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Review of the Australian Curriculum
Department of the Education, Canberra

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The Australian Dance Council – Ausdance National is Australia's peak body for dance: educating, inspiring and supporting the dance community in reaching its potential as a dynamic force within local, national and international communities. As part of a network of Ausdance organisations working across Australia we design and deliver accessible and sustainable services and integrated programs to support Australian dance professionals.

Ausdance National is also an active member of the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE) an affiliation of peak national arts education associations representing the five artforms of dance, drama, visual arts, music, and media arts. Ausdance supports the submission made by NAAE (dated 17 February 2014) as part of this review.

Benefits of an Arts Education

The arts broadly and the professional dance sector specifically contributes to the understanding of Australia's culture and international profile. Arts education across all artforms is central to young people's cultural understanding, their ability to express ideas and to problem solve. It is the essential means to build skilful, knowledgeable, arts literate, articulate and confident generations. Research by agencies such as *The Song Room* and Professor Brian Caldwell clearly demonstrate the benefit of an arts education across the school experience in Australia. High quality arts programs can result in higher attendance and engagement rates with the primary and secondary school systems, improved NAPLAN results (up to a year increase), as well as improved resilience across ages and cohorts.ⁱ

Experiences in dance can provide the foundation for lifelong participation in healthy physical activity and through dance individuals can also find new ways of communicating ideas, learn about working creatively in teams and understand and interpret more complex works of art. The Australian Bureau of Statistics reported the increasing participation by young people aged 5 to 14 in dance over the last decade. Between 2003 and 2012 participation rates increased across all age brackets for boys and girls. Total participation in 2012 was 15%, with more young people taking part in dancing outside of school hours than in soccer, netball or Australian Rules football.ⁱⁱ

Creative arts, including dance, is also a growing area in the economy and community.

In 2008-09, the creative industries made a larger contribution to GDP than a number of traditional industry groups, such as agriculture, forestry and fishing; electricity, gas, water and waste services; and accommodation and food services.ⁱⁱⁱ

Creative arts courses can equip graduates with a range of skills, with many going onto employment in different fields –enhancing creativity across the economy. Research by the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation (CCI) reports employment growth in creative industries at a rate forty per cent faster than in the economy as a whole.^{iv}

A Curriculum based approach

There is demand, and a recognised benefit of arts being an accessible part of a young person's education. Individual growth, and ongoing community contribution flow from a



well-rounded education. A curriculum that does not include the arts will ignore basic values, skills and understandings that an arts education provides. In 2006 the Cultural Ministers' Council recognised this and stated:

Every child deserves such an education, with carefully planned opportunities to learn in and through the arts. Education systems that value and develop individuals' creative capacities help to position Australia as a vibrant nation in the global context.^v

Ausdance has long been an advocate for well-resourced and developed curricula for dance and the arts. The benefit of a consistent curriculum across jurisdictions allows teachers, educators and arts professionals to develop and share approaches to learning across Australia. Professional dance companies and educators are also able to ensure materials and programs are developed to meet teachers' needs and apply them as performance works tour across the country. Without a clear curriculum imperative and support for classroom learning arts education can be left to flounder.

We, and the dance community more broadly, were extensively involved in the development of the current curriculum for the Arts, including hosting experts at the Dance Education in Australian Schools roundtable in 2011, and feeding into the ACARA 'Shape paper' process and on-going consultation. The ongoing review process built into the curriculum is welcomed and Ausdance looks forward to the ongoing 'monitoring' and 'evaluation' of the Arts curriculum, following implementation across states and territories.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input as part of this review of the Australian Curriculum. Please do not hesitate to get in contact if you wish to discuss the matters raised in this submission.

Kind regards,



Roslyn Dundas
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ⁱ for example Professor Brian Caldwell presentation to *Dance Education in Australian Schools Forum*, Sept 2013 available at http://ausdance.org.au/uploads/content/projects/DEAS/Brian_Caldwell_DEAS_Presentation.pdf

ⁱⁱ Australian Bureau of Statistics *Children's participation in sport and leisure time activities 2003-12*, Dec 2012

ⁱⁱⁱ Centre for International Economics *Creative Industries Economic Analysis*, 2009, in Australian Government, *Creative Industries, a Strategy for 21st Century Australia*, 2013 p5

^{iv} ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation *Australian Creative Economy Report Card 2013*, Feb 2013

^v Cultural Ministers Council and MCEETYA *National Education and Arts Statement 2006* (Senator the Hon George Brandis SC, Minister for Arts and Sport, Federal Government member of CMC in 2006)