

# Australia's Entertainers And Arts Community In Heart Rending Video In Call For Support Amid Devastation Of Pandemic On Lives And Careers

In the emotion-charged 10-minute video, prominent artists from a wide range of disciplines speak of the loneliness and despair combined with deepening concern that the arts are being overlooked.

Entertainer James Bustar has compiled a heart rending video in which members of the arts community tell of the devastation of the pandemic on lives and livelihoods and the need for further government income support to be extended to the arts. In the emotion-charged 10-minute video, prominent artists from a wide range of disciplines speak of the loneliness and despair combined with deepening concern that the arts are being overlooked. (Watch the video here <https://youtu.be/hlYorBoUmoc> or at [https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story\\_fbid=10157888789001969&id=516426968](https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10157888789001969&id=516426968) ) They tell of having bookings and income in their gig-to-gig industry cut to zero, which in some cases has left them in despair reliant on family and friends to survive. "I made the video because it was clear to me that the arts community and the people who make it so vital were being overlooked even though entertainment is among one of the most hardest hit sectors," said Bustar. "Very few people beyond artists' immediate circle are aware of the depths of despair into which they've been plunged amid the silence of government in terms of offering income protection beyond JobKeeper at a time when the covid crisis continues unabated especially with the current outbreak and lockdown in the wider Sydney region. . "The video is an impassioned plea from the arts community for a lifeline to get them to the other side of the pandemic. As one of the artists in the video says, the arts community consists of the artists and entertainers who produce the content that is helping everyone else get through the pandemic and its restrictions but are now in need of help themselves." In the video, artists contrast how every effort has been made to ensure that the passion of Australians for sport is satisfied but the same priority has not been afforded to the arts. In it, virtuoso jazz vocalist and violinist Fem Belling says: "Artists are the last to be thought of, we are not (seen as) important, we don't do important things. But I want to challenge every single person out there to go through a lockdown or some harrowing time in their life without music, without Netflix, without newspapers, without books ... (it is) the artists who create those things and yet we are the first to always be asked, 'please donate your services'. The government needs to step up and look after the people that they go home to every night when they turn on their televisions and radios." In the video there is also a note of defiance on the part of the arts community with prominent keynote speaker and corporate entertainer Anthony Laye saying: "Do we just throw in the towel and say 'stuff it I'm moving out of the entertainment and speaking world' or do we hang in there to wait and hope that things might get back to normal? I want to hang in there because I love what I do." James Bustar said he hoped the video and the pleas of the arts community would be seen far and wide to raise awareness of how serious the situation had become for many artists in terms of their mental health and ability to support themselves financially and in other ways. "People see the work of the arts community in their lives every day but they don't necessarily know what is going on in the background or the pressure that individual artists are under," Bustar said. "If nothing else, I hope the video shines a light on the crisis they are facing and the solution to help them get through it."

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