



National Advocates for Arts Education  
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The Hon. Simon Crean, MP  
Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development & Local Government,  
Minister for the Arts  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

#### NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY RESPONSE

The National Advocates for Arts Education support the development of a national cultural policy, and make the following brief comments, particularly as they pertain to arts education (Goal 4).

We fully support the Government's commitment to the provision of five art forms as *entitlement for all* from F-6, but a National Cultural Policy goal 'To increase and strengthen the capacity of the arts to contribute to our society and economy' will not be possible unless a goal of *arts education for all* is to be more than words on paper.

We have major concerns about any commitment to adequately resource the Australian Curriculum in the Arts, particularly in light of the number of hours to be allocated, the number of teachers without any significant training in the arts and the ability of schools – especially in regional and remote areas – to resource the Arts curriculum. While we understand some of these issues are the responsibility of States and Territories, we think a national cultural policy must acknowledge the issues and commit resources.

The Australian Curriculum in the Arts will require attention to the following:

**Art Education Australia; Australian Dance Council – Ausdance;  
Australian Society for Music Education; Australian Teachers of Media; Drama Australia;  
Music Council of Australia; National Association for the Visual Arts**

- Teacher training – extensive upgrading of pre and inservice training in the arts, especially for primary school teachers.
- Curriculum materials such as ‘Primary Connections’ for science.
- Space within schools for safe learning environments.
- The role of specialist teachers, artists in schools and arts organisations needs to be clarified and included in any resource commitments to support classroom teachers.

We are also concerned to note that the entitlement to five art forms in Years 7–8 has now been reduced to ‘at least one’ (not even two, as originally proposed by ACARA). We understand that agreement could not be reached with all States and Territories about a minimum of two, but this creates major problems for those students travelling between jurisdictions, for those wishing to pick up an arts subject in Year 9, and it does not recognise the high priority placed on arts learning by Indigenous students at that crucial stage in their education. We strongly recommend that this situation be reviewed and rectified in the context of a national cultural policy.

Finally, we want to see a strong statement about the value of learning in the arts (not just *about* the arts), and the value of meaning in the lives of all young people, not just the gifted and talented. There also needs to be recognition that the arts can be used as an important and meaningful learning tool in other subject areas, i.e. learning in the arts, through the arts and about the arts.

We look forward to continuing this conversation with you and with School Education Minister, the Hon. Peter Garrett, and thank you for your own commitment to arts education in the national cultural policy context.

Yours sincerely,



**on behalf of the National Advocates for Arts Education:**

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Richard Letts (Music Council of Australia)

Jay McPherson (Australian Society for Music Education)

Derek Weeks and Roger Dunscombe (Australian Teachers of Media)

Sandra Gattenhof and Mark Bailey (Drama Australia)

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