



DRAMA QUEENSLAND

Queensland Association For Drama In Education Inc.

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Drama Queensland welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation surrounding the next phase of the National Cultural Policy. We strongly support the vision articulated throughout the *Revive* policy and commend the Government's commitment to ensuring that arts and culture remain central to Australia's civic, cultural and democratic life.

In particular, we are encouraged by *Revive's* recognition that:

"It is important that a range of stories are heard, respected, reflected – and at times contested – in Australia's collective social and cultural life" and its assertion that "Arts and culture belong to everyone."

These statements articulate a vision of Australia that is inclusive, creative, reflective and connected. However, for this vision to become reality, access to Arts education, including Drama education, must be guaranteed for all young Australians, regardless of postcode, school sector or socioeconomic circumstance.

Drama Queensland is deeply concerned by the significant decline in Drama offerings across Queensland schools. According to QCAA Subject Reports in Drama, 324 schools offered Drama in 2020. As of January 2026, this number has fallen to just 257 schools. In 2020, 3575 students engaged with Senior Drama. In 2025, this number is 2144, representing a 40% decline in students engaging with Drama to a Senior Level in Queensland. This decline represents more than a statistical shift; it signals a growing crisis in Arts education and a narrowing of opportunities for young people to engage in creative, collaborative and critical learning.

The reduction in Drama offerings reflects broader pressures within the education sector. Reduced funding for Arts education across Primary, Secondary and Tertiary sectors, increasing curriculum pressures, staffing shortages, and the ongoing undervaluing of the unique skills fostered through Drama have all contributed to this decline. Increasingly, Arts subjects are treated as supplementary rather than essential. Yet Drama develops capacities that are fundamental not only to the Arts sector, but to Australian society itself: empathy, collaboration, communication, creativity, critical thinking, confidence, cultural understanding and the ability to engage meaningfully with diverse perspectives.

Drama is one of the oldest forms of storytelling and remains one of the most powerful ways young people learn to understand themselves, others and the world around them. In an era marked by social fragmentation, misinformation, anxiety and disconnection, Drama education provides students with opportunities to listen, imagine, question, create and connect. It fosters social engagement and cultural literacy in ways that no other discipline can replicate.

Drama Queensland therefore strongly supports the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE) submission calling for the inclusion of a sixth pillar within the National Cultural Policy — one dedicated specifically to Arts Education.

We believe this sixth pillar is essential to strengthening the five existing pillars of *Revive*. A thriving national arts and cultural sector cannot exist without sustained investment in the education systems that nurture future artists, audiences, educators and cultural leaders. The long-term health of Australia's creative industries begins in classrooms.

A strengthened National Cultural Policy must therefore include:

- Guaranteed access to quality Arts education for all students across Australia;
- Increased and sustained funding for Arts education programs in schools;
- Greater support for Drama and Arts teaching positions, particularly in regional and remote communities;
- Specialist Arts-trained teachers in primary schools;
- Strong and accessible secondary Drama programs in all school sectors;
- Investment in tertiary Arts education to ensure universities and training institutions can continue preparing the next generation of artists and educators;
- Recognition of Arts and Drama education as essential infrastructure for Australia's cultural future.

If arts and culture truly belong to everyone, then every child must have the opportunity to encounter, create and participate in the Arts throughout their education.

At present, this cannot be guaranteed in Queensland. Many students complete their schooling without meaningful access to Drama education at all. This inequity undermines the aspirations of *Revive* and risks creating a future in which participation in the Arts becomes increasingly limited to those with geographic or economic privilege.

Drama Queensland fully supports and actively endorses the aims of *Revive*. However, we believe the policy can only truly succeed if it centralises the strengthening and funding of Arts education within its recommendations. Investment in the Arts sector must begin with investment in young people's access to Arts learning.

To build a nation in which the Arts are genuinely valued, we must ensure that students are able to experience them from the earliest years of education through to tertiary study and beyond.

The future of Australia's cultural life depends on it.

Sincerely,



Mr. Scott Andrews
President
Drama Queensland



