



# Media Release

## The Arts Wellbeing Collective launches 24/7 Wellbeing Helpline for performing arts practitioners

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, 18 JULY 2019** – Arts Centre Melbourne's Arts Wellbeing Collective is thrilled to announce the launch of a new pilot program, the [\*\*Support Act Wellbeing Helpline\*\*](#), as part of its suite of mental health and wellbeing initiatives, tailored for those who work in the performing arts.

Partnering with Support Act to provide a free and confidential Wellbeing phone service, the Support Act Wellbeing Helpline is particularly targeted at those who may not have access to professional support such as independent theatre makers, and those working in small to medium arts organisations.

It is especially for those for whom an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is cost prohibitive, though the Wellbeing Helpline does not replace an organisational EAP or ongoing professional clinical support.

**Arts Centre Melbourne Chief Executive Claire Spencer** says she is absolutely thrilled that this vital service will be made available to those who work in the performing arts industry.

“This much needed helpline is staffed by qualified clinicians who have an understanding of the performing arts sector. We recognise that our community faces particular challenges and stresses from the unique nature of our work, which can include being curtain ready under pressure and the demands of touring and its effect on mental health and wellbeing when away from routine, family and friends.”

“Whether a person is in production, performance, or arts management, a life working in the performing arts can be challenging and at times stressful. The Support Act Wellbeing Helpline will offer a free and confidential phone service to any person who would not ordinarily be able to access this type of service – particularly those who work in our thriving independent and small to medium sector. We’re immensely grateful to our partners, Support Act and WorkSafe Victoria through the WorkWell program, for making this available to the wider performing arts community.”

**Support Act Chief Executive Clive Miller** says he is delighted to be partnering with the Arts Centre Melbourne and WorkSafe Victoria to provide access to the Wellbeing Helpline.

“It is a great resource for anyone who works in music, and now the performing arts, to access if they are concerned about any aspect of their mental health or wellbeing. The Helpline provides a wide range of counselling support from depression, anxiety, addiction, suicidal feelings through to loneliness, relationship breakdown, financial worries, illness and workplace conflict. We hope it becomes a widely used resource for people working in the performing arts.”

**WorkSafe Chief Executive Clare Amies** said the helpline demonstrated the practical ways WorkWell funding recipients could improve mental health and wellbeing in their sectors.

“The WorkWell Mental Health Improvement Fund challenges organisations to design programs that reach deeply into their sectors to make a positive and lasting difference to the mental health of Victorian workers. The Support Act Wellbeing Helpline is a great example of what can be achieved when organisations focus on the specific mental health needs of their industry and has the potential to make a big difference to the lives of performing arts workers who might not otherwise be able to access support.”

The Support Act Wellbeing Helpline can be accessed 24/7 on 1800 959 500 within Australia. For more information about The Arts Wellbeing Collective, please visit [artswellbeingcollective.com.au](http://artswellbeingcollective.com.au)

Images from the launch can be found [here](#).

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## Notes to the Editor:

Support Act is a music charity that provides crisis relief and wellbeing support services to artists, roadies and music workers. The Support Act Wellbeing Helpline is a free, confidential 24/7 phone counselling service, made possible through support from Alberts' The Tony Foundation and Levi Strauss Australia.

The Arts Wellbeing Collective receives funding from WorkSafe Victoria's Mental Health Improvement Fund, which aims to make mental health and wellbeing a priority in the workplace.

For further media information and interviews, please contact Media Advisor Kara Bertoncini on (03) 8699 9553, 0438 423 308 or [kara.bertoncini@artscentremelbourne.com.au](mailto:kara.bertoncini@artscentremelbourne.com.au).

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