

## **Who is Ausdance Queensland?**

Ausdance Queensland (Ausdance QLD) was established in 1978 and provides professional advocacy and industry development for Queensland dance through strong local, regional, national and international networks. We work to bring recognition to the many roles that dance plays in the cultural life of Queensland and to maximise opportunities for practitioners.

Ausdance QLD strives to support an innovative, sustainable, capable and inclusive dance ecology for Queensland through advocacy, provision of support and increasing capability for the Queensland dance sector.

Ausdance QLD champions excellence, sustainability, innovation, creativity and diversity in dance by providing services, training and resources to dancers, artists, teachers, students, organisations and audiences to build the long-term capacity of the dance sector across Queensland.

### **Ausdance QLD aims to respond to sector needs by:**

- Providing strong advocacy and leadership for Queensland dance
- Creating systems and programs improving the quality of Queensland dance and dance education
- Supporting and resourcing sector development and sustainable career pathways
- Improving and increasing participation inclusivity and diversity in dance

Across all five pillars, Ausdance QLD sees significant opportunity to strengthen the role of dance, and the arts more broadly, as essential contributors to Australia's cultural sustainability and social fabric. In particular, we believe stronger structural focus is required to ensure the policy translates effectively from vision into implementation through sustained investment in arts education, regional engagement, workforce development, child safety and Cultural capability. Ausdance QLD strongly believes these areas are not peripheral to cultural policy; they are fundamental to the systems, relationships and pathways that enable cultural participation, artistic development and community connection across Australia.

Ausdance QLD advocates for a broader understanding of cultural infrastructure and cultural participation - one that recognises not only major institutions and presentation outcomes, but also the educators, artists, service organisations, schools, community programs and regional networks that sustain the arts ecology over time. This includes recognising arts education and providing access to professional development as critical cultural infrastructure; strengthening

access and opportunity for regional and remote communities; embedding child safety and culturally safe practice as sector-wide responsibilities; and supporting pathways that enable artists, educators and communities to participate meaningfully in and enrich Australia's cultural life.

Through the lens of dance, Ausdance QLD strongly encourages the National Cultural Policy to position the arts more clearly as central to creative workforce sustainability and development, community wellbeing and lifelong participation in culture. Stronger alignment between policy intent, funding structures, education systems and sector capability will ensure the long-term sustainability, accessibility, growth and relevance of Australia's arts and cultural landscape.

**Across all five pillars, Ausdance QLD advocates for the following foundational principles:**

- Arts education is cultural infrastructure.
- Children and young people are cultural participants now.
- Participation is fundamental to audience development.
- Cultural infrastructure extends beyond buildings and venues.
- Workforce sustainability is essential to cultural sustainability.
- First Nations Cultural leadership and authority must be embedded across all levels of cultural policy and practice.
- Cultural safety and child safety are foundational sector responsibilities.
- Equitable cultural participation should not depend on postcode, geography or income.

Together, these principles position dance and arts participation not as peripheral activity, but as essential national social, educational and cultural infrastructure.

## **First Nations First**

Ausdance QLD believes the *First Nations First* pillar must drive structural change across the arts sector by recognising Cultural authority, supporting Community-led governance, and investing in long-term Cultural preservation. Consultation with First Nations communities and arts leaders has shown that existing funding, reporting, and consultation systems often fail to align with Community-led ways of working or provide equitable access to leadership and decision-making opportunities. Ausdance QLD emphasises the need for genuine representation of First Nations artists, Elders, and Cultural knowledge holders across governance, education, and leadership, supported by accessible pathways in training, mentoring, and professional development that are Culturally safe and regionally inclusive.

Ausdance QLD's engagement with dance educators in a variety of settings across Queensland highlights dance education as a key avenue for strengthening cultural capability, supporting cultural transmission, language revitalisation, and self-determination. The organisation advocates for sustained investment in First Nations-led curriculum development, educator capability, and professional learning to ensure engagement with First Nations cultures is respectful, accountable, and non-tokenistic. Through initiatives such as Safedance for Kids, Ausdance QLD also supports embedding Cultural safety and child-safe standards across arts participation. It argues that a genuine First Nations First approach in Australia's National Cultural Policy must embed First Nations-led decision-making, equitable access, and clear pathways for First Nations young people to participate, lead, and thrive across the arts sector.

### **Ausdance QLD recommends that the *First Nations First* pillar be strengthened through the following actions and strategic refinements:**

1. Recognise First Nations Cultural knowledge, dance practice and storytelling as living intellectual and cultural infrastructure that must be protected, resourced and led by Community, not extracted or institutionally controlled. Implementation could include:
  - Recognising and investing in First Nations-led arts organisations, education providers and Cultural institutions as essential national Cultural infrastructure supporting Cultural transmission, language revitalisation, leadership development and community wellbeing.
2. Commit to long-term investment models that move beyond symbolic inclusion and enable genuine First Nations-led governance, decision-making and Cultural authority across all levels of the arts sector. Implementation could include:
  - Establishing multi-year funding programs and governance requirements that embed First Nations leadership, decision-making authority and Community-led evaluation processes across arts organisations and initiatives.

3. Address the ongoing systemic barriers that prevent First Nations children and young people, particularly in regional and remote communities, from accessing sustained arts education, training, mentorship and leadership pathways. Implementation could include:
  - Strengthening equitable access for First Nations children and young people to participate in arts learning, leadership, training and creative pathways throughout their education and career development.
  - Embedding the Universal Principle for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety across all arts education, training and participation settings, supported by investment in culturally safe practice frameworks, workforce capability development and child-safe standards.
  - Investing in regional partnerships, scholarships, transport support, mentoring programs and sustained artist residencies in Communities with limited access to arts opportunities.
4. Invest in Culturally safe arts education and professional development frameworks that are led by First Nations educators, artists, Elders and Cultural knowledge holders, rather than relying on short-term consultation models. Implementation could include:
  - Embedding First Nations arts pedagogies and Culturally responsive practice within pre-service teacher education and ongoing professional learning, with targeted curriculum, resources and delivery led by, or co-developed in genuine consultation with, First Nations educators and Cultural knowledge holders.
  - Expanding and resourcing pathways for First Nations artists, Elders and Cultural practitioners to teach, mentor and lead within schools, tertiary institutions and arts organisations through culturally appropriate employment, governance and engagement models.
5. Recognise that Cultural safety is not an optional addition to arts practice, but a foundational responsibility across all arts education, training and participation environments. Implementation could include:
  - Embedding mandatory Cultural safety frameworks, workforce capability development and accountability measures across funded arts organisations, education providers and training institutions.
6. Support digital infrastructure and Community-led archiving initiatives that protect and preserve First Nations stories, movement practices, language and Cultural knowledge for future generations. Implementation could include:

- Investing or co-investing in Community-controlled digital archiving projects, digital infrastructure, Indigenous data governance frameworks and intergenerational knowledge preservation initiatives.
  - Existing opportunities to invest or co-invest in national digital infrastructure (NDRI) programs with existing Commonwealth Government support (NCRIS) such as the HASS and Indigenous Research Data Commons which includes Language Data Commons of Australia (LDaCA), Improving Indigenous Research Capabilities (IIRC) and Australian Creatives Histories and Futures (ACHF).
  - For reference: Langton, M., McLellan, R. Fewster, J. Smith, K. (2026) Framework for the Governance of Indigenous Data: Humanities, Arts, Social Sciences and Indigenous Research Data Commons. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11135961> (live from 1 June 2026)
7. Ensure First Nations artists, educators and Cultural practitioners are appropriately remunerated for Cultural labour, consultation, mentoring and knowledge-sharing responsibilities. Implementation could include:
    - Developing First Nations-led and authentically informed nationally recognised remuneration standards not already included in NAVA and funding requirements that appropriately value Cultural knowledge-sharing, consultation, mentoring and Community engagement.
  8. Recognise that many current funding, reporting and governance systems and timelines remain structurally inaccessible to First Nations communities and not facilitative to genuine consultation processes. Implementation could include:
    - Developing systems that are redesigned through genuine co-creation and Community leadership provisioning the time, resourcing and guidance required to engage with Indigenous communities in meaningful and authentic ways.
  9. Ensure accessible application pathways, flexible timelines and Community-led decision-making approaches. Implementation could include:
    - Redesigning funding, reporting and assessment processes in partnership with First Nations Communities.
  10. Position First Nations Cultural leadership not as a diversity initiative, but as central to the integrity, fundamental infrastructure future sustainability and global identity of Australia's arts and cultural landscape. Implementation could include:
    - Embedding First Nations Cultural leadership and authority as a core principle across national arts policy, investment frameworks, education systems and institutional governance structures.

- For refence: QLD Government's [Cultural Engagement Framework 2022](#): *Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and cultures in Queensland.*

## **A Place for Every Story**

Ausdance QLD argues that while this pillar highlights access, inclusion, and participation in arts and culture, it does not adequately recognise dance as one of Australia's most accessible and widely practised forms of cultural expression. The Australian Sports Commission has identified that 95,500 children participate in dance each week in Queensland alone. Dance occurs across studios, schools, community spaces, and homes, yet access to quality participation, education, and resources remains highly unequal, particularly in remote, regional, and low socio-economic communities. Ausdance QLD emphasises that children and young people are not only future artists and audiences but active cultural participants today, making equitable access to dance and arts education critical for fostering cultural understanding, social connection, and creative opportunity.

Ausdance QLD highlights ongoing disparities in access to training, fit-for-purpose venues, funding, safe practice environments, and other infrastructure, particularly for regional communities, culturally diverse groups, people with disabilities, and those outside established institutions. The organisation argues that current policy and investment models remain too focused on formal presentation contexts rather than reflecting how dance and culture are created and experienced in communities, schools, and digital spaces. It advocates for recognising dance and arts learning as a cultural right, supported through equitable education provision, community-based arts hubs, safe and accessible learning environments, and stronger professional development pathways for teachers and artists. This approach would help ensure all Australians have the opportunity to participate in, create, and share their own stories through dance and the arts.

### **Ausdance QLD recommends that the *A Place for Every Story* pillar be strengthened through the following actions and strategic refinements:**

1. Recognise equitable access to dance and arts education as a national cultural entitlement for every Australian child and young person, regardless of geography, socio-economic status or background. Implementation could include:
  - Investing in dance experiences in formal school settings, studios and community spaces so inequities are addressed for all especially for regional communities, culturally diverse groups, people with disabilities and those outside established institutional structures.
  - Establishing minimum national access benchmarks for arts education and participation opportunities across schools and community settings.
2. Acknowledge that Australia cannot claim cultural equity while access to dance and arts participation remains deeply determined by postcode, income, infrastructure and educational opportunity. Implementation could include:

- Developing national equity targets and place-based investment strategies that prioritise communities experiencing the highest barriers to access, including regional, remote and low socio-economic areas.
3. Invest in dance and arts participation as essential social infrastructure that strengthens wellbeing, belonging, resilience, identity and community connection. Implementation could include:
    - Embedding arts participation within health, education, youth and community development funding frameworks, including sustained investment in community-led arts programs.
  4. Recognise that children and young people are not only the future of Australia's cultural life but realistically they are active cultural participants, creators and audiences right now. Implementation could include:
    - Embedding youth-led arts participation, co-creation models and structured opportunities for young people to influence programming, policy and creative decision-making.
  5. Recognise digital participation, online learning and hybrid engagement as critical tools for reducing inequity and expanding cultural access across regional and remote Australia. Implementation could include:
    - Investing in national digital arts infrastructure, hybrid delivery models and accessible online platforms to support equitable participation regardless of location.
  6. Support affordable access to safe, fit-for-purpose creative spaces for participation, rehearsal, learning and community cultural activity. Implementation could include:
    - Expanding subsidised access schemes and strengthening partnerships between schools, local government and venues to increase the availability of shared community creative spaces.
  7. Acknowledge that participation in dance often occurs outside major institutions and formal venues, and that policy must reflect where culture is created, shared and experienced. Proactive change here could look like:
    - Investing in arts and cultural educators in diverse settings to deliver high quality, authentic and respectful arts and cultural learning experiences.
  8. Commit to supporting culturally diverse communities, people with disability, neurodivergent individuals and low socio-economic communities through genuinely accessible participation models. Implementation could include:

- Embedding co-designed, universally accessible participation frameworks and targeted funding for inclusive arts programs across all delivery contexts.
9. Position dance and the arts as essential tools for strengthening social cohesion, cross-cultural understanding and community wellbeing in an increasingly fragmented society. Implementation could include:
- Integrating arts participation into cross-sector wellbeing strategies, including partnerships between arts, health, education and community services to support social cohesion outcomes.

## **Centrality of the Artist**

The *Centrality of the Artist* pillar recognises the importance of artists and creative workers within Australia's cultural life. However, Ausdance QLD believes it must more explicitly acknowledge the pathways that enable people to become and remain artists, educators and creative professionals. Equitable access to dance learning across schools, studios and communities is fundamental to sustaining Australia's future creative workforce, audiences and cultural participation. Declining enrolments in school arts subjects, reduced tertiary arts provision and increasing barriers to study are already weakening workforce pipelines into dance and the broader arts sector. The policy must recognise children, young people, educators, teaching artists and community practitioners not only as participants in culture, but as essential contributors to Australia's creative ecosystem and long-term cultural sustainability.

Ausdance QLD also believes the policy must more directly address the sustainability and protection of artistic careers within this current era of dance practice. Independent dance artists frequently work within insecure freelance and project-based employment structures that undervalue creative development and Cultural consultation, research and long-term artistic practice while contributing to workforce instability and burnout. Policy settings should better support sustainable career pathways, fair remuneration, workforce wellbeing and long-term creative development across the full spectrum of dance practice. As digital platforms and artificial intelligence continue to reshape creative work, stronger protections are also required to ensure artists retain ownership, attribution, consent and fair compensation for their creative labour, and that innovation does not come at the expense of artist rights or sustainability.

### **Ausdance QLD recommends that the *Centrality of the Artist* pillar be strengthened through the following actions and strategic refinements:**

1. Recognise that artists cannot remain central to Australia's cultural life while continuing to work within financially precarious, underfunded and unsustainable employment conditions. Implementation could include:
  - Embedding fair pay, minimum fee standards and sustainability requirements into all publicly funded arts programs and commissioning frameworks.
2. Recognise youth as artists and educators as co-artists in formal school settings with appropriate and sustained investment in professional learning to support schools to deliver quality dance learning experiences. Implementation could include:
  - Funding sustained professional learning programs for teachers and embedding arts specialists, teaching artists and co-delivery models in schools to strengthen dance education outcomes.

3. Acknowledge that the current project-based funding environment actively contributes to workforce burnout, instability and artist erosion across the dance sector. Implementation could include:
  - Introducing longer-term, recurrent funding models with baseline operational support to reduce reliance on short-term project cycles.
4. Recognise educators, teaching artists and community practitioners as artists and creative workers whose labour underpins workforce sustainability, audience development and cultural participation. Implementation could include:
  - Expanding eligibility criteria in funding programs and employment frameworks to formally recognise teaching artists, educators and community practitioners as core creative workforce roles.
5. Support long-term, multi-year funding structures that enable artists and organisations to build sustainable careers, creative risk-taking and sector innovation. Proactive change here could look like:
  - Providing funding models that include financial consideration of creative development and spaces for artistic and cultural nurturing to align with *Revive's* fair pay, safety and sustainability principles
6. Address the growing instability of freelance and portfolio-based creative careers through stronger industrial protections, fair pay principles and workforce support systems. Implementation could include:
  - Establishing sector-wide minimum standards for freelance engagement, contracts, pay rates and working conditions across publicly funded arts activity.
7. Create sustainable training pathways for independent artists by building a multidisciplinary skills framework from which to support the development of the necessary competencies which are required to sustain their practices and longevity in the sector. Proactive change here could look like:
  - Supporting artists by maintaining, securing (or re-securing) and re-introducing pathways for arts and cultural engagement and qualifications such as tertiary courses and other training opportunities
8. Recognise the urgent need for career transition pathways, wellbeing support and sustainable employment structures within dance due to the physical demands and shortened career lifespan of many artists. Implementation could include:
  - Establishing national career transition programs, injury support systems, and wellbeing initiatives tailored to dance and physically intensive art forms.

9. Develop national protections for artists against unauthorised AI scraping, replication and reproduction of choreographic works, movement vocabularies and creative intellectual property. Implementation could include:
  - Introducing enforceable legal frameworks and digital safeguards to protect choreographic and embodied intellectual property from unauthorised use in AI systems.
10. Ensure artists retain meaningful ownership, attribution and fair remuneration within rapidly evolving AI and digital content environments. Implementation could include:
  - Establishing clear attribution standards, licensing frameworks and remuneration mechanisms for the use of artistic works in digital and AI contexts.
11. Invest in digital capability, AI literacy and emerging technology training so artists and arts organisations are equipped to adapt and thrive in future creative industries. Implementation could include:
  - Funding sector-wide digital skills programs, AI literacy training and access to emerging creative technologies for artists and organisations.
12. Recognise that innovation cannot come at the expense of artist rights, wellbeing or economic sustainability. Implementation could include:
  - Embedding rights-based impact assessments into all cultural policy, funding and digital innovation initiatives affecting artists.
13. Position artists not only as cultural contributors, but as educators, innovators, community leaders and drivers of Australia's broader creative economy. Implementation could include:
  - Recognising and resourcing cross-sector artist roles through integrated policy settings spanning education, health, community and economic development.

## **Strong Cultural Infrastructure**

Under the *Strong Cultural Infrastructure* pillar, Ausdance QLD strongly supports a broader understanding of infrastructure that extends beyond buildings and presentation venues to include the people, systems, organisations, education pathways and safeguarding frameworks that sustain Australia's cultural life. The dance sector relies on interconnected networks of artists, educators, schools, studios, training providers, service organisations and community programs, yet these systems remain fragmented, under-resourced and lacking coordinated national support. Ausdance QLD believes that without sustained investment in workforce capability, arts education, digital infrastructure, safeguarding systems and sector development, Australia's cultural infrastructure will continue to weaken regardless of investment in physical venues and facilities.

Ausdance QLD also believes arts education, service organisations and regional participation must be recognised as essential components of national cultural infrastructure. Declining Arts participation, reduced school provision, subject scaling effects and shrinking training pathways are already impacting the future sustainability of the creative workforce. This is especially crucial for regional and low socio-economic communities where access to specialist teaching, training and industry engagement is more limited. Service and advocacy organisations play a critical role in connecting policy, workforce development, safeguarding, professional learning and community participation outcomes across the sector. With this in mind digital capability and emerging technologies are increasingly central to equitable access and long-term sustainability. A National Cultural Policy must recognise that cultural infrastructure is not only physical space, but the broader ecosystem of people, knowledge systems and relationships that enable artistic practice, participation and cultural life to thrive.

### **Ausdance QLD recommends that the *Centrality of the Artist* pillar be strengthened through the following actions and strategic refinements:**

1. Recognise that cultural infrastructure is not limited to buildings and venues, but includes the educators, artists, service organisations, safeguarding systems, digital networks and workforce pathways that sustain Australia's cultural life. Implementation could include:
  - Expanding national cultural infrastructure definitions in policy and funding frameworks to explicitly include workforce, education, safeguarding and digital systems alongside physical venues.
2. Acknowledge that without sustained investment in sector capability, workforce development and arts education, Australia's cultural infrastructure will continue to weaken regardless of capital investment in physical venues. Implementation could include:

- Introducing dedicated funding streams for workforce development, sector capability building and arts education as core infrastructure investment categories.
3. Recognise arts education institutions, service organisations and advocacy bodies as essential national cultural infrastructure requiring sustained operational investment. Implementation could include:
    - Establishing recurrent operational funding models for arts education providers, service organisations and peak bodies to ensure long-term sector stability.
  4. Commit to coordinated national workforce planning to address declining arts participation, shrinking training pathways and long-term workforce sustainability challenges across the sector. Implementation could include:
    - Developing a national cultural workforce strategy that integrates education, training, employment pathways and regional workforce needs.
  5. Recognise that inequitable ATAR scaling and declining school provision continue to actively discourage participation in Arts subjects and weaken Australia's future creative workforce. Implementation could include:
    - Reviewing senior secondary subject scaling systems to recognise academic rigour of Dance and other arts subjects, alongside targeted investment to restore equitable access to Arts subjects in schools.
  6. Invest in specialist arts teachers, tertiary pathways and school-to-industry partnerships as critical infrastructure supporting future artists, educators and creative professionals. Implementation could include:
    - Funding specialist teacher training, reinstating and strengthening tertiary dance and other arts pathways, and expanding structured school–industry partnership programs.
  7. Recognise digital infrastructure and online learning environments as essential cultural infrastructure, particularly for regional, remote and underserved communities. Implementation could include:
    - Funding specialist teacher training, reinstating and strengthening tertiary arts pathways, and expanding structured school–industry partnership programs.
  8. Invest in sector-wide digital capability including CRM systems, livestream infrastructure, audience analytics, digital learning platforms and hybrid engagement models. Implementation could include:
    - Providing targeted digital transformation funding for arts organisations to build and maintain contemporary audience, learning and engagement systems.

9. Develop national frameworks addressing ethical AI use, digital rights and intellectual property protections within the arts sector. Implementation could include:
  - Establishing clear regulatory frameworks and sector guidelines for AI use, data protection, copyright and digital rights management in creative practice.
10. Recognise child safety, safeguarding and Cultural capability as core infrastructure responsibilities that require ongoing national investment and workforce training. Implementation could include:
  - Embedding mandatory safeguarding, child safety and Cultural capability training into all funded arts and education programs, supported by national standards and ongoing professional development.
11. Position service organisations such as Ausdance QLD as essential connectors between government policy, workforce capability, safeguarding, advocacy, education and community participation outcomes. Implementation could include:
  - Providing sustained operational funding and formal policy integration for service organisations as key delivery partners in national cultural infrastructure systems

## **Engaging the Audience**

This pillar highlights the importance of building and sustaining audiences for the arts. However, Ausdance QLD believes audience engagement must be understood as something developed through participation, education and access long before a ticket is purchased or a theatre is entered. Children and young people should be recognised not only as the audiences of the future, but as artists, audiences and cultural participants today. Equitable access to dance and arts experiences through schools, studios, community programs and artist-led engagement is essential to developing culturally engaged, confident and lifelong participants in Australia's cultural life. Without sustained investment in these early engagement pathways, long-term audience development goals will remain difficult to achieve.

Ausdance QLD also believes current policy settings define audience engagement too narrowly through attendance-based metrics and formal performance models. These measures overlook the diverse ways people engage with dance through participation, education, digital interaction, community practice, health and wellbeing contexts. Audience engagement must include accessible, inclusive and participatory experiences across metropolitan, regional and remote communities. These must, in turn, be supported by strong partnerships between schools, artists and arts organisations. Digital engagement, accessibility initiatives and broader evaluation frameworks that recognise social, educational and wellbeing outcomes are increasingly essential to sustaining contemporary cultural participation. A National Cultural Policy should position lifelong cultural engagement as critical social infrastructure that strengthens creativity, connection, wellbeing and social cohesion across Australian communities.

### **Ausdance QLD recommends that the *Engaging the Audience* pillar be strengthened through the following actions and strategic refinements:**

1. Recognise that audiences are developed through participation, education and access long before they purchase a ticket or enter a theatre. Implementation could include:
  - Embedding audience opportunity and development within arts education, community participation programs and early engagement initiatives across schools and local communities.
2. Acknowledge that without equitable access to dance and arts experiences during childhood, Australia cannot expect to build sustainable, diverse and culturally engaged audiences in the future. Implementation could include:
  - Targeted investment in school-based arts experiences, community programs and regional outreach to ensure consistent early access for all children and young people.

3. Recognise children and young people as audiences, artists, consumers and cultural participants today, not simply future audiences waiting to be developed. Implementation could include:
  - Supporting youth-led programming, co-creation initiatives and decision-making roles for young people in arts and cultural organisations.
4. Shift national audience policy beyond attendance metrics to recognise participation, digital engagement, education and community connection as legitimate forms of cultural engagement. Implementation could include:
  - Revising national cultural data frameworks to include participation, digital interaction, learning engagement and community impact indicators alongside attendance.
5. Invest in early audience development through schools, studios, community programs and artist-led engagement initiatives across metropolitan, regional and remote communities. Implementation could include:
  - Funding sustained artist-in-residence programs, touring education initiatives and community partnerships that embed arts engagement in everyday learning environments.
6. Support stronger partnerships between schools, artists and arts organisations to create lifelong pathways into cultural participation and audience engagement. Implementation could include:
  - Establishing structured partnership programs and funding incentives that connect education systems with arts organisations and practicing artists.
7. Recognise digital engagement, livestream participation and online creative interaction as increasingly critical forms of audience development, particularly for younger generations. Implementation could include:
  - Investing in national digital engagement platforms and hybrid programming models that support accessible, interactive cultural participation online.
8. Invest in audience analytics, CRM capability and digital engagement tools so small-to-medium arts organisations can better understand, grow and retain audiences. Implementation could include:
  - Providing targeted funding and capacity-building programs for data systems, CRM platforms and digital audience development tools for the sector.
9. Recognise that younger audiences increasingly engage with culture through digital platforms, social media and interactive online experiences, and that policy settings must evolve accordingly. Implementation could include:

- Supporting digital-first audience strategies, including content creation, platform engagement and youth-led digital cultural initiatives.
10. Support innovative audience engagement models including behind-the-scenes storytelling, artist access, interactive digital content and interactive experiences for schools and community. Implementation could include:
- Funding experimental engagement programs that prioritise participatory, immersive and artist-led audience experiences across platforms.
11. Invest in subsidised youth ticketing, school transport support and regional access initiatives to remove economic and geographic barriers to cultural participation. Implementation could include:
- Expanding access schemes, transport subsidies and regional touring support to ensure equitable attendance at live arts experiences.
12. Commit to accessibility measures including Auslan interpretation, captioning, sensory-friendly performances, multilingual resources and audio description so all Australians can access arts experiences equitably. Implementation could include:
- Embedding mandatory accessibility requirements and dedicated funding streams for inclusive audience access services across funded arts organisations.
13. Recognise the role of dance and the arts in improving mental health, reducing social isolation and strengthening community wellbeing across all demographics. Implementation could include:
- Integrating arts participation into health, education and community wellbeing programs with formal cross-sector referral and partnership pathways.
14. Expand evaluation frameworks to capture the broader social, educational, wellbeing and community impacts of cultural engagement, not solely attendance numbers. Implementation could include:
- Updating national cultural reporting frameworks to include wellbeing, physical health, learning, participation and social cohesion outcomes alongside traditional metrics.
15. Position lifelong cultural engagement as essential national social infrastructure that strengthens empathy, creativity, resilience and social cohesion across Australian communities. Implementation could include:
- Embedding lifelong cultural participation goals into national cultural policy, education strategy and social infrastructure planning.

In closing, Ausdance Queensland respectfully urges the Australian Government to recognise dance and the arts not as peripheral activity, but as essential national cultural, educational and social infrastructure. Through this submission, we advocate for a future-focused National Cultural Policy that strengthens equitable participation, workforce sustainability, cultural safety, regional access, arts education and long-term sector capability across Australia.

We believe the arts play a critical role in shaping connected, creative and resilient communities, and that meaningful investment in participation, education, safeguarding, artists and cultural infrastructure is fundamental to Australia's cultural future. We strongly encourage policy settings that move beyond short-term investment models and attendance metrics to recognise the broader social, educational, wellbeing and economic contributions of arts and cultural engagement across all communities.

Ausdance QLD sincerely thanks the Australian Government and the Department for the Arts for the opportunity to contribute to this important consultation process. We appreciate the time and consideration being given to the perspectives and recommendations shared by the sector and welcome ongoing dialogue as the future of Australia's cultural landscape continues to evolve.

Yours sincerely,

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