of your requirements while they are on site. They will be required to comply with all pre-screening, physical distancing and hygiene practices whilst on site.

— Minimise the number of workers attending to deliveries and contractors as much as possible.

— Make hand washing stations available for workers after physically handling deliveries, or alcohol-based hand sanitiser as a secondary option.

— Delivery companies should also have their own COVID plan and this should be seen before they are booked

— Collect details of driver in line with track and trace principles?

— Direct visiting truck drivers to remain in vehicles and use contactless methods such as mobile phones to communicate wherever possible. Use, and ask deliveries and contractors to use, electronic documentation where possible to minimise physical interaction.

— Establish alternatives to requiring signatures. For instance, see whether a confirmation email or a photo of the loaded or unloaded goods can be accepted as proof of delivery or collection (as applicable).

Unwell staff, volunteers and contractors

— Those who are unwell or symptomatic should be actively encouraged to stay home and advised to seek appropriate medical review. Organisations and groups should consider how they will support staff through this process, including use of leave entitlements.

— Any staff who are unwell with cold or flu symptoms are to be requested to have a COVID test and encouraged to self-isolate until results are known.

— Where face-to-face meetings cannot be held online, they should occur outdoors or in large indoor meeting venues such that appropriate physical distancing is maintained.

Any workforce member who has a confirmed case of COVID-19, whether asymptomatic or not, must immediately advise their manager or supervisor and self-isolate in accordance with government regulations for the time period stipulated.

Staff must also notify their manager or supervisor if:

— they have been in direct contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, and/or

— they have been in regular contact with someone (partner, friend or family member) who has been overseas recently or who is showing signs of COVID-19 illness.

Contact tracing and outbreak management protocols

Contact tracing of audiences, participants and visitors

General admission spaces, indoor and outdoor, may need to introduce ticketing systems that allow for group bookings to be managed with physical distancing requirements. This means allocated seating or alternatively marked stand-up zones for groups and individuals.

— Maintenance of effective records, survey/questionnaire responses and other audience and participant information may be vital in the community response to COVID-19.
— Organisations will support health authorities in contact tracing as required.
— Manual recording of contact details on arrival should remain an option.

It is advised that all activities are managed through ticketing systems where possible, including free events. This provides:

— contact details to be recorded in the event of contact tracing
— scheduling of arrival times if required to manage queuing
— seating arrangements to be modified for group bookings
— control of maximum numbers to attend
— administration of declaration of health certification.

Outbreak management plan

Organisations and groups will adopt management plans for potential COVID-19 cases including, but not limited to:

— immediate isolation of the potential case
— distribution of PPE for any staff in contact
— immediate advice and liaison with appropriate public health authorities and
— thorough cleaning of the surrounding environment.

Performances and rehearsals may need to be cancelled to manage the necessary outbreak and self-isolation requirements.

Outbreak management of the creative workforce

Any member of the creative workforce who has a confirmed case of COVID-19, whether asymptomatic or not, must immediately advise their supervisor or manager and self-isolate in accordance with government regulations for the time period stipulated.

Creative workforce members must also notify their supervisor or manager if:

— they have been in direct contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, and/or
— they have been in regular contact with someone (partner, friend or family member) who has been overseas recently or who is showing signs of illness.

If a creative workforce member has been tested for COVID-19 and is awaiting test results, they will be instructed not to attend the workplace until they have been confirmed as having a negative result. In the interim period they must self-isolate but may work from home in circumstances that allow.

If the creative business is notified of a confirmed case of COVID-19, risk mitigation measures will be actioned as appropriate following relevant state or territory government advice. In the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case on work premises:

— The creative workforce member who has been diagnosed must quarantine in accordance with health advice and can return to work only when they have fully recovered and met the criteria for clearance from isolation. Clearance may be given by the public health authority or by the staff member's treating clinician and provided to the employer.

— The creative business will work with public health authorities to inform all staff members, contractors and volunteers that a case has been confirmed and request that those who have been in contact with the infected person immediately disclose their contact.

— The creative business will work with public health authorities to consult with workforce member, contractor or volunteer who are identified as having had contact with the infected person and will continue to share information with the relevant state or territory health authority and take any additional measures recommended by that authority.

— A deep clean will be conducted in accordance with advice received from the relevant health authority.