

# National Cultural Policy Submission

**Organisation:** Joint Submission from leaders from Street Dance

**Submission:** Made on behalf of part of the Street Dance Sector  
— not a formalised peak body, organisation or agency  
— can be made public

**Date:** Friday 19 August 2022

**Contact details:** C/o Claire Hicks, Director, Critical Path  
[REDACTED]  
The Drill, 1c New Beach Road, Darling Point, NSW  
2027

---

## ABOUT THIS SUBMISSION: STREET DANCE

This submission has been developed and endorsed by a group of arts leaders with exemplary histories, practices and expertise in Street Dance.

Leaders contributing to this Submission:

- Dr Rachael Gunn, Raygun (NSW)
- Feras Shaheen, Fez (NSW)
- Jo Hyeon Yoon, J1 (NSW)
- Leah Clark, Flix, Elements Collective (QLD)
- David Prakash (VIC)
- Jonathan Homsey (VIC)

The leaders were convened by Critical Path and Dancehouse with the support of the Australia Council for the Arts. For more information on each contributor please see biographies at the end of this document.

Two digital consultation meetings were held with participants and were facilitated by Dr Rachael Gunn. From these discussions, Rachael Gunn and Claire Hicks, Critical Path drafted a response which was then endorsed by all participants.

This submission reflects some leaders' voices from a vibrant and diverse sector within dance and music; Street Dance.

Contributions and recognition of Street Dance artists, forms, organisations, collectives, presentation formats and communities have been mostly absent from state and federal arts policies and funding patterns.

This submission is not a consultation, but instead attempts to forward some urgent and important views from key leaders in the sector in a time-dependent process.

## ABOUT STREET DANCE

The word 'contemporary' is an exclusionary term in Australian arts and has become synonymous with dance from white Western modern forms from the US and Europe. Contemporary is a colonial term which appears to prioritise "new work" and "innovation" through the lens of American post/modernism — not defined by artists and communities themselves.

Street Dance is a mix of contemporary Black western forms and practices in a state of ongoing change and international fermentation.

Although convened through the lens of 'dance', this submission uses the term 'Street Dance' to acknowledge the intrinsic interconnections between movement, music, culture and community.

Street Dance is an umbrella term that encompasses various distinct contemporary dance forms that were developed outside 'institutionalised' spaces (such as studios and companies) by largely African-American as well as Latinx young people. Grounded in the traditions of African-American social dance, street dance styles are largely improvisational, highly social, and often competitive.

Specifically, the term 'Street Dance' includes the styles and cultures of: breaking, which was developed in New York throughout the 1970s; freestyle hip hop developed in New York and Los Angeles in the 1970s; popping and locking, part of the West Coast 'funkstyles' of California in the 1970s; waacking, created in primarily gay Latinx and Black underground disco clubs of 1970s Los Angeles; house cultivated in 1970s New York electronic music clubs as well as the rave scene in Chicago and New York in the 1980s; and krumping, which emerged in south central Los Angeles in the early 2000s. The Ballroom scene (also known as community and/or culture) is an LGBTQ+ cultural form, developed by the African American and Latinx Queer community in the 1980s as pageants to counter the racist spaces of traditional American competitions. Ballroom has grown around and nurtures 'houses' and 'families' where communities of choice and identity provide support systems for the creation of art and for daily life. Similarly, many of the other street dance styles unite people through 'crews', providing social support, mentoring, and an identity in which to represent and build at events.

Breaking and other street dance forms gained international exposure in the early 1980s largely as the result of many dance genre Hollywood films and their widespread use in music videos (around the time of the birth of MTV). Documentaries and international tours by early creators and adopters of the form helped to educate burgeoning street dance scenes around the world. Over the past twenty years the international street dance community has continued to grow, amplified through the connections enabled by digital technologies. Large-scale international street dance events, such as The Notorious IBE in the Netherlands (since 1998) and Radikal Forze in Singapore (since 2008), attracts street dancers from all over the world for competitions, workshops, and social events, with competitions recorded and streamed online for greater international audiences to view.

The diverse styles within Street Dance were created and established by young people, offering a means of expression and socializing not otherwise available. Underscored by the edict of "peace, unity, love, and having fun"\* Street Dance is a joyful space in which to celebrate diversity and personal expression. Despite the years of training required to excel in street dance forms, there is not the same recognition from the mainstream or wider public outside the Street Dance community/ies of the leaders and Senior artists in these practices.

Balletic and / or western contemporary primacy is a significant problem for the recognition and validation of Street Dance in Australia as an art form, for formal education and for professional work opportunities and investment.

This may change with Breaking being recognised as an elite dance sport in the 2024 Olympic Summer Games, following its successful inclusion in the 2018 Youth Olympics (<https://olympics.com/en/news/breaking-breakdancing-rules-format-moves>).

\*Lyrics from "Unity" a song recorded by Afrika Bambaataa and James Brown (1984)

Australia is behind the global times still seeing contemporary dance as only from the Western canon, and Street Dance and related forms solely as 'community-based' as such they are assumed to be void of artistic excellence.

**PILLAR ONE: First Nations: Recognising and respecting the crucial place of these stories at the centre of our arts and culture.**

Acknowledging that every inch of the country has a story directly supports the diversity of First Nations stories and the need for multiple different ways of story-making.

It is in recognizing the heterogenous nature of Street Dance, its diversity, that appropriate interactions with and support for First Nations dance and related cultural elements can be put in place. It is in finding space for acknowledgement of First Peoples stories on every inch of this land that Street Dance can find strong and appropriate ways to 'speak' on Country.

**PILLAR TWO: A place for every story: reflecting the diversity of our stories and the contribution of all Australians as the creators of culture.**

Street Dance forms are part of a wider multi-arts culture (originating alongside other elements of Hip Hop culture) and other 'underground' forms in New York and Los Angeles in the 1970s, they are Cultural forms, and have community and individual identity at their core. Street Dance is performed by a variety of people of ethnic, cultural, and sexual diversity.

Street Dance is characterised as an Urban Dance and therefore as a metropolitan form. However, as its global development has demonstrated it has a relationship to building Culture and to representation of often marginalised communities that translate to diverse communities and contexts.

**PILLAR THREE: The centrality of the artist: supporting the artist as worker and celebrating their role as the creators of culture.**

Self-determination is crucial to the sustainability, development of and Cultural elements (community, identity, expression and transfer of knowledge) of Street Dance.

The basis of the development of all forms of Street Dance has been participation. Participation as dancer, as audience, as teacher, as mentor, as community member. As such the artists are the centre of all aspects of the form, they drive the pedagogy, the spaces in which the art form takes place and hold a shared role of community member with and as audience. Street Dance events become hubs through which dancers meet, exchange ideas, and build their artistic practice.

**PILLAR FOUR: Strong institutions: providing support across the spectrum of institutions which sustain our arts and culture.**

The kinds of institutions that exist do not necessarily work with Street Dance as an art and cultural form. There needs to be an opening up of 'mainstream' infrastructures, along with a shift in what is mainstream and an understanding and support for the specific needs and architecture of Street Dance.

Most of the work in Street Dance is done through private studios (often short-lived due to financial pressures), and public spaces (though much public realm design and development locks Street Dancers out of these spaces).

Form of the work, its technique, its cultural and social element, its improvisory basis and its connection to music plays against traditional arts support and investment. Allowing other avenues of funding to dominate can be detrimental to the development of the diverse forms and to the cultural agency and safety within Street Dance.

**PILLAR FIVE: Reaching the audience: ensuring our stories reach the right people at home and abroad.**

The stories expressed in and through Street Dance speak to a diverse array of people. They speak first to those in our own Street Dance communities, our makers, our sisters and brothers. They speak to those who recognise themselves in us - as highlighted above, Street Dance is performed by a variety of people of ethnic, cultural, and sexual diversity. Street Dance becomes an important mode of empowerment and strength to marginalised communities. As such, they also speak to those who share our experiences and those who understand them through their own. These are people across Australia, metropolitan, regional and remote communities, as well as international audiences (both in person and online).

Street Dance also excites dance and music audiences on a cultural, artistic and social level. Audiences who thrill to the skill, passion, and ability that Street Dancers have to speak and to share through their art. Audiences who see the joy, intensity, and diversity of our events, our artistic excellence, who want to hear our stories, and who are excited to move with us.

## SUBMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. A national strategy for Street Dance

A national strategy should be developed following a wider consultation with artists and communities. The strategy, to cover a 10 year period, will articulate and respond to the experience, capacity and maturity of the sector and recommend programs, initiatives and policies to support, celebrate, platform and offer professional opportunities for the Street Dance sector locally and nationally.

It is important to note that there are concerns of art and sport as having two different remits (though also elements of shared concern and interest, particularly at grassroots) - how these street dancers can interact with other departments needs to be carefully considered.

It is likely that this strategy would align with opportunities provided by the inclusion of Breaking at the Brisbane Olympics in 2032 but would not be limited to Breaking.

The strategy will include:

- Support for the creation of new spaces (venues and public realm) for Street Dance, see for example:
  - <https://ccnrb.org/>
  - <https://www.campbelltown.nsw.gov.au/Business/ReimaginingCampbelltown/RevitaliseQueenStreet/ForumQ>
- Cross-governmental approaches to build capacity for diverse making and dissemination of Street Dance.
- Australia-New Zealand/Aotearoa collaboration and joint initiatives for workforce development.

### 2. Portfolio investment in demystifying, educating, creating and disseminating

The strategy will outline how the Government and wider arts and education sector can collaborate and support Street Dance, in particular young people, through education, communication, and application.

### 3. Funding

In line with many other submissions, access to a more robust, transparent, accessible and contestable funding available to organisations and individuals is needed.

- Grant programs should be accompanied with training to ensure grant access.

Fellowships and grants to individuals already undertaking significant and diverse work in the community are important and have historically been impactful for leaders to undertake research, outreach and much-needed sabbaticals.

- Multi-Year Fellowships for senior improvising and making-artists and artist collectives
- Opportunities for more longitudinal funding to enable artists and organisers to build meaningful and sustainable communities around their practice and events.

Honouring time and research in the form without the pressure to make a product.

All project funds should be set at levels that allow for at least 10% on consultation and cultural safety

Funds for partnering work and targeted initiatives to bring Street Artists into wider opportunities.

Peak national bodies for some elements of Street Dance to be supported as well as long-standing Crews & Houses and significant events -

- Australian Breaking Association (ABA)
- Destructive Steps Dance Association (DSDA)
- Identify long-standing crews (e.g. some in Australia operating for 20 years plus) for support
- Identify long-standing Houses and Families in the scene that could be invested in on a multi-year basis
- Explore with the Ballroom scene appropriate structure/s for peak body type support and significant events /delivery initiatives

#### **4. Universal Basic Income and aligned strategies**

Echoing the National Dance Managers submission, Street Dance artists and arts workers earn a living through many activities, from casual work (in and outside the sector) to self-generated entrepreneurial activity and the gig economy. The development of a mechanism that ensures this portfolio employment structure is sustainable, such as a Universal Basic Income, would support the precarious and uneven nature of most employment along with protecting and advancing individual rights, conditions and entitlements.

#### **5. Targeted initiatives to strengthen the sector**

Informed by the multi-year strategy, targeted initiatives have the opportunity to connect artists of colour to LBQTI+, and First Nations artists and others through mentoring, outreach, and professional development programs. An example is the Department of Justice and Community Safety targeted initiative/s to address equity issues related to Tobacco use and related anti-smoking programs. A similar lens could be applied working with and through the arts.

#### **6. National digital strategy**

A National digital strategy would strongly benefit from Street Dance innovators, content-makers, contributors, and audiences. Street Dance events are streamed and recorded and accessed by audiences around the world. A national digital strategy would showcase Australian Street Dancers, and help dancers connect and network with other communities of dancers. Targeted initiatives could also work to connect and support communities of colour.

#### **7. Equity, safety and cultural literacy**

Programs and initiatives that support equity, safety, cultural awareness and literacy are needed across the arts sector, within Government and in education. Appropriate hiring and recruitment and representation: cluster hiring, specialist form knowledge, lived-experience are priorities for Street artists and associated arts workers.

### ***PERMISSIONS***

Street Dance leaders group

Contact: Dr Rachael Gunn & Jonathan Homsey

For more information on each contributor please see biographies at the end of this document.

- Dr Rachael Gunn, Raygun (NSW)
- Feras Shaheen, Fez (NSW)
- Jo Hyeon Yoon, J1 (NSW)
- Leah Clark, Flix, Elements Collective (QLD)
- David Prakash (VIC)
- Jonathan Homsey (VIC)

## COMMENTARY FROM GROUP ADDRESSING PILLARS

### **PILLAR ONE: First Nations: Recognising and respecting the crucial place of these stories at the centre of our arts and culture.**

Acknowledging that every inch of the country has a story directly supports the diversity of First Nations stories and the need for multiple different ways of story-making.

It is in recognizing the heterogenous nature of Street Dance, its diversity, that appropriate interactions with and support for First Nations dance and related cultural elements can be put in place. It is in finding space for acknowledgement of First Peoples stories on every inch of this land that Street Dance can find strong and appropriate ways to 'speak' on Country.

#### ***Challenges and Opportunities***

- Street Dance artists and communities recognize the Cultural and Societal role that First Nations artists operate within. They have these roles often within their own communities, both communities of dance and communities of marginalized and under-represented communities. There is much common ground between First Nations Artists and communities and those of Street Dance.
- First Nations arts and Culture is not homogenous. It is characterized by many languages, spoken and of the body, held over many years, lost and sometimes recovered. It is in recognizing this heterogenous nature, this diversity, that appropriate interactions with and support for First Nations dance and related cultural elements can be put in place.
- There is a significant history of Street Dance working in and with First Nations communities, in Metropolitan and Regional and Remote contexts. Bboy Scotty Doo Rok's Redfern Block Party's direct connection to the Redfern Riots and the mentoring of the crew Redfern City Rockers. Other breakers, such as Nick Power (aka Rely), Stephen Gow (aka Stevie G), Morgonics, have also spent quite a lot of time in rural Australia working with First Nations communities.
- It is vital that we recognise that TRUST is really important to build. Relationships must be formed slowly in order to build a meaningful connection and avoid tokenistic engagements. Examples of successful engagement are from relationships where artists worked over 3 years with a particular community. Engagement requires time, commitment, generosity, and no expectation for immediate results.
- We can all learn a lot from the work of First Nations artists in this area. For example, companies like Marrageku, where every show is taken straight to the Kimberley to their local audience before they go to national and international stages. There is a need to support models such as this - taking shows of scale to regional and remote audiences.
- Colleagues across the Tasman have researched and implemented social cohesion and mental health for Maori youth using hip hop dance and culture. There are opportunities for First Nations communities across the Tasman to learn from each other.

### **PILLAR TWO: A place for every story: reflecting the diversity of our stories and the contribution of all Australians as the creators of culture.**

Street Dance forms are part of a wider multi-arts culture (originating alongside other elements of Hip Hop culture) and other 'underground' forms in New York and Los Angeles in the 1970s, they are Cultural forms, and have community and individual identity at their core. Street Dance is performed by a variety of people of ethnic, cultural, and sexual diversity.

Street Dance is characterised as an Urban Dance and therefore as a metropolitan form. However, as its global development has demonstrated it has a relationship to building Culture and to representation of often marginalised communities that translate to diverse communities and contexts.

#### ***Challenges and Opportunities***

- Street Dance forms are part of a wider multi-arts culture (originating alongside other elements of Hip Hop culture) and other 'underground' forms in New York and Los Angeles from the 1970s, they are Cultural forms, and have community and individual identity at their core.
  - Street Dance is performed by a variety of people of ethnic, cultural, and sexual diversity

- For example, organisations with NSW and Victoria engage with street dance artists, with 75% from the Asian or Pasifika diaspora.
- The word “contemporary” is an exclusionary term in Australian arts and has become synonymous with dance from white Western modern forms from the US and Europe. Contemporary is a colonial term which appears to prioritise “new work” and “innovation” through the lens of American post/modernism — not defined by artists and communities themselves. Street Dance is a mix of contemporary Black western forms and practices in a state of ongoing change and international fermentation.
- Due to education reform and the dominance of the Cunningham technique in pedagogy, the understanding of what ‘work’ is has been viewed through postmodern perspectives.
  - Street dance works are highly varied, manifesting from local cyphers to venue hosted block parties (e.g. at the Arts Centre Melbourne), Destructive Steps Australia’s largest 3-day Battle, Sissy Ball annual event (now at the Town Hall, Sydney). As such they are more than just works in a proscenium arch, and should be recognised as just as valid.
  - There are recognised artists and leaders in Street Arts within mainstream and experimental arts networks, but they are often tokenised and/or expected to work within others’ forms and agency.
- Street Dance has been successful in getting funding from corporations (commercial enterprises) due to the cultural clout and reach of Street Dance in digital and physical spaces. However, the programs created with these funds and the expectations that come with them are often not culturally safe. Also this funding is focused on certain kinds of activities, commercial imperatives and often tokenism is at play. The government needs to create scaffolding or co-funding public private programs that can ensure these corporations are working safely.
- Street Dance is extremely effective at practicing and maintaining culture: sharing culture, promoting pride, self-worth and wellbeing, empowerment, community cohesion and coherence, as well as creative and recreational benefits. There is a need for more recognition of this important work by Street Dance creatives, producers, administrators, and production staff.

### **PILLAR THREE: The centrality of the artist: supporting the artist as worker and celebrating their role as the creators of culture.**

Self-determination is crucial to the sustainability, development of and Cultural elements (community, identity, expression and transfer of knowledge) of Street Dance.

The basis of the development of all forms of Street Dance has been participation. Participation as dancer, as audience, as teacher, as mentor, as community member. As such the artists are the centre of all aspects of the form, they drive the pedagogy, the spaces in which the art form takes place and hold a shared role of community member with and as audience. Street Dance events become hubs through which dancers meet, exchange ideas, and build their artistic practice.

### ***Challenges and Opportunities***

- Australia is behind the global times in still seeing contemporary dance as only from the Western canon, and street dance and related forms solely as ‘community-based’ and as such assumed to be void of artistic excellence. Internationally we can see examples of recognition of excellence:
  - Kate Prince —> Zoo Nation, UK
  - Parris Goebel by the New Zealand Order of Merit by the age of 25
  - FAIR-E Collective directors of National Choreographic Centre of Rennes and Brittany
  - USA government supporting ALAANA (African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, Native American) orgs → <https://www.giarts.org/supporting-alaana-organizations>

Street Dance artists here include experts (including many diaspora artists) but who aren’t getting recognised due to the models of funding in Australia, including government grants.

- Poe One (Style Elements) is a pioneer in the form from New York, who lives in Australia but is mainly programmed, and therefore financed/funded, overseas.

- In Europe, Street Dance is accepted as being taken up to the level of a prestige school even though artists haven't gone to these kinds of institutions. This prestige is recognised by the kinds of structures to which professional artists are 'admitted', work within, and hold leadership roles for, e.g. Hip Hop Choreographic Centre Rennes, FRANCE, <https://ccnrb.org/>.

There is an opportunity in Australia to create a centre like this, even if it's a relatively small group of people initially that want to do this (work as Street Dance 'Choreographers'). Having a dedicated space to do this would help shift the perception of Street Dance, and contemporary dance, to broader audiences.

- In the United States and Europe, Street Dance is taught at the tertiary level. Examples include the Hip Hop, Street and Social Dance Forms Minor at the University of Southern California, and the Hip Hop studies minor at the University of Arizona, and the all-round Hip Hop course at Alkio College in Finland. There is an opportunity to recognise Australia's historical contribution to the development of Street Dance internationally, as well as provide a space to discuss key social and cultural issues (such as race, identity, nation) through the lens of Street Dance. Incorporating Street Dance practice will broaden the artistic development of young practitioners as well as allowing artists with those backgrounds to enter on equal terms.
- Balletic and / or western contemporary primacy is a significant problem for the recognition and validation of Street Dance as an art form, for formal education and for professional work opportunities and investment.
- There is desire for both professional artistic practice and community practice but there are few opportunities for paid work as elite practitioners in either area. Artists need their form and working needs to be met.
- Examples:

how can models like creator's fund be used → what does a half -fellowship look like ?

Artists in residence and other programs/structures - that can fit entire competitions learning & exchange structure, or a collective working together.

Spaces, funds & other resources that work with Street Dance working practices and agendas

- Influence and representation within existing mechanisms and institutions within the arts is an ongoing primary concern. Countered with this is an anxiety around the remaking of young dance artists who come from Street Dance backgrounds into dominant western modernist and neo classical structures.
  - DANCE AS SPORT → Elite sport. How does this help the further development of Street Dance (particularly Breaking) and create new audiences? How does this shape the form in a particular way, impact on it as an art form, and relationship to Cultural and societal elements outside of judging criteria (creativity, personality, technique, variety, performativity and musicality).
- Destructive Steps, Australia's biggest Street Dance event, started very small and grew over a decade. It takes time to build meaningful relationships and sustainable communities, and yet often practitioners and organisers are expected to show immediate results after one year of funding.
  - Time sensitive due to cultural safety.
    - Scotty Doo Rok (Scott Fox) → Redfern City Rockers – established in response to Redfern Riots.
    - Work of community groups at e.g. Dancehouse → stop Asian hate, accountability of Black Lives Matter.
  - Individual and small groups of artists work for the wider community and audiences to build accessible spaces and programs. This is often at the financial expense of these artists and in addition to their work as art-makers/ teachers and other employment.
- Some Street Dance artists want to be experienced by the "mainstream" and others by diverse communities outside the mainstream. The inability to have choice currently is the main issue. Street Dance has a wide and deep interest and exposure globally, in some countries (particularly in Europe) this has extended to visibility in national policy and availability of resources— this is not seen in Australia at the same level.



## **PILLAR FOUR: Strong institutions: providing support across the spectrum of institutions which sustain our arts and culture.**

The kinds of institutions that exist do not necessarily work with Street Dance as an art and cultural form. There needs to be an opening up of 'mainstream' infrastructures, along with a shift in what is mainstream and an understanding and support for the specific needs and architecture of Street Dance.

Most of the work in Street Dance is done through private studios (often short-lived due to financial pressures), and public spaces (though much public realm design and development locks Street Dancers out of these spaces).

Form of the work, its technique, its cultural and social element, its improvisory basis and its connection to music plays against traditional arts support and investment. Allowing other avenues of funding to dominate can be detrimental to the development of the diverse forms and to the cultural agency and safety within Street Dance.

### ***Challenges and Opportunities***

- Cultural processes and self-determination are key to Street Dance development and representation as an art and cultural form.
- Like most contemporary artists, their role is often two-fold; to both preserve and critique their practiced cultures.
- Many artists who manage to maintain themselves within Street Dance over 5-years plus and/or have been recognised for developing the form and the community have been mentored and supported by others from their earliest days in the scene.
- Some of this mentoring has been from artists outside of the Street Dance scene and those engaged in wider arts practice. More chances for these kinds of interactions – as more Street Dancers working in these other professional arts worlds.
- There is a need to understand the importance of pedagogy in Street Dance. Due to systemic injustice, many elders have passed on or about to pass on. In waacking in particular, every originator bar one has died due to the HIV epidemic by 1984. Furthermore, the form is about 'we', not I. Success of the form is through the group, i.e. crews and community groups that work outside of company structure.
- Mentoring is intrinsic within the culture of the forms. However, where artists have been mentored by 'outsiders' it opens up wider possibilities for individuals and then for those that they in turn mentor, e.g. Nick Power mentored by David Clarkson at Stalker – they met through Stamping Ground in Northern Rivers. Nick then mentored others – including Leah. And now Leah does the same. This is becoming more common now. There are examples to follow.
- Street Dance doesn't work in a structure like western contemporary or ballet. It's not like the Royal Academy of Dance - there is no model codification and syllabus. There is a liveness to Street Dance, as a social dance it is constantly changing as dancers are also encouraged to build upon the foundation, adding their own individual creativity and style.
- Many street dance artists operate as dance 'hobbyists' as they have another job - being a full-time artist is not viable in Australia, but also artists who work at elite level do not want to form a FTE work relationship with this part of their culture as it may impact access to the form.
- Destructive Steps, Australia's biggest Street Dance event, started very small and grew over a decade. Individual and small groups of artists work for the wider community and audiences to build accessible spaces and programs. This is often at the financial expense of these artists and in addition to their work as art-makers/ teachers and other employment.
- Quantitative funding approach impacts on the sustainability of the form for artists as professional and artform development - it is not sustaining qualitatively
  - Vogue ball in Melbourne funded by state government; 1 day event with no rehearsals employing 35 people including 20 dancers, but each dancer only getting award rates for one day and not for their ongoing practice.
  - Another example, Lunar New Year Disco a queer dance battle that received funds from museums due to dance organisations not able to support an event with that scale and that many people. Again this activity whilst welcome does not invest in the dancers outside of the battle delivery.

- Ability to deliver around social cohesion: Street Dance gets more funding from the department of health and housing than the arts. This is due to the way the work is created and priorities for cultural safety and mental health.
  - Why can't the arts match this funding in a pandemic? Previous example includes the 1990s anti-smoking funding. Key not for profits in the sector could be identified to support targeted initiatives. Whilst this is welcome there is a concern that this would then make the organisations the gatekeepers, which is against the values of orgs including Dancehouse & Critical Path. Such initiatives require steps to support this kind of intervention to ensure that it is not a move away from self-determination. Greater investment directly in Street Dance companies and structures would avoid this.
- Some Street Dance artists want to be experienced by the “mainstream” and others by diverse communities outside the mainstream. The inability to have choice currently is the main issue. Street Dance has a wide and deep interest and exposure globally, in some countries (particularly in Europe) this has extended to visibility in national policy and availability of resources— this is not seen in Australia at the same level.
- Influence and representation within existing mechanisms and institutions within the arts is an ongoing primary concern. Countered with this is an anxiety around the remaking of young dance artists who come from Street Dance backgrounds into dominant western modernist and neo classical structures.
- There is a missed opportunity to build upon the origins and continuity of Street Dance as a street form by providing public space facilities for dance development and presentations.  
<https://www.campbelltown.nsw.gov.au/Business/ReimaginingCampbelltown/RevitaliseQueenStreet/ForumQ>

**PILLAR FIVE: Reaching the audience: ensuring our stories reach the right people at home and abroad.**

The stories expressed in and through Street Dance speak to a diverse array of people. They speak first to those in our own Street Dance communities, our makers, our sisters and brothers. They speak to those who recognise themselves in us - as highlighted above, Street Dance is performed by a variety of people of ethnic, cultural, and sexual diversity. Street Dance becomes an important mode of empowerment and strength to marginalised communities. As such, they also speak to those who share our experiences and those who understand them through their own. These are people across Australia, metropolitan, regional and remote communities, as well as international audiences (both in person and online).

Street Dance also excites dance and music audiences on a cultural, artistic and social level. Audiences who thrill to the skill, passion, and ability that Street Dancers have to speak and to share through their art. Audiences who see the joy, intensity, and diversity of our events, our artistic excellence, who want to hear our stories, and who are excited to move with us.

- Street Dance forms are part of a wider multi-arts culture (originating alongside other elements of Hip Hop culture) and other ‘underground’ forms in New York and Los Angeles from the 1970s, they are Cultural forms, and have community and individual identity at their core.
  - Street Dance is performed by a variety of people of ethnic, cultural and sexual diversity.
  - For example, organisations with NSW and Victoria engage with Street Dance artists, with 75% from the Asian or Pasifika diaspora.
- Street Dance has an ongoing commitment and belief in its power and potential as a form by and for young people.
- Street Dance is characterised as an Urban Dance and therefore as a metropolitan form. However, as its global development has demonstrated it has a relationship to building Culture and to representation of often marginalised communities that translate to diverse communities and contexts. There are opportunities for more Regional Battles, and need to recognise and value quality of engagement rather than just quantity of audience.
- Street Dance is a thriving global community and industry. There is a need to better support Australian Street Dance artists and events in order to showcase Australian stories to the right audiences here and abroad. This may be through stronger digital infrastructure, supporting tours, and facilitating exchange programs.

## Information on submission contributors

**RACHAEL GUNN** HOLDS A PHD IN CULTURAL STUDIES (2017) AND IS A LECTURER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA, COMMUNICATIONS, CREATIVE ARTS, LANGUAGE, AND LITERATURE AT MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY. SHE IS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY AND PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCHER INTERESTED IN THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF BREAKING. HER WORK DRAWS ON CULTURAL THEORY, DANCE STUDIES, POPULAR MUSIC STUDIES, MEDIA, AND ETHNOGRAPHY, AND HAS BEEN PUBLISHED IN CONTINUUM: JOURNAL OF MEDIA AND CULTURE, JOURNAL OF WORLD POPULAR MUSIC, FEMINIST MEDIA STUDIES, QUEER STUDIES IN MEDIA AND POPULAR CULTURE, AND THE EDITED BOOK NOCTURNES: POPULAR MUSIC AND THE NIGHT. ALSO KNOWN AS 'BGIRL RAYGUN', RACHAEL IS A PRACTISING BREAKER AND HAS WON NATIONAL TITLES INDIVIDUALLY AND WITH HER CREW, '143 LIVERPOOL STREET FAMILIA'. SHE WAS THE TOP RANKED AUSTRALIAN BGIRL IN 2020 AND 2021, AND REPRESENTED AUSTRALIA AT THE WORLD BREAKING CHAMPIONSHIPS IN PARIS IN 2021. RACHAEL HAS A RANGE OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE AT UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE LEVELS ACROSS THE AREAS OF MEDIA, CREATIVE INDUSTRIES, MUSIC, DANCE, CULTURAL STUDIES, AND WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING. HER RESEARCH INTERESTS INCLUDE: BREAKING, STREET DANCE, AND HIP-HOP CULTURE; YOUTH CULTURES/SCENES; CONSTRUCTIONS OF THE DANCING BODY; POLITICS OF GENDER AND GENDER PERFORMANCE; ETHNOGRAPHY; AND THE METHODOLOGICAL DYNAMICS BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE. SHE IS A MEMBER OF POP MOVES, AN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK FOCUSING ON POPULAR DANCE AND PERFORMANCE.

**JO HYEON YOON**, PROFESSIONAL CAREER AS A MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT SCIENTIST/CHEMICAL ENGINEER WORKING IN RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT IN THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY, CURRENTLY AT DUPONT MEMCOR WATER SOLUTIONS. DANCER NAME BBOY J ONE FROM 143 LIVERPOOL STREET FAMILIA, DANCING ROUGHLY TWENTY YEARS PRIMARILY IN BREAKING AND ATTENDING AUSTRALIAN HIP HOP EVENTS FOR THE SAME AMOUNT OF TIME. CREATOR OF THE EVENT DESTRUCTIVE STEPS AND FOUNDER OF DESTRUCTIVE STEPS DANCE ASSOCIATION INC. (DSDA) A NON-PROFIT COMMUNITY ART CHARITY DEDICATED TO PROMOTING THE IDEALS OF HIP HOP SPECIFICALLY THROUGH (BUT LIMITED TO) PERFORMANCE ART. RECENTLY A LICENSED BREAKING JUDGE UNDER THE OLYMPIC JUDGING SYSTEMS TRIVIUM AND THREEFOLD THROUGH WORLD DANCE SPORTS FEDERATION, DANCE SPORTS AUSTRALIA AND AUSTRALIAN BREAKING ASSOCIATION.

**LEAH CLARK** HAS WORKED AS A PROFESSIONAL DANCER, CHOREOGRAPHER, ACTOR AND PERFORMER FOR THE PAST 15 YEARS. SHE HAS TOURED EXTENSIVELY BOTH NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY FOR A NUMBER OF HIGH-PROFILE DANCE, TV, FILM AND THEATRE COMPANIES AND HAS REPRESENTED AUSTRALIA TWICE AT THE WORLD FINALS, BATTLE OF THE YEAR IN FRANCE & GERMANY AS WELL AS WINNING NUMEROUS AUSTRALIAN B-GIRL TITLES OVER HER 20 YEAR DANCE CAREER. IN 2010 SHE OPENED ELEMENTS COLLECTIVE, WHERE SHE FORMED HER MULTI-AWARD WINNING DANCE COMPANY. SINCE ITS HUMBLE BEGINNINGS, ELEMENTS COLLECTIVE HAS BECOME ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S LEADING HIP-HOP DANCE COMPANIES AND PRODUCES WORKSHOPS, PERFORMANCES AND EVENTS FOR A RANGE OF CLIENTS FROM COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS TO LARGE CORPORATE PROFILES. IN 2014, SHE REBRANDED HER STUDIOS INTO A MULTI-USE CREATIVE SPACE & EVENTS VENUE AND IN MAY 2019 SHE EXTENDED HER LEASE TO INCLUDE A GROUND FLOOR LEVEL AND OPENED A BRAND NEW PERFORMANCE VENUE & PUBLIC BAR (EC VENUE). LEAH ALSO WORKS AS A FREELANCE CREATIVE PRODUCER AND HAS WORKED CLOSELY WITH QLD CRICKET / BRISBANE HEAT FOR THE PAST 8 YEARS MANAGING THE ENTERTAINMENT "HYPE CREW" FOR THE WBBL & BBL GAMES. IN 2017-2018 SHE WORKED AS CAST COORDINATOR FOR THE GC2018 COMMONWEALTH GAMES OPENING & CLOSING CEREMONIES AND HAS SINCE GONE ON TO WORK WITH SOME OF QLD'S FINEST EVENTS COMPANIES INCLUDING BRISBANE FESTIVAL (2019 ASSOCIATE PRODUCER & 2020 ARTIST LIAISON) AND AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR FOR CONCRETE CULTURE AT H.O.T.A (HOME OF THE ARTS, GOLD COAST).

**DAVID PRAKASH** IS AN INDIAN/SAMOAN ARTIST WHO BEGAN HIS JOURNEY INTO THE REALM OF STREET DANCE IN 2012. DURING THIS TIME, HE HAS EXPLORED MULTIPLE GENRES SUCH AS POPPING, HIP HOP FREESTYLE, HOUSE, AND KRUMP. DAVID HAS JUDGED AT VARIOUS STREET DANCE BATTLES IN MELBOURNE AND COMPETED NATIONALLY/INTERNATIONALLY. SINCE 2018, DAVID HAS BEEN CO-FACILITATING 'JAM ON TOAST', A WEEKLY DANCE JAM FOR THE MELBOURNE DANCE COMMUNITY TO DANCE, HANG OUT AND CONNECT WITH NEW PEOPLE. DAVID'S RECENT VENTURE INTO THE CONTEMPORARY DANCE SPACE HAS SEEN HIM IN DEVELOPMENT WITH CHUNKY MOVE AND IN MULTIPLE CREATIVE PROJECTS WITH JENNIFER MA & COLLABORATORS INCLUDING: HOME(S), SUBMERGE AT DANCEHOUSE, ART ECHOES COMMISSIONED BY BUNJIL PLACE, ACCUMULATING COMMISSIONED BY HYPHENATED PROJECTS AND IS CURRENTLY IN DEVELOPMENT FOR WE ARE HERE. DAVID IS YOUTH ARTS COORDINATOR AT L2R (MELBOURNE WEST DANCE, ARTS LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING DISADVANTAGE), WHERE HE BRINGS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE MECHANISMS THAT ALLOW STREET DANCE TO ACT AS A CATALYST FOR CONNECTION AND EXPERIENCE IN THE INDUSTRY AS A WORKING ARTIST.

**FERAS SHAHEEN'S** ART PRACTICE SPANS ACROSS PERFORMANCE, SEMIOTICS, STREET DANCE, READYMADE ART AND DIGITAL MEDIA. SHAHEEN WAS BORN IN DUBAI TO PALESTINIAN PARENTS AND MOVED TO SYDNEY AT THE AGE OF 11. DRAWING FROM HIS STREET DANCE BACKGROUND AS WELL AS PALESTINIAN CULTURAL DANCE TRADITIONS, SHAHEEN TRAVERSES DIFFERENT ROLES WITHIN THE ARTS, WORKING AS A PERFORMER, TEACHER, CHOREOGRAPHER AND DIGITAL ARTIST. HE HOLDS A BACHELOR IN DESIGN FROM WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY (2014) AND IN ADDITION TO HIS ARTISTIC PRACTICE, FERAS WORKS AS A FREELANCE GRAPHIC DESIGNER, PHOTOGRAPHER AND FILMMAKER . THEY CALL PEOPLE LIKE FERAS MULTIPOTENTIALITES—THOSE WHOSE INTERESTS AND TALENTS SPAN MULTIPLE AREAS.

WHAT ENABLES HIM TO EXCEL IN THESE SOMEWHAT DIVERGENT FIELDS ARE HIS PROBLEM SOLVING, CREATIVE THINKING, AND VISUAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS. WORKING AT THE FULCRUM OF BEAUTY AND CULTURE, FERAS STRIVES FOR LOGIC RATHER THAN DECORATION, CREATING MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES FOR ALL INVOLVED. FERAS IS ALSO A MEMBER OF ENCOUNTER, MARRUGEKU, BUGGY BUMPERS CREW, GROOVE THERAPY AGENCY, CULTURAL RENEGADES AND KLAPPSQUAD. FERAS HAS BEEN AWARDED THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET'S TELSTRA EMERGING CHOREOGRAPHER (TEC) IN 2021.

**JONATHAN HOMSEY** IS A CHOREOGRAPHER AND CURATOR WORKING FROM THE POSITIONALITY OF AS A QUEER PERSON OF COLOUR BASED ON WURUNDJERI COUNTRY. ORIGINALLY AN AWARD-WINNING DANCER FOR CREWS DURING THE NAUGHTIES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, HE IS HUMBLLED TO BE A COMMUNITY LEADER IN SO-CALLED AUSTRALIA FOR THE PAST DECADE GALVANISING PEOPLE TOGETHER TO DANCE. FROM FOOTSCRAY COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE TO MELBOURNE MUSEUM, HE SPECIALISES IN PLATFORMING STREET AND QUEER DANCE FORMS TO CULTIVATE EMPOWERMENT FOR SEXUALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE YOUNG PEOPLE. HIS CHOREOGRAPHIC PRACTISE HAS EVOLVED FROM A THEATRICAL CONTEXT WITH WORKS SUCH AS THE AWARD-WINNING TOGETHER AS ONE (ARTS HOUSE, MELBOURNE FRINGE 2013) TO AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PRACTICE IN GALLERIES AND PUBLIC SPACES FROM FOOTSCRAY COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE (MELBOURNE) TO 107 PROJECTS (SYDNEY) AND DESIGN FESTA GALLERY (TOKYO). FROM CIRCUS OZ TO NATIONAL TOURS FOR AUSTRALIAN POP STAR GEORGE MAPLE, JONATHAN'S CHOREOGRAPHIC PRACTICE GOES BEYOND GENRE LINES. AS A PRODUCER, HE IS PASSIONATE ABOUT SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT WORKING ON EVENTS SUCH AS NOCTURNAL FOR MELBOURNE MUSEUM, MAPPING MELBOURNE, MELBOURNE MUSIC WEEK 2016, 2017 AUSTRALIAN DANCE AWARDS, AUSTRALIAN YOUTH DANCE FESTIVAL AND DANCE MASSIVE. IN ADDITION, JONATHAN IS PASSIONATE ABOUT COMMUNITY OUTREACH THROUGH DANCE COLLECTIVES. HE HAS HAD THE PLEASURE TO DANCE WITH BEATPHONIK AND BE A CO-FOUNDER OF THE GROUPS SOLE SYMPHONY MOVEMENT, AND MENAGERIE DANCE CO-OPERATIVE. HE IS ALSO PASSIONATE ABOUT ACADEMICS; IS CURRENTLY A LECTURER AT VICTORIAN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS, AND FORMER LECTURER AT RMIT UNIVERSITY, JMC ACADEMY AND HAS PRESENTED AT THE WORLD ALLIANCE FOR ARTS EDUCATION CONFERENCE. HE IS CURRENTLY A DOCTORAL CANDIDATE AT QUT MEASURING THE SOCIAL IMPACT OF HIS CHOREOGRAPHY.