



ausdance

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Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham
Minister for Education and Training
PO Box 6100, Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

28th May 2017

Dear Minister,

RE: Review of the VET Student Loans Eligible Course List and Loan Caps Methodology

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As per our previous submission in October 2016 regarding the exclusion of dance performance courses from the eligible course list for the VET Student Loans program (see Attachment 1), Ausdance would like to re-state its significant concern in light of the recent call for submissions regarding the review of the VET Student Loans Eligible Course List and Loan Caps methodology.

Following Julie Dyson's meeting with you on 10th November 2016, we received a response to our submission by Kate Woodall, Director – VET Student Loans Branch dated 8th November 2016 (see Attachment 2). Within this response, Ms Woodall stated "...the Australian Government has a responsibility to ensure that tax payers' money is well directed and spent in a way that offers the greatest benefit to the Australian Community...(and) the list targets those courses...(that) reflect good employment prospects".

This perspective appears at odds with the Federal Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, the Honourable Ian Macfarlane's statement in the 2013 [Valuing Australia's Creative Industries report](#) regarding the significant contribution of the Creative Industries to the Australian economy, that "quite separate (to this economic value) is the intangible but undeniable worth of knowing our nation creates great software, films, TV, radio, music, theatre, dance, design, media, writing, marketing and architecture".

As previously identified, a number of Australia's leading dance training institutions such as Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) and the TAFE SA Dance program as delivered by the Adelaide College of the Arts, remain excluded from the eligible list which will result in significantly adverse impacts on their enrolment numbers. This will consequently limit the opportunities for such organisations to provide specialised career pathways in ballet and contemporary pre-professional dance training, and thus limit the future contributions to the Creative Economy in Australia. Alongside fellow institutions such as The Australian Ballet School and the National Aboriginal & Islander Skills Development Scheme (NAISDA), these courses have produced generations of high calibre graduates that have/are contributing to the dance profession and the Creative Industries more broadly, as evidenced throughout their 36 and 30 year histories to-date.

The courses offered in both of these organisations clearly meet industry needs, contribute to addressing skills shortages, and align with strong employment outcomes – all key factors outlined in the proposed methodology for approving courses (<https://www.education.gov.au/vet-student-loans/VSLmethodology>).



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We therefore recommend that:

- Appropriate targeted industry consultation and evaluation of the quality and impact of the professional dance courses excluded from the eligible list is undertaken. Industry benchmarking between courses is a common and required practice as part of re-accreditation and/or quality assurance processes, therefore the sector would have information to contribute to this point.
- Reinstatement of Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses in dance onto the eligible list or alternatively, extension of eligibility to specifically recognised training institutions that provide these courses and can demonstrate the achievement of strong education and industry outcomes.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of these points and would welcome an opportunity to discuss this further with you at any time.

Yours Sincerely -

Associate Professor Gene Moyle *ARAD MAPS MCSEP GAICD SFHEA*
National President
Ausdance National Council

