



25 September 2013

National Advocates for Arts Education

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Ms Annmaree O'Keeffe AM (Chairperson) and
Mr Toshi Kawaguchi (Secretary-General)
Australian National Commission for UNESCO
International Organizations Branch
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
R.G. Casey Building, John McEwen Crescent
BARTON ACT 0221

Dear Ms O'Keeffe and Mr Kawaguchi,

I am writing on behalf of the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE), which is the peak national arts education association representing the five artforms of Dance, Drama, Music, Media Arts and Visual Arts. Our associations are networked throughout Australia and internationally, and between us we represent at least 10,000 arts educators working in schools and tertiary institutions in this country alone.

We are seriously concerned that UNESCO has recently voted to downgrade its cultural program (including arts education), thus risking the program's eventual elimination. We acknowledge the leadership role that UNESCO has played as an active advocate for Arts Education internationally by publishing the *Road Map for Arts Education* (2006) and endorsing the *Seoul Agenda: Goals for the development of arts education* (2010). UNESCO has also been instrumental in placing the arts on the global agenda through the establishment and fostering of an International Arts Education Week and has called for another World Conference in Arts Education to be held in the near future, following the success and significance of earlier international conferences initiated by UNESCO on arts education.

The *Seoul Agenda: Goals for the development of arts education* (2010), clearly states that arts education contributes to solution of the 'social and cultural challenges facing today's world' (Goal 3). It also indicates that arts education has the capacity to foster creative and innovative responses to major global challenges (Goals 3a-3d). It is surprising, therefore, especially in the current international climate, that the cultural

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Australian Society for Music Education, Australian Teachers of Media, Drama Australia,
Music Council of Australia, National Association for the Visual Arts**

program has not been highly prioritised, funded and supported. It is clear that UNESCO's own policies on arts education have the capacity to empower disenfranchised communities and young people in challenging situations in creative and innovative ways that foster the establishment of social responsibility, social cohesion, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.

As leading Australian arts educators, we have worked collaboratively for 25 years to advocate for and promote the arts in education, and since 2006 we have found UNESCO leadership in arts education policy to be a powerful tool in our own advocacy. Our members have provided advice to Senate committees and other government inquiries, published papers and resources, and participated in national and international arts education conferences and working groups, including the UNESCO-led World Conferences on Arts Education in Lisbon (2006) and Seoul (2010). Our work has included advocating for and contributing to the Seoul Agenda, and most recently several of us were invited to participate in the Polylogue II – World Summit on Arts Education, held in Munich and Wildbad Kreuth, in May 2013.

Policies developed through UNESCO's leadership have also contributed to the NAAE's ability to work with the Federal Government and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to have five artforms included in Phase 2 of the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts*, now almost ready for implementation across all jurisdictions in Australia. This success clearly indicates our national commitment to the place and significance of the arts within our national education framework.

We therefore respectfully request that UNESCO reconsiders the change to the priority ranking recently proposed to its cultural program, and particularly request that Australia votes to upgrade this priority ranking at UNESCO's November meeting to ensure ongoing funding. Without it, we understand that the Third Arts Education conference, planned in about two years' time, will not eventuate, and nor will there be anyone working on arts education matters at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris. We want Australia's representatives to UNESCO to take a clear message from this country to the next meeting: That the capacity of arts education to promote and foster creative, imaginative, innovative and sustainable change in the world's most challenging social environments must never be underestimated, and must be prioritised by our representatives.

A copy of this correspondence has also been sent to Australia's Permanent Delegate to UNESCO in Paris, Mr George Mina.

Yours sincerely



Julie Dyson, AM
Chair, National Advocates for Arts Education

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Australian Society for Music Education, Australian Teachers of Media, Drama Australia,
Music Council of Australia, National Association for the Visual Arts**

UNESCO REFERENCES

Seoul Agenda: Goals for the development of Arts Education (2010)

GOAL 3: Apply arts education principles and practices to contribute to resolving the social and cultural challenges facing today's world

3a Apply arts education to enhance the creative innovative capacity of society.

3b Recognize and develop the social and cultural well-being dimensions of arts education

3c Support and enhance the role of arts education in the promotion of social responsibility, social cohesion, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue

3d Foster the capacity to respond to major global challenges, from peace to sustainability through arts education

UNESCO

Roadmap for Arts Education (March 2006)

'...Arts Education is a universal right, for all learners, including those often excluded from education, such as immigrants, cultural minority groups and people with disabilities'.

'Arts Education contributes to an education which integrates physical, intellectual and creative faculties and makes possible more dynamic and fruitful relations among education, culture and the arts.'

'Arts Education is also a means of enabling nations to develop the human resources necessary to tap valuable cultural capital.'

VI: Recommendations.

(4th dot point)

- Recognizing the challenges of cultural diversity posed by globalization and the increasing need for imagination, creativity and collaboration as societies become more knowledge based.'*

3. Recommendation for UNESCO and other Intergovernmental and Non-governmental Organizations

Advocacy and Support

- Reflect the important contributions that Arts Education can offer to all areas of society and identify Arts Education as a major cross-sectoral strategy*
- Continue to include Arts Education in international programmes*