

CORONAVIRUS — CULTURE AND THE ARTS SECTOR — RECOVERY

**899. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Culture and the Arts:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to supporting businesses and workers in WA's arts sector as the economy recovers from the impacts of COVID-19.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how the government is providing producers and event organisers with the certainty they need to start touring and putting on performances again across the state?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this support will help drive more economic activity in Western Australia?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:**

I thank the member for Bunbury for his question, which I am very pleased to answer.

- (1)–(2) As members will be very aware, Western Australia is now one of the safest places on the earth. It is safe because of the leadership of the Premier and the government of Western Australia and the tremendous contribution and commitment by the people of Western Australia to ensure that we keep all our families safe. Of course, that is why we are now at over 100 days of zero community spread. Our economy is now the envy of other states and territories, and indeed the envy of other nations. Of course, we recognise that the cautious approach that has been taken—always focusing on the health and safety of our citizens—has worked and it has worked so well.

Of course, we know that when COVID-19 hit, those in the entertainment industry—in events and in performance et cetera—were impacted very severely. But they are back on the road now because this government has made sure that, through its \$76 million commitment through the recovery package, it has a whole range of programs and initiatives that are aimed at ensuring that we can get our performers back on stage and get our musicians back into performance venues. We can get our festival organisers and people who are able to present high-quality community events back out there delivering high-quality opportunities to communities throughout Western Australia—and we are doing it because we have been listening very closely to the sector. I am very pleased that part of our commitment includes the getting the show back on the road program, which is aimed to assist performance venues through an underwriting process. This new shared risk program allows a benchmark to be reached whereby there is support and underwriting support to share risk. This means that producers, touring companies, our wonderful performing arts entities such as the Western Australian Ballet, Western Australian Opera, West Australian Symphony Orchestra and our community theatres, and all those organisers and entrepreneurs, can have some surety that the getting the show back on the road program can support them at the box office. In the regions, for example, member for Bunbury, we will now be able to see touring programs restart. We will see touring opportunities—private, state-based and state-funded—being able to get back out into the regions. We know that is very important for our regional performing arts venues because many of them had to close and stay closed during the COVID-19 crisis, but now there is a surety that they can commence activity.

The getting the show back on the road program has been applauded by other states and territories. When it was announced as part of our recovery package, a number of other states and territories noted this initiative by the McGowan government. It demonstrates this government's commitment to the creative industries of Western Australia; to our artists, artisans, dancers and performers; and to those people who are involved in putting together entertainment opportunities, festivals and events. All those people are important to our economy, but they are also very important people in our social dividend that deliver high-quality experiences in Western Australia. We live in the safest place in the world. We recognise that and we are cautiously making sure that we move forward, but we also recognise that people in the creative industries are an essential part of our economy and our social fabric and we are supporting them on the ground with such initiatives. I am very pleased and very proud of our initiatives, and I am very pleased that the sector has been listened to very carefully and closely. The people in that sector are always engaged. I salute them because they are a very important part of our recovery from COVID-19.