

The Hon. Michael Sukkar MP  
Assistant Treasurer  
Australian Government - The Treasury  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT 2600

28 January 2022

Dear Minister,

The Australian Dance Council - Ausdance Inc, known as Ausdance National, is the national peak dance advocacy organisation in Australia bringing dance to be a valued part of the lives of all Australians. It works with a network of Ausdance organisations that are state and territory peak bodies for dance that are based in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria, and Western Australia.

Ausdance National is part of an unincorporated federation of national peak arts organisations (ArtsPeak)<sup>1</sup>, that promotes research, policy and industry development, communication and advocacy for the arts sector. You will see below that we refer to a number of our ArtsPeak colleagues' submissions in our recommendations.

Evidence that Australians deeply value the arts is provided in The Australia Council for the Arts' *Connecting Australians Report*<sup>2</sup>

*Transformative: Impacts of Culture and Creativity*<sup>3</sup>, by A New Approach (ANA), documents international evidence of the impact of greater cultural and creative engagement on improving national issues.

Ausdance National recommends reading the submissions and reports outlined above to gain a fuller understanding of the rationale for recommended investments in arts and culture.

Ausdance National is appreciative of the opportunity to highlight considerations and make recommendations for the 2022-23 Federal Budget.

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<sup>1</sup> APRA/AMCOS, Arts Access Australia, Australian Museum and Galleries Association, Australian Music Centre, Australian Writer's Guild, BlakDance, Diversity Arts Australia, Live Performance Australia, Moogahlin Arts Centre, National Association for the Visual Arts, Performing Arts Connections Australia, Regional Arts Australia, Screen Producers Association, Symphony Services Australia, Theatre Network Australia

<sup>2</sup> <https://australiacouncil.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/connecting-australians-natio-59520692c614a.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://pgav.org.au/Transformative-Impacts-of-Culture-Creativity~4434>

## Conceiving notions of culture and value

Inviting consideration of the notions of what culture is and how culture cultivates culture. As well as how culture manifests in many ways, in myriad forms, and is intrinsic to our being - as individuals; as communities; and as a society. This submission calls for the Federal Government to assess how it values culture in deciding how to invest in this nation's future and care responsibly for issues that affect all people living in Australia.

“...there has been no society in human history without a culture.”<sup>4</sup>

Constantly present, the importance of culture - through its multifaceted, multi-layered, interconnected, and uniquely life-affecting impacts - is challenging to capture. An elusive and rather intangible thing, we feel the impact of culture throughout our lives, from the past, and into the future. Yet we would need to assess a chronology of lifetimes played out in retrospect to observe and evaluate how the effects came to be. Even then we'd lose track, following tangents trying to wrangle the complex inter-relativity of the cultures we inherit, inhabit and create as well as their cause and effect.

Like nature, **culture is everywhere**. It traverses the past, the present, and the future. And, it's **essential to life**. There are many reasons why culture has value, not least because it's deeply ingrained in our sense of being, our sense of community, and our sense of belonging. Investment in culture is an investment made for all Australians because it involves all humans - those of yesterday, those of today, and those of the future.

Dance more specifically, manifests in many varied forms. As product, process, culture, and human experience it is a vital means of cultivating culture which leads to the enrichment of the Australian community and to building the nation's economy and society. **Dance is everywhere**. Movement and expression of the human body is the innate language of humankind. It's experiential. It belongs to, and it exists uniquely in the bodies of us all. It is part of who we are. Every day, people engage in their own dance, many purposefully seeking its benefits, many more unknowingly utilising the movement and expression of their bodies in communicating and connecting. Dance serves us within daily living not only as arts, culture, creativity, and entertainment, but as education, healthcare, tourism, science, technology, and fundamentally in communication and connection.

For the Government to effectively support Australia's economy and society, particularly as Australia and the world face the new normal of living with Covid-19, supporting human development is ever more essential and critical to sustaining economic capacity and liveability in Australia.

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<sup>4</sup> Meyrick, Julian; Phiddian, Robert; Barnett, Tully: What Matters? Talking Value in Australian Culture. (Monash University. Monograph. <https://doi.org/10.26180/5f3c700055075>, 2020), p. 62.

**Dance is essential** in this; supporting connectedness, communication, health, wellbeing, and social consciousness. This is culture affecting culture in action.

The Government's investment in arts and in culture is an investment in the state of our being.

## Recommendations

### Develop a National Plan for Arts, Culture and Creativity<sup>5</sup>

- Inform an efficient whole-of-government approach and provide the architecture to power relevant and effective policy, legislation, regulation, and investment for Arts, Culture, and Creativity nationwide;
- Position Indigenous perspectives at the centre of Australian cultural life;
- Acknowledge the broad and interconnected work of the national Arts, Culture, Creativity, and Entertainment sectors and value the work of artists;
- Recognise and realise measures to ensure everyone in Australia has equitable access to participate in artistic, cultural, and creative activities that are relevant and significant to them;
- Illuminate and maximise both the public and private value cultivated through participation in artistic, cultural, and creative activities that improve liveability for people living in Australia.

### Develop a national First Nations Arts Skills and Workforce Plan

- \$500K to develop a 10 year plan to support skill development and build capacity for First Nations Arts. (Please refer to BlakDance's submission).

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<sup>5</sup> Recommended in *Sculpting a National Cultural Plan*[1], the report from the Parliamentary Inquiry into Creative Industries and Institutions. According to a New Approach, a plan would "lay the foundations of a cultural inheritance that will benefit future generations for the decades to come"[2].

[1] [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/House/Communications/Arts/Report](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Communications/Arts/Report)

[2] [https://newapproach.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ANA-Priorities-Paper\\_FA\\_Acc.pdf](https://newapproach.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/ANA-Priorities-Paper_FA_Acc.pdf)

## **Develop regulation and accreditation systems in the dance industry to address safety concerns.**

- \$1m for the Ausdance network to roll out a national accreditation system for dance teachers and studios to address child safety in dance. This directly responds to the recommendations made in the Final Report from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse;<sup>6</sup>
- \$5m annually thereafter to establish and maintain a framework to manage ongoing compliance of accreditation standards within the sector;
- Additional funding for First Nations led creation/adaptation of appropriate user systems for, and accreditation of, First Nations dance facilitators and centres.

## **An additional \$133m per annum for Australia Council for the Arts allocated as follows:**

- New funding of \$20m p.a. for a First Nations Performing Arts Fund to support the unmet need for development of self-determined dance organisations, programs and projects. (Please refer to BlakDance’s submission);
- \$28m to extend peer reviewed grant programs for projects for small to medium organisations and independents to cover current levels of ‘unfunded excellence’, as well as offer additional fellowships for performing artists;
- New funding of \$15m per year for four years for a Young People and Culture Plan. Implementation of the plan would see young Australian’s engage in arts-based community projects. (Please refer to Theatre Network Australia’s submission);
- \$5m to support Playing Australia, the national performing arts touring program. (Please refer to the submission by Performing Arts Connections);
- \$10m to increase capacity to invest in four-year funded arts organisations strengthening capacity in the small to medium arts sector;
- \$25m to create a Reserves Incentive scheme where funds raised by arts organisations towards their reserves or endowments are matched with funding from Government. (Please refer to Live Performance Australia’s submission);

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<sup>6</sup>[https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final\\_report\\_-\\_recommendations.pdf](https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/final_report_-_recommendations.pdf)

- \$30m for the extension of the National Performing Arts Partnerships Framework to make way for new appointments. (Please refer to Live Performance Australia’s submission).

\*With the proviso that all funding is equity tested and that 39% of funding is designated to CALD, migrant and refugee productions, artists and creative workers<sup>7</sup>. (Please refer to Diversity Arts Australia’s submission).

### **Invest \$12m to build CALD capacity in the Arts and Creative Sectors**

- Create a CALD Employment and Participation Pathways Strategy;
- Develop cultural archives and systems to recognise the historical contributions of CALD artists;
- Support a national sector-wide capacity and training program in equity. (Please refer to Diversity Arts Australia’s submission)

### **Ensure that there is sufficient funding to maximise the opportunity for significant, sustainable improvements in disability access and inclusion**

- Establish a formal process to provide ways for people with disability and the sector to inform *Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021-2031* and the *National Disability Employment Strategy*, as well as other associated arts and disability Plans;
- Establish an independent service to develop and provide information, advice, education, training and supporting resources to the arts and cultural sector to better understand issues of disability access and inclusion, and the actions that can be taken;
- Under the designated term for the Office for the Arts’ Associated Plan (Arts and Disability Plan), allocate the Australia Council for the Arts appropriate additional funding to establish specific programs that assist Australian arts organisations to improve disability access and inclusion within their operations, programs, workforces, physical and digital infrastructure and disability arts projects. (Please refer to Arts Access Australia’s submission).

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<sup>7</sup> The Australian Bureau of Statistics and Reserve Bank data reports that 39% of Australians are from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background, with over 28% of Australians born overseas.

## **Support a Regional Strategic Framework**

- \$20m for new funding programs and an extension to the Regional Arts Fund. (Please refer to Regional Arts Australia's submission).

## **Amend tertiary education fees.**

- Revoke university fee increases for Arts courses to remove access barriers which have compounded equity issues for students;
- Ensure that any increased Federal Government fees for arts courses in the interim see that relative funding amounts are allocated to their corresponding departments that are delivering the courses.

## **A targeted wage subsidy for workers in the performing arts impacted by Covid-19.**

- Implement a targeted wage subsidy, similar to JobKeeper, but which aligns with the specifics of working in the performing arts environment, to support workers in the sector who continue to be impacted by Covid-19.

## **Establish a Live Entertainment and Events Insurance Scheme**

- \$130m - \$200m to increase industry confidence and support event reactivation through an insurance scheme tailored for Live Entertainment and Events. This would need to be established in partnership with the states and territories. (Please refer to Live Performance Australia's submission).

Yours sincerely,



Lizzie Vilmanis

**Ausdance National President**