

18 MARCH 2020

AN UPDATE FROM PP&VA ABOUT COVID-19

Dear supporters, friends, patrons, artists,

This morning the Prime Minister has announced a ban on non-essential gatherings of more than 100 people, effective immediately.

Yesterday the impact of the COVID-19 virus on our cultural life was keenly felt by us all as artists told us they were unable to travel, tours were suspended or postponed, and more and more venues suspended performances even ahead of the ban.

At this point all performances and talks are suspended in the first instance until at least May 2020. We await further detail on the ban length – but measures for six months have been mentioned.

Today we have cancelled more programs – workshops and classes that put people in close contact with each other. At this point in time we have cancelled these programs for the remainder of Term One. Effective immediately. However, it is likely that Term Two will also be affected. This is despite the fact that schools will remain open.

Currently, the Main Gallery at Penrith Regional Gallery and The Joan remain open, and individual tuition at Penrith Conservatorium will proceed, with additional cleaning operations in place and enough space to observe social distancing recommendations.

The overwhelming health advice is to practice social distancing, to self-isolate if possible. At such a time our programs which are about coming together to learn in a safe, collaborative group environment become impossibly high risk despite all precautions. We must put community safety first. We must each do what we can to flatten that curve and protect those most vulnerable in our community. To assist the healthcare sector to cope. To minimise the spread.

These cancelled programs are run by independent contractors who rely upon this income to survive. Our business model relies upon your fees to enable these services. Both will be hard hit by this decision.

Like many other arts organisations we ask that if you can, you donate your refund – or keep it as a credit in your account with us against future activity. This will assist us to honour the contract fees and to help artists and this organisation to survive through this crisis. We understand that many will not be in a position to do this. These are tough times.

In the meantime, we are looking to set up ways to move as much activity as possible online, to use the enforced isolation as an opportunity to connect with you in new ways.

We will be in touch again soon. Stay safe and healthy.

Hania & Team

PP&VA Ltd

The Joan

Penrith Regional Gallery, Home of the Lewers Bequest

Q Theatre

Penrith Conservatorium