



Ausdance Victoria

Postal Address: 59 Francis St Yarraville, 3013

Contact (C/- General Manager): gm.vic@ausdance.org.au

Impact of the 2014 and 2015 Commonwealth Budget decisions on the Arts Ausdance Victoria - Senate Inquiry Submission

Ausdance Victoria is deeply concerned by the 2014 and 2015 Commonwealth Budget decisions on the Arts along with the suitability and appropriateness of the establishment of a National Programme for Excellence in the Arts (NPEA) to be administered by the Ministry for the Arts. As the peak body for dance in Victoria, we hold grave concerns about the long-term effects of these decisions on the dance sector in particular.

The announcement of these changes has already created instability and a genuine fear within the industry about the future of the Arts in Australia due to the direct and immediate impact the cuts will have on key organisations. Specifically, we believe that the ultimate result of the changes to Australia Council funding and the NPEA will be the disappearance of our vibrant and diverse dance ecology.

Ausdance Victoria is part of the national Ausdance network, which has a history spanning over 30 years and was formed for the Australian dance sector by its leaders and advocates. Ausdance National currently receives Australia Council support and it is our opinion that state-based offices along with our members throughout Australia stand to be affected by the proposed funding cuts.

Ausdance Victoria aims to enrich, advance and advocate dance in all its forms, and support the growth and expansion of Victorian dance as a whole. Despite high levels of community participation, dance is already at current risk of exclusion from the Victorian Curriculum, and remains absent from the core Arts subjects in the National Curriculum (Visual Arts, Music and Drama). Ausdance Victoria is the only state organisation of the Ausdance network that is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and we provide the mechanisms and support for students and dance educators to study and grow in dance through nationally recognised qualifications.

Without the existence of state and community-based dance organisations that currently receive Australia Council support (including BalletLab Association Inc., Chunky Move Ltd, Dancehouse Incorporated, Kage Physical Theatre Association Inc., and Lucy Guerin Association Inc.) we must ask how our dance students will be able to develop, be inspired and find a place of their own within the industry. The likelihood of many organisations needing to rely on project-based funding rather than longer-term operational funding also removes the structural stability that underpins the overall sustainability of dance practice.

Looking to the creation of the NPEA, if the aim of this proposed program is to “strengthen Australia’s reputation as a sophisticated and artistic nation with a confident, outward-focused arts sector”, it would be disingenuous to suggest that we will be able to produce “outward-focused” work that can transcend international boundaries without first developing through grassroots community and state-based organisations. An “artistic nation” needs the arts at every level. The ecology of the sector relies on diversity to support the major performing arts companies and their creative output.

We urge the government to review these budget decisions to protect the foundation of our cultural ecosystem and to ensure the future of the Arts and Dance in Australia.