

**National Cultural Policy Submission**

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Public and anonymous



Short submission (text box 500 words or less)

Centrality of the Artist and Australian students having the opportunity to receive an education that includes culture, creativity, humanities and the arts is my greatest concern in the current climate particularly in Queensland, for two key factors, the recently introduced hate speech laws and ATAR's current scaling here is effectively destroying arts education and the future of the arts in Queensland. It needs urgent attention if this pillar in the policy is to be upheld. How can CA also advocate for reversing the Job Ready Graduates scheme when ATAR scaling is already cutting creative industries tertiary enrolments and directly driving the closures, reviews and restructures that have already happened at in disciplines like Dance? You now have to travel interstate to study dance at a tertiary level.

Creative Arts enrolments in Queensland have sharply declined over the past decade, driven not by reduced student interest but by the unintended consequences of QTAC's intersubject ATAR scaling methodology. In 2017, 10,274 Queensland students studied Drama in Years 11 and 12; by 2021 this had fallen to 6,431—a loss of more than 3,500 students in four years. Because scaled ATAR outcomes disadvantage arts subjects, students are being advised as early as Year 9 to avoid them, framing arts study as a risk to tertiary entry.

The downward trend has continued. Between 2021 and 2024, the number of schools offering Drama dropped from 303 to 279. Year 12 Drama completions fell from 3,131 in 2021 to 2,439 in 2023, with only a minor recovery to 2,470 in 2024—a net loss of 21% over three years. Although official reporting highlights a marginal year on year increase, overall enrolments remain far below previous levels, and Drama continues to be cut from school timetables.

The effects cascade through the system. Low senior enrolments lead schools to merge classes, reduce curriculum depth, assign nonspecialist teachers, or discontinue arts subjects altogether, often flowing down into Years 7–10. This diminishes educational quality, discourages uptake, and entrenches a negative feedback loop. Universities are now experiencing falling enrolments in creative arts degrees, prompting course pauses, restructures, and closures, while students are pushed toward expensive private training options. At the same time, government cultural policy identifies critical creative workforce shortages, exposing a contradiction between arts investment and a weakened education pipeline.

To arrest further damage, my submission calls for: an immediate independent review of QTAC's scaling methodology (with arts and equity representation); full public transparency of the scaling formula; alignment with NSW and Victorian practice; a moratorium on further cuts to school and university arts programs during the review; and direct ministerial engagement with sector bodies that have raised these concerns since 2022 without substantive response.