

Update: 17 March 2020

We appreciate there is uncertainty around future events, as the COVID-19 response develops nationally and internationally. Many arts events have already been cancelled and we know other organisers have difficult calls to make in the days ahead. The Government issued further guidelines for mass gatherings yesterday afternoon (Monday 16 March), and will provide information about an expanded business continuity package today.

We understand that this is a complete game-changer for most of our industry and will heavily impact many. Our thoughts are with you. Like you, we'll be assessing what the Government's announcements mean for the sector. You'll be hearing about them at the same time we do. We'll work to share key messages as quickly as we can, together with any related information that might help support or inform the sector at this time.

When announcing a 500-person limit on the size of mass gatherings yesterday afternoon, the Prime Minister acknowledged that she's acutely aware of the impact this decision has on the arts sector, especially as Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage. The Government will issue more mass gathering information later this week, including information about how event organisers might be able to mitigate issues.

Our senior leadership team is assessing the evolving situation this morning and discussing how we might be able to further support the sector. No stone will be left unturned. This will be our first priority.

Our Arts Council will be asked to consider an extraordinary response to this extraordinary set of circumstances. Our Council is prepared to make the decisions necessary in order to progress things in a timely manner. On 31 March we'll have a plan for how we're going to support the arts sector through this crisis – and we'll share this approach with the sector.

Future planning is important. We encourage you to keep considering the impact COVID-19 may have on you, your whānau and your arts practice or organisation. For the latter, we recommend you develop a business continuity plan for the immediate and longer term, and include a range of scenarios. [More information on business continuity plans](#) is available on the Ministry for Business, Innovation & Employment's website.

We'll update you with any changes, but please refer to the [Ministry of Health](#) as your primary source of COVID-19-related information. This includes yesterday's [advice for public events and mass gatherings](#).

Aku mihi nui. Kia kaha.

Stephen Wainwright
Tumu Whakarae | Chief Executive