

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

15 March 2020

Coronavirus: Opera Australia Update

In accordance with the federal government's escalation of the coronavirus precautionary measures, effectively banning all static public gatherings of more than 500 people in an effort to limit the spread of the virus, Opera Australia is cancelling the remainder of its Sydney summer season.

This includes all performances of *Attila*, *Carmen* and Great Opera Hits at the Sydney Opera House that were scheduled from Monday 16 through to Saturday 28 March.

At Opera Australia we are committed to ensuring the health and well-being of its staff and patrons at all times, however we know this is incredibly disappointing news to all our employees and supporters.

We are very proud to be the only major opera company in the world where more than 50% of its revenue comes from ticket sales. However, as Australia's largest arts employer with more than 1,000 employees, not to mention contractors and suppliers, it is this singular strength that will now be our biggest challenge through the COVID-19 crisis.

This is a time of crisis for performers across the cultural sector. So, it is at this time that I ask any ticket holders to OA or any presenting company - please re-consider your refund requests and instead where possible, to either exchange your ticket to a performance later in the year, convert it to a gift voucher or a donation to the company.

Whilst Opera Australia continues to process the impact of the current season's cancellation and further possible disruptions to the 2020 program, we want to assure our stakeholders and staff, that we are doing all we can to mitigate the impact on the Company to ensure our long term survival and ongoing position as one of Australia leading arts institutions.

A decision about the upcoming season of Handa Opera on Sydney Harbour will be made in the coming days as all avenues and scenarios are explored with stakeholders and government authorities.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our patrons, stakeholders and sponsors in anticipation of their ongoing support and their patience while we as a company, and the wider community, works through this unprecedented set of circumstances.

Rory Jeffes
CEO Opera Australia

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