

Submission to the Review of the National Cultural Policy, *Revive* (2023)

Submitted by: Dr Katrina Rank PhD

Independent artist, choreographer, educator and community arts leader

██████████, Victoria

Professional Background

I am an independent ██████████-based choreographer, performer, community dance artist and producer with over three decades of experience creating contemporary performance in public spaces and theatres, in professional and community contexts.

In 2013, I founded Fine Lines Dance, a mature dance collective comprised of former professional and paraprofessional dancers. I established the company to support dancers to continue meaningful engagement with dance into later life in ways that honour both their professional histories and present aspirations. Through weekly classes, creative development and performance opportunities, Fine Lines Dance provides artistic visibility, technical training and creative expression within an art form that remains largely youth-centric.

As Founder and Director of Fine Lines Dance, I have developed inclusive models of participation that remove barriers to dance engagement. This work has expanded to include programs for people living with neurological conditions, residents in aged care settings, multicultural communities, and participants across metropolitan and regional Victoria.

Alongside this work, I maintain an active solo creative practice that informs and enriches my teaching and facilitation. My recent solo work *Creature* (Melbourne Fringe, 2025) received the Melbourne Fringe Award for Sound and Technical Excellence and was nominated for a 2026 Green Room Award for Outstanding Costume Design.

I have also held significant sector leadership roles, including Director of Education and Lifelong Learning at Ausdance Victoria (2008–2024) and Academic Leader at the National Institute of Circus Arts. These positions involved large-scale program design, partnership development, education leadership and project delivery. Programs I developed reached tens of thousands of participants nationally, including:

- *The Alice Project* with VicHealth, engaging over 15,000 participants;
- *Blue Sky Dance* and *Activate*, developed in partnership with the Victorian Department of Education, which connected more than 15,000 Victorian primary schools with dance workshops and educational resources.

The following recognitions demonstrate my longstanding contribution to the sector:

- 2007 Caroline Plummer Community Fellowship (New Zealand)
- 2018 Australian Dance Award for Services to Dance Education
- 2020 Australian Dance Award for Outstanding Achievement in Community Dance

Achievements Since 2023

Recent initiatives and partnerships demonstrating the impact and relevance of this work include:

- A partnership between Fine Lines Dance and Multicultural Services Australia delivering an arts and wellbeing program supporting the resilience and mental health of 30 mature dancers. The resulting performance season at Dancehouse (Carlton, VIC) sold out and reached hundreds of new and returning audience members (2025).
- A partnership with The Australian Ballet to pilot *The Beaut Ballet Series*, a program designed for people living with neurological conditions. The initiative demystified ballet while fostering deep engagement with contemporary choreographic practice through studio rehearsals, performances and discussion (2023 and 2025).
- Development of *The Classic Series* with The Australian Ballet for 2026, introducing participants to the classical repertoire while also offering more technically advanced training pathways. All series have sold out.
- Appointment as Board Member, Dance for Parkinson's Australia (2025–26).

How the Pillars of Revive Matter to My Practice

A Place for Every Story

Culture strengthens social connection, mental health and civic participation. Participation in arts and culture fosters belonging, resilience and community cohesion.

Challenge 1

Access to arts participation remains deeply unequal, particularly for regional, disadvantaged and marginalised communities.

Opportunity 1

Invest in long-term, inclusive community arts programs — not just short-term projects — that support storytelling, identity, participation and social connection.

Challenge 2

Access to high-quality arts experiences is often limited by financial barriers, forcing artists to subsidise participation themselves.

Opportunities

- Invest in ongoing arts and wellbeing programs to ensure equitable access to high-quality dance experiences and interventions.
- Introduce a national cultural engagement voucher scheme to support participation across the lifespan.
- Develop artist-in-community residency programs funded collaboratively across government portfolios, including health, ageing, education and social services.

How This Relates to My Practice

Much of my work occurs at the intersection of arts and health, supporting participants experiencing financial hardship, isolation and poor physical and mental health. What most effectively supports resilience and participation is access to high-quality, ongoing programs delivered by skilled, experienced facilitators.

This work must be recognised as professional practice and remunerated appropriately. Sustainable investment in artists and facilitators would strengthen sector confidence, improve workforce retention and ensure equitable access to meaningful cultural participation.

Centrality of the Artist

Challenge 1

Mature artists remain under-recognised despite their significant contributions as creators, mentors and cultural leaders.

Opportunity 1

Establish national initiatives that support lifelong engagement in dance and the arts as artists age.

A voucher model similar to Victoria's *Get Active Kids Voucher Program* could significantly improve access to programs that support physical wellbeing, artistic practice, visibility, representation and social inclusion.

Challenge 2

Current funding systems disadvantage independent artists who are not incorporated entities, charities or not-for-profits.

The administrative burden associated with establishing and maintaining these structures is substantial and often inappropriate for independent practitioners and artist-led collectives.

Opportunity 2

Recognise and adequately resource arts auspicing organisations, such as Auspicious Arts Projects, which provide essential administrative, financial and governance support to independent artists.

How This Relates to My Practice

I regularly subsidise participation by offering services at low or no cost to ensure accessibility for participants experiencing financial hardship. This is not financially sustainable.

Voucher schemes and participation subsidies would support access while preserving dignity and choice for participants.

Similarly, arts auspicing services are essential infrastructure for independent practitioners. These organisations provide expertise in governance, compliance, grant administration, financial management and risk management, enabling artists to focus on creative and community outcomes.

Strong Cultural Infrastructure

Challenge

Rising costs are threatening the sustainability of dance practice and community participation.

Affordable, safe and appropriately designed dance spaces are increasingly difficult to access. Dance requires specialised infrastructure, including sprung floors, non-slip surfaces, hygienic environments and adequate spatial dimensions to ensure participant safety.

Many community halls are unsuitable for dance practice due to flooring, overcrowding and safety limitations. Meanwhile, commercial dance studios often remain underutilised during daytime hours but are financially inaccessible to independent artists and facilitators.

Opportunity

Develop targeted subsidy programs that improve access to existing dance infrastructure and underutilised commercial studios.

This could include partnerships with commercial studio providers, with government subsidising a proportion of studio hire costs for independent artists and community facilitators.

Investing in creative neighbourhoods and dedicated movement spaces would significantly strengthen the sustainability, accessibility and safety of dance practice nationally.

How This Relates to My Practice

Access to affordable and safe dance spaces is one of the greatest challenges facing dance artists across Australia.

Reducing this financial burden would enable artists to maintain affordable participation fees, increase community access and support ongoing artistic development. Investment in dedicated dance infrastructure would strengthen both cultural participation and workforce sustainability.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Invest in long-term, inclusive community arts programs that support participation, wellbeing and social connection.

This should include:

- sustained funding for arts and wellbeing initiatives;
 - equitable access to high-quality dance and movement programs;
 - a national cultural engagement voucher scheme;
 - artist-in-community residency programs funded across government portfolios.
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Recommendation 2

Establish national initiatives that support lifelong engagement in dance and the arts.

This should include:

- participation vouchers for older adults;
 - support for programs promoting artistic development, visibility, representation and wellbeing for mature artists.
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Recommendation 3

Recognise and strengthen the infrastructure supporting independent artists.

This should include:

- increased support for arts auspicing organisations;
 - investment in services that reduce administrative barriers for independent practitioners and collectives.
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Recommendation 4

Improve access to safe, affordable and appropriate dance infrastructure.

This should include:

- investment in creative neighbourhoods and dedicated movement spaces;
 - partnerships with commercial dance studios;
 - subsidised studio hire programs for independent artists and facilitators.
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Conclusion

The greatest opportunity within *Revive* is to recognise cultural participation not as a luxury, but as essential social infrastructure. Sustained investment in artists, accessible participation pathways and appropriate creative spaces would strengthen community wellbeing, cultural inclusion and artistic innovation across Australia for generations to come.

Dr Katrina Rank PhD

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[Katrina Rank](#)

Founder and Director, [Fine Lines Dance](#)

PhD, B.Ed, B.Lit (Hons), Australian Ballet School Graduate

Certified Dance for Parkinson's Teaching Artist

2020 Australian Dance Award — Outstanding Achievement in Community Dance

2018 Australian Dance Award — Services to Dance Education