



PAC Australia announces new plans for APAX 2020

When PAC Australia rebranded our Performing Arts Exchange and Conference to **APAX** (the Australian Performing Arts Exchange) late last year, it was based on the recognition that these two major events are at the heart of performing arts presenting in Australia, and central to our members' planning and development. And so, we began planning the largest event in PAC Australia's history for 2020.

But of course, 2020 had other plans for all of us.

While PAC Australia has been heavily focused on membership services and advocacy since COVID-19 shut down the performing arts sector, we have also been reviewing how APAX might best be placed to keep us connected and move our sector forward in these unpredictable times.

PAC Australia Executive Director, Katherine Connor said, "It became clear early on that even if we were permitted to gather by September, our delegates' capacity to travel or to fund travel costs and registration fees would be limited, our own capacity to deliver APAX to our usual standard would be compromised, and of course we considered what we could reasonably expect artists, producers and presenters to know about their future, amidst the ongoing uncertainty of COVID-19.

Even if we are permitted to both travel and gather in our usual numbers, September will be a time when we will all likely want, and need, to be in our own communities, hopefully re-opening or planning to reopen our performance spaces, rehearsing or delivering work.

It is crystal clear, however, that the sector still needs to be talking to each other, more than ever.

Our role in facilitating this has not diminished; if anything our drive to connect the sector is stronger than ever so that we may, collectively, create new opportunities, partnerships and strategies, and build the capacity needed to propel our organisations forward into the new environment."

After much consideration, consultation and based on a timeline of specific decision-making trigger points, today PAC Australia confirms that for the first time in 34 years PAC Australia will not be able to bring our sector together for an in-person gathering.

However, PAC Australia are pleased to announce that APAX will still be delivered in 2020, as we move the event online.

This revised, online format will include a series of gatherings, each no more than 90 minutes in length, with the professional development (i.e. conference) component delivered from July through to August and the market component delivered over six sessions in August and September.

Producers and artists are now invited to apply to present updates on the status of their organisation or practice and their future plans. Emphasising the essence of 'exchange', there will also be specific sessions for presenters to address the online audience to discuss how they are emerging from shutdowns and where they are currently positioned in terms of future programming.

Katherine said, "Building tours will not be the primary outcome of APAX in 2021 – exchanging ideas, providing updates and initiating conversations about what is possible will be the focus."

The full APAX program will be announced in early July, to coincide with the opening of registrations. A new website has been launched, where new content will be posted on a regular basis.

In closing, Katherine said, "PAC Australia is exceedingly proud of what APAX has delivered for our members, the sector and Australian audiences over the years and the whole team will be working hard to ensure APAX 2020 continues to deliver the connections and support needed at this critical time."