

# National Cultural Policy Submission

## **NAISDA Dance College**

Submitted: On behalf of an organisation with arts-components (e.g. community organisation, tourism, venue, health, education etc)

Shaped by our world's oldest living cultures, NAISDA is Australia's only tertiary arts training organisation providing nationally accredited qualifications specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

NAISDA's visionary Naya Wa Yugali project, meaning "We Dance" in Darkinjung language, builds on 46 years' experience and NAISDA's unique learning model success of embedded cultural practice and Knowings. As the strategic expansion of NAISDA's current educational curriculum, and transformation of NAISDA on the NSW Central Coast into an international centre of excellence for First Nations creative, cultural learning, engagement and performance, Naya Wa Yugali will meet demand for the development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creative and cultural learning and sector employment in a culturally supportive and appropriate environment.

Naya Wa Yugali celebrates the richness of our country's First Nations cultures for all Australians; and as a place of meaningful engagement and truth-telling, speaks to a broader role of transforming mainstream perspectives and understanding in society through art and education.

Upon completion the facility will be an internationally-recognised destination for First Nations arts and cultural practice, connecting, training and empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Australia. Naya Wa Yugali's capacity will increase by 200%, building First Nations self-determination, authority and control; and expanding programs to increase opportunities for all Australians to engage with First Nations art and culture.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart offers a transformational opportunity. It is the voice of anticipation and change. Like the National Cultural Policy, Naya Wa Yugali will be informed by the Uluru Statement to enrich the artistic, cultural and educative fabric of our country and champion real, healing change.

### **The Naya Wa Yugali vision is:**

"For the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creative voice to be a potent catalyst for cultural, artistic and social vibrancy in all communities."

### **The Naya Wa Yugali objectives are:**

- 1. Cultural and Creative Infrastructure:* Deliver world-class contemporary facilities that support best practice in national/international First Nations creative and cultural learning, onsite and online storytelling and continuation of Songlines, wellness and connectivity.
- 2. Learning and career pathways.* Increase national access and success in arts training, skills development and career pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians
- 3. Support First Nations arts and tourism sectors* with skilled, networked Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, works and exports at the forefront of aligned creative disciplines.
- 4. Community access and participation.* Increase access, space and programs for community participation, wellbeing and engagement in First Nations creative and cultural arts practice in an environment intrinsically connected to Country.
- 5. Outreach and Engagement.* Extend curriculum-linked outreach, touring, workshops and digital connectivity/streaming.

6. *Partnerships*. Become a catalyst for national and global First Nations partnerships and creative synergies increasing sector impact, economy, opportunity and innovation.

Whilst Naya Wa Yugali fundamentally addresses the first of the pillars, as a national project, all five pillars are important. Naya Wa Yugali speaks to challenges and opportunities across all pillars as outlined below:

**What challenges and opportunities do you see in the pillar or pillars most relevant to you? Feel free to respond to any or all pillars:**

### **First Nations**

#### **Addressing underrepresentation of First Nations performing artists, companies and career pathways**

Naya Wa Yugali is a national response to the skills and pathways gap to arts employment for First Nations people through tailored, culturally affirming, nationally accredited curriculum and short courses to build an ecology of First Nations creative sector roles, particularly much-needed, off stage, technical, production and presenter roles. It synthesises NAISDA's current cultural learning and wellbeing across new arts training courses. Graduate numbers will increase by 200%, so that skilled and networked First Nations artists, art workers and cultural leaders will work at the forefront of the Australian arts industry pursuing successful careers which share our stories. Their original works, new companies and exports will drive Australia's creative innovation and economic development.

(stories = Cultural spelling of 'story' in the plural form)

#### **Cultural protocols, consultancy, cultural knowledge and practice**

Indigenous Knowings and embedded cultural practice inform the NAISDA curriculum and performative response ensuring future artists, artworkers and leaders respect and understand cultural protocols and maintain the integrity and longevity of cultural practice.

#### **Support for all-of-career artists**

Naya Wa Yugali's life-long learning recognises the artist's need for transferrable skills to respond to predicted future workforces and undertake portfolio careers and creative work in more than one art form and/or industry.

#### **Mentorship, peer networking and collaboration**

Naya Wa Yugali is a national space providing opportunities to engage with other First Nations artists, producers, artworkers with strong formal and informal mentoring to grow and connect interdisciplinary and cross practice and provide pathways for the diversity of First Nations creative works to reach audiences.

#### **Sector development and cultivating international First Nations networks**

Naya Way Yugali will deliver national and international sector development, artist residencies and collaboration to build markets, products and audiences and harness export value

### **A Place for Every Story**

#### **Increasing opportunities for all Australians to engage with First Nations art and culture**

With a strong program of open and online learning and engagement programs including youth and holiday workshops, incubation, rehearsal and arts exchange forums and performance and concert seasons Naya Wa Yugali embraces and celebrates the richness of our country's First Cultures for all Australians. The project's Living Cultures Resource Centre will deliver a purpose built Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander library and digital archive to store and share NAISDA's Collection of Indigenous Performance Arts. The facility will also have an exhibition space and e-learning, digital and streaming platforms for wider external audiences, classrooms and communities.

### **Accessibility, engagement and visibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander audiences and communities**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people want to participate more in cultural activities and those who do participate have “*markedly better physical and mental health, self-reported happiness and are more likely to complete secondary school and be employed*” – *Australia Council’s Art Nation*. Naya Wa Yugali’s community engagement and accessibility through outreach, tours, performances, collaboration, short courses will continue Songlines and ensure multi-generational sharing of cultural practice, knowledge and expression. It will particularly engage with young First Nations people, ensuring they see themselves represented, building artists, creative leaders and audiences of the future.

### **Creating work to tour nationally to schools and young people**

Naya Wa Yugali’s early engagement activities and strategies include outreach, touring, workshops and digital connectivity/streaming. Curriculum resources will be developed for schools to deepen the richness of programs delivered.

### **The Centrality of the Artist**

**Centrality of the NAISDA Artist** Culture is at the core of how we support and train First Nations artists. Education is the pathway to change, and our unique teaching model has been developed in powerful partnership with remote Communities, Elders and Cultural Tutors. Our pre-COVID student completion rate was double the national average for Vocational Education and Training in Australia with 75% of NAISDA students completing their qualifications. Such achievement demonstrates the success of NAISDA commitment to providing holistic learning support for developing artists throughout training. This includes physical, emotional and wellbeing programs and support, nutrition programs, physical conditioning, injury support, cultural connection and discovery, and onsite accommodation within a culturally- affirming environment. As a provider of elite arts training and the only First Nations arts training organisation within the ARTS8, this empowers and shapes our young people with lifelong skills and resilience to articulate their own contemporary practice, develop opportunity and build an expanded and sustainable First Nations arts sector.

### **Life-long learning and retraining ensuring transitions to employment and enterprise**

Australia Council’s *Making Art Work* report recognises that “Overall, lifelong learning may perhaps be a stronger reality in the arts than in many professions.” Naya Wa Yugali is a new model of professional training providing transitions to employment and enterprise throughout the artist career-cycle. Life-long learning, entrepreneurial programs and accredited qualifications will equip First Nations artists for portfolio and multicareers and ensuring they are ready for the changing context of artistic practice with opportunities to retrain, enhance and diversify skills.

### **Strong Institutions**

NAISDA is a leader in the space; a collaborator with communities and a catalyst for change. As part of the ARTS8 training organisations NAISDA provides strong representation for First Nations creative and cultural practice with rigour, artistic excellence and integrity. As a national institution for the country, Naya Wa Yugali will:

- a) Bring NAISDA facilities in line with peer creative training institutions, establishing NAISDA on an equitable footing with its non-Indigenous arts training organisations.
  - b) Remove the barriers which prevent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people accessing and completing tertiary education (lack of holistic health, culturally relevant accommodation and support services – *The Joyce Report into VET sector*)
- Naya Wa Yugali’s safe, affordable and appropriate onsite student housing will have multi-purpose usage during term holiday periods for cultural tourism and visitors.

- c) Create a performance space and cohesive hub for the wider community with an extensive engagement program which will be a catalyst for cultural tourism and celebration regionally and state-wide.
- d) Develop external partnerships and collaboration including corporate performances, studio hire, opportunity for appropriate creative organisations to permanently relocate to the NAISDA campus, fee-for-service activities and accommodation hire, resulting in additional income streams and long-term sustainability of the Naya Wa Yugali operating business model.
- e) Record, grow and share NAISDA's collection of cultural props, artefacts, photographs, video, audio, objects, instruments, artworks and documentation into an onsite and digitally accessible archive and living repository of national significance for future generations.
- f) Provide digital and technological infrastructure to enable online access to collections, curriculum-related cultural performances and resources to widen immersive experiences for audiences and school students nationally and globally through live streaming and programming.
- g) Extend scalable and transferable learning programs and secondments to other ARTS8 national arts training partners and creative learning organisations.
- h) Provide infrastructure which will assist NAISDA in extending its geographic reach into regional Australian communities through engagement and talent-identification programs, guiding and nurturing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to audition for NAISDA at an early decision-making point in their lives.

### **Reaching the Audience**

**The creative economy and cultural tourism** With NAISDA graduates securing positions across Australia's leading performing arts organisations and companies, as well as establishing new companies and works as independent artists, Naya Wa Yugali will generate a creative industry with world-wide success and provide the source of First Nations artists, art workers and companies to service growing demand. Naya Wa Yugali will help underpin the Indigenous Australian story within our tourism economy, driving interstate and international visitation and exports.

**Sustainable economic development** With over 7,000 registered Aboriginal sites, the Central Coast is the richest source of Aboriginal sites anywhere in Australia. The project will support high functioning productive arts clusters inviting smaller/regional arts

organisations, creatives, artists to collaborate and use Naya Wa Yugali as a hub through classes, showings of work, as a creative incubator space, performance partnerships, masterclasses and arts exchanges. NAISDA will also explore and extend partnerships with opportunities for permanent relocation to the site for aligned arts and cultural organisations. As a lively creative and cultural learning precinct it will play a role in delivering renewal and revitalisation helping to transform our region's communities and accelerate growth, private investment and development.

The Centre will attract up to 35,500 people specifically accessing performance and engagement programs and events. It is estimated that approximately half of these visitors will be from other areas within NSW and the other half from other states across Australia.

This will result in an increase in economic development and local jobs within the region with supporting benefits for other arts organisations, artists, workers and residents.

### **Are there any other things that you would like to see in a National Cultural Policy?**

The alignment of the discussions preceding the referendum on the Indigenous Voice to Parliament with the review of the National Cultural Policy provides a deep and meaningful platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians to look forward in anticipation of real cultural change – where First Nations voices are recognised for the special place that they hold; and where their truth telling, healing and enriching stories can breathe deeply into the soul of this country.

The Uluru Statement From The Heart provides the opportunity for both individual and collective responses to this gift to all Australians. For nearly fifty years NAISDA has provided arts training, leadership, political advocacy and community and industry networking and alignment to ensure the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice remains strong. NAISDA's approach has always been holistic – reflecting the commitment to Indigenous ways of Knowing and Being and understanding that the process of change needs to be based on respectful dialogue lead by First Nations voices.

The visibility of the First Nations creative voice must be elevated through the National Cultural Policy through the provision of infrastructure to signal its intrinsic importance and Songline for the future.