

National Cultural Policy Submission

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NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY SUBMISSION

I am making this submission as an individual, in my roles representing the following not for profit organisations:

- 1 **Ausdance WA** - service and advocacy organisation
Director WA
- 2 **Decibel New Music Ensemble**
Chair, Management Committee
- 3 **Momentum Dance Perth** - new dance for older bodies
Chair, Management Committee
- 4 **Seesaw Magazine** - Western Australia's online arts magazine
Business and Marketing Manager

INTRODUCTION

I fully endorse the importance of the development of a national arts policy and recognise that the arts and culture are a public good in the life of our nation.

The organisations and companies that I represent, recognise and respect that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures are an integral element of our shared, dynamic, living culture and ever evolving national identity.

I strongly urge the implementation of a bi-partisan National Cultural Policy and cross government portfolio engagement with the policy.

Further, I urge that the policy engages all levels of government - federal, state and local.

I support the Ausdance National position:

- *Implement a bi-partisan National Cultural Policy.*
- *Ensure effective and efficient cooperation among all tiers of Government.*
- *Review Federal, State, and Local Government parameters of support for artistic, creative and cultural development and address gaps and inefficiencies.*

I wish to draw attention to the fact that "national" includes Western Australia: too often, the outcomes of federal arts initiatives are east-coast-centric.

PILLAR: ARTISTS

Support excellence and the special role of artists and their creative collaborators

It is imperative that any policy and subsequent strategies to implement the policy support **excellence** in creative endeavour. To achieve this, artists

must be able to operate in an environment that supports the aspiration for excellence - education, time, place, space and funds are essential ingredients.

Endorse **peer assessment**:

- Keep funding decisions at arms-length from the federal Ministry
- Devolve Arts Ministry funding programs to the Australia Council
 - to ensure transparency and remove the risk of Ministerial intervention;
 - to enable an Australia-wide picture of federal government arts funding - the effective aggregation of the significant expenditure made in culture across government
 - to empower the Australia Council to do its job

Facilitate **long term career paths for independent artists**

- Offer more 3-year fellowships for established artists at a minimum of \$100,000 per year
- Fellowships are opportunities for paid employment of independent arts as well as design and music creatives

CASE STUDY:

Conception to presentation of dance performances often takes around three years - made up of creative developments, funding applications, collaboration and partnership formation and production rehearsals.

STRUT Dance GROUNDWORKS 2022 program note

Independent West Australian choreographer, Rachel Arianne Ogle, presented a new work at the 2022 Perth Festival. The work was three and a half years in development. For the performance season, Rachel had secured the maximum amount of funding for an independent artist from both the Australia Council and the state government's Culture and the Arts Division of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. Despite this, she required a significant injection of support - both financial and ~\$100,000 in kind - from Perth Festival to mount the short season.

Rates of pay

- Address rates of pay for independent artists - dancers, musicians, composers and choreographers
- Endorse Ausdance National proposals:
 - Ensure that the full costs of working as an artist are remunerated.*
 - *Establish and implement legislation that provides a universal basic income for professional artists - reduce the reliance of professional artists on organisations. (The Australian Tax Office already defines a professional artist through the following business indicators in [TR2005/01](#)).*
 - *Address significant issues to do with ineffective, inefficient, and inequitable systems of funding artistic, creative, and cultural activity.*
 - *Reduce unnecessary administrative workloads.*
 - *Implement higher minimum wage standards and review legislation and industry awards to ensure that artists are paid to do all of the work involved.*
 - *Value artists as workers - ensure that all workers, including artists, are paid at least minimum wage and that artists are paid no less than any other workers who are being paid.*

- o *Fund projects. Employ artists. Ensure that funding processes for projects and organisations implement accountability in upholding employment standards.*
- o *Increase the possibility for artistic, creative, and cultural products and services to be paid for so that there's greater capacity to employ artists - Promote and value the full degree of skills and capabilities of artists and the scope that those skills and capabilities as well as the outcomes of artistic, creative and cultural work, present to benefit other industries and citizens outside of the sector.*

Training and accreditation

- Registration or accreditation of teachers of dance and private dance studios. There is some urgency to address
 - Safe spaces for dance
 - Safe Dance Practice
 - Child Safety Regulations

Please refer to the Ausdance QLD submission:

Key challenge: *In the unregulated dance sector, there is no nationally recognised accreditation for teachers.*

Opportunity: *A nationally recognised accreditation system for dance teachers reflecting a commitment to excellent teaching practices, safe studios, safe spaces, safe workplaces and safe bodies and minds is required to ensure a strong framework within which creativity can thrive.*

Recommendation: *Support development of an accessible and affordable nationally recognised accreditation system for dance.*

Establish formal dance teacher training apprenticeships for private dance studios

I endorse Ausdance National proposal:

- *Invest in Ausdance to continue development of accreditation and regulation systems and platforms to activate and maintain best practice in dance teaching activities to improve the safety of dance engagement for children. Refer to [The Ausdance Network Report to the National Office for Child Safety](#)*

PILLAR: STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector to contribute to national life, community wellbeing and the economy

Acknowledge and support **SERVICE ORGANISATIONS**

US Research into the impact and capacity of service organisations has determined that they are

the unacknowledged gems of the cultural ecosystem. They play an important role in supporting the work of artists and non-profit agencies and in developing the sector's cohesion and ability to meet its collective needs.

[The Boston Foundation, Arts Service Organizations: A Study of Impact and Capacity, 2005

<https://www.issuelab.org/resource/arts-service-organizations-a-study-of-impact-and-capacity.html>]

The Boston Foundation research also found that 'service organisations help their participants act as if they had achieved a larger scale of operations

while freeing them to focus on their core mission and programs.’ This raises the concern that, by reducing the capacity of service and advocacy organisations, the impact of representation is curtailed: the voice for the artist is diminished.

- They take the burden away from small to medium organisations and companies and individual artists
- Their advocacy is very well informed by the experience, needs and views of practicing artists
- Governments, philanthropic foundations and corporate sponsors are better and independently informed about the value, impact and needs of artists and companies.
 - *Ensure that a strong, informed, and cohesive voice is heard by all levels of government, philanthropic trusts and foundations, sponsors and key decision makers to continue guiding policy and infrastructure at the national level which is relevant and appropriate to supporting the effective and efficient functioning of dance operations and activities.*
 - *nonpartisan voices are involved in policy development, sector planning, advocacy and promotion*
- They offer capacity building support to organisations
 - *Ausdance National helps build the capacity of the dance sector and provides services and advocacy for its members nationally to the Federal Government and agencies, making known the benefits of diverse dance practices and the widespread impact dance engagement has on the quality of life.*

- Please refer to the AusQLD submission:

Key challenge: Specific issues and challenges facing the dance sector require targeted strategies.

Opportunity: Peak organisations are connected to their members/communities, consult regularly, and can recommend targeted strategies.

Recommendation: Investment in effective arts peak bodies supports the sustainability and capability of members and can inform the public perception of arts and culture.

There may be potential to rationalise the number of artform-specific service organisations

Increase **support for S2M companies producing “our stories.”**

- The current funding to the National Arts Partnerships Framework companies is saturated with companies whose primary productions are heritage arts and overwhelmingly European heritage arts
- The real producers of “our stories” are the small to medium companies

Venues

- All artists need affordable, professionally equipped rehearsal and performance spaces as a fundamental tool of trade

Endorse Ausdance National proposition:

- *Invest in environments of all types for all people to participate in and engage with artistic, creative, and cultural professionals and their products and services.*
 - *Spaces that are flexible and/or that there are multiple spaces available to support a wide variety of different activities in suitable ways.*
 - *Built for purpose spaces for dance so that safe dance practice of all forms and for all people can be facilitated.*
 - *Accessible spaces for dance for those who are disabled and neurodiverse to participate freely and safely.*

- o *Invest in making digital platforms for dance safer spaces for both participants, viewers, facilitators, and artists.*

Diverse funding sources

- Strengthen the support/capacity for the sector to engage with philanthropic trusts and foundations. State and federal government funding bodies are increasingly placing emphasis on the need for companies to diversify funding sources
- Creative Partnerships Australia is tasked with "fostering a culture of giving" though I have encountered no evidence of this [apart from Awards (to the converted)].
- For service organisations, in particular, securing philanthropic support can be very difficult, if not impossible, as they sit alongside/compete with performance works of scale produced by high profile companies, artists, festivals and events. In this context, service organisations are not the sexy option.

As a service organisation we are not a "compelling" applicant for funding sitting alongside the state's leading producing companies. We do, however, play a very significant role in the sector, providing support, education and training, employment, access, promotion, advocacy - we're not at the fashionable high profile end of the business, but our work is critical to the sector. Consider, for example, that research indicates that 30% of participants in our Participation and Access program are likely to become audiences for the producing companies and organisations.

Ausdance WA

- Commission research into the impact and value of service organisations with a view to providing governments and philanthropic foundations with accurate information on which to base their financial support for this sector of the culture and arts industry.

PILLAR: AUDIENCES

Ensure Australian creativity thrives here and abroad in the digitally enabled 21st century

Arts education

- Strengthen access to arts education via the primary and secondary school arts curriculum
- Ensure teachers have PD opportunities

CASE STUDY:

The West Australian Education Department does not offer PD for teachers of dance nor does it provide funding to organisations to deliver PD for teachers of dance. When funded by the state government arts funding body, Ausdance WA was able to run an annual program of teacher PD but, in recent years, without arts funding support this service has been reduced to one half day per year for a specific area of the secondary school dance curriculum. It is entirely inadequate.