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Live Performance Australia condemns new visa processing charges





Live Performance Australia (LPA) has called on the country's Immigration Minister, Peter Dutton, to overturn increased fees for visa processing which are due to come into force next month. LPA states that huge increases in visa processing fees for international touring groups will hit Australian fans of live performance including some of the most iconic music festivals.

LPA Chief Executive Evelyn Richardson said the Turnbull Government's decision to scrap the long-standing group discount for entertainment visas for overseas touring groups would hit the financial viability of international tours, leading to fewer tours, reduced job opportunities for Australian performers and workers in the live performance industry, and higher ticket prices.

'Visa processing fees are being increased by up to 600 per cent which could stop touring artists from coming to Australia altogether,' Ms. Richardson said.

'This is a massive money grab by the Government, which is being introduced under the guise of a new online visa processing system that is supposed to cut red tape and streamline visa approvals.'

For example, the world-renowned Bluesfest held each year at Byron Bay attracts a strong contingent of international performers. In addition to the festival event, many of the touring acts also do side shows in capital cities or regional areas. Under the new charges, the visa processing fee for the organisers of Bluesfest have soared by 600 per cent to \$55,000. Other festivals such as Splendour in the Grass and the Falls Festival face visa fee increases of more than 200 per cent for their international artists.

'These new fees add significantly to the cost of touring Australia, and will act as a major disincentive for international artists to come here compared to opportunities in other markets,' Ms. Richardson said.

‘Australians who go to a live performance event or who work in the industry will be the biggest losers under this new scheme, as well as those who work in local tourism and hospitality businesses especially in regional communities.’

Ms. Richardson said LPA was also seeking clarification around changes to the exemption from visa fees for not-for-profit organisations and those which received government funding.

[Read the full media release from LPA](#)

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