

Submission  
No 33

**INQUIRY INTO ARTS AND MUSIC EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

**Organisation:** Creative Australia

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## Music and arts education in NSW

### Creative Australia submission

25 July 2024

Creative Australia, the Australian Government's principal arts investment and advisory body, welcomes the Joint Select Committee's inquiry into music and arts education and training in New South Wales.

A key principle of the Australian Government's National Cultural Policy, *Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place*, is 'Australian students have the opportunity to receive an education that includes culture, creativity, humanities and the arts'.

Creative Australia is committed to fostering Australia's next generation of creative minds and talent. Our strategic investments, research, policy and advocacy endeavours seek to broaden access to arts and culture and connect all young Australians with creativity.

This submission provides research and insights on the value, benefits and impacts of nurturing creativity in schools, particularly through improved utilisation of skills inherent in the creative workforce. It also details research and initiatives underway at Creative Australia and Music Australia, the new body dedicated to contemporary music.

Creative Australia looks forward to reading the Committee's final report in late 2024. We are certain the findings will help inform arts education policy and initiatives at a federal level, ensuring a whole-of-government approach to creative learning and development.

### Main points:

- Government investment in music and arts education plays a critical role in preparing the next generation for their personal and professional futures, and in building a resilient, productive and cohesive Australia.
- Creative engagement generates powerful outcomes across our lives – from early child development into adulthood – equipping us with innovative thinking, problem-solving and experimental ideas, and enabling adaptability.
- Creative programs delivered in partnership with the artistic workforce are valuable tools for teachers across the curriculum and for improving academic and social outcomes for students.
- Upcoming Creative Australia research will help inform creative workforce needs.
- Music Australia will be well placed in the future to work with the NSW Government on strategic initiatives to support music education outcomes.

## Creative engagement generates powerful outcomes across our lives

- **Our arts and cultures are a vital expression of the human experience, and cultural and creative engagement underpins a cohesive, resilient and productive society.** Engaging with arts and creativity generates powerful outcomes across our lives – helping to build skills and confidence that benefit Australians across a range of social, academic and work settings.
- **Creativity equips us with innovative thinking, problem-solving and experimental ideas, and enabling adaptability** to changing industrial, social and environmental conditions, helping us to address digitisation, climate change and an ageing population. Creativity is key to the 21st century professional skillset and research repeatedly identifies creative skills as essential for future work environments.<sup>1</sup> Currently, creative skills are embedded across the workforce in a range of sectors<sup>2</sup> – in health, education, digital innovation – and will play an ever more important role in future adaption and transformation.
- **Schools play an integral role in imparting creative knowledge and skills to young Australians and establishing the foundations for lifelong engagement.** A UK study found encountering arts activities at school, such as learning an instrument, attending an art class or acting in a school play, makes a child much more likely to participate in arts as an adult.<sup>3</sup>
- **Government investment in music and arts education plays a critical role in preparing Australians for their personal and professional futures.**
  - **There is strong support for public funding for the arts for educational outcomes.** The second top funding priority among Australians ‘is ensuring young people have access to art and creative experiences to support their learning and development’ (65%).<sup>4</sup>
    - Parents with children under 16 place particular importance on art education for young people, with three quarters choosing ‘ensuring children and young people have access to art and creative experiences to support learning and development’ in their top three funding priorities (74%).<sup>5</sup>
  - **There is strong support from Australians for arts in education,** with three quarters of Australians agreeing arts and creativity should be an important part of education (74%).<sup>6</sup>

## Creative programs delivered in partnership with the artistic workforce are valuable tools for teachers and for improving outcomes for students

- **Creative programs are a valuable tool for teachers in all areas of the curriculum,** improving staff motivation and strengthening a sense of connection with the school community.
  - Sydney Opera House’s Creative Leadership in Learning program embeds creativity in schools through an artist in residency program and a teacher professional learning program.<sup>7</sup> Evaluation of the 2020 program demonstrated positive impacts of creative engagement for teachers – supporting risk taking, and an enhanced sense of trust within the classroom.<sup>8</sup>

- **There is ample evidence of the positive impact of creativity on the comprehensive development of a child and in supporting learning across the curriculum, including in literacy and numeracy.**
  - Research shows that students who are involved in the arts are more motivated at school and engaged in class, and have high self-esteem and life satisfaction.<sup>9</sup>
  - Music and arts education has a proven positive impact on literacy and numeracy outcomes for students. Research shows that arts-engaged strategies can be used to improve student literacy and engagement.<sup>10</sup> Research also shows integrating the arts into other subjects, such as science, maths and languages, has a demonstrated impact on the academic success of students and supports critical thinking and problem solving.<sup>11</sup>
  - Evaluation of Sydney Opera House’s Creative Leadership in Learning program demonstrated significantly positive impacts for students – helping students develop personal, social and cognitive skills that can transfer to a wide range of academic and social situations and improve performance in their future careers.<sup>12</sup>
- **Creative-based pedagogies are particularly valuable for ‘at risk’ students,** since they increase self-esteem, improve communication skills, provide a sense of achievement and wellbeing and increase feelings of connection to teachers and the community.
  - ACO Foundations, an in-school music learning program for children in low socio-economic status schools, has demonstrated the potential of music to have a profound impact on education and performance in low-socio-economic schools.<sup>13</sup>
  - The Artist in Residence (AiR) schools’ initiative delivered in partnership between the federal and state and territory governments from 2008–16 provided unique arts engagement and participation for children and young people within their learning environments, including in early childhood, juvenile detention and tertiary education. Evaluation of AiR highlights the importance of a range of artist in residency in schools models to child development.
- **Our creative workforce is an invaluable resource to drive powerful outcomes for our education sector.** There is a wealth of professional artistic expertise on which the education sector can capitalise, with 71% of Australian professional practicing artists engaged in paid work in art teaching/training.<sup>14</sup>

### Upcoming Creative Australia research will help inform creative workforce needs

- **Creative Australia has a long-term commitment to championing and investing in arts and culture to benefit all Australians.** Our strategic investments, research, policy and advocacy endeavours seek to broaden access to arts and culture and connect young Australians with creativity.
- **Creative Australia is currently undertaking key research work to understand the current workforce issues across the cultural and creative industries.**
  - *Revive* includes an action to undertake a scoping study to understand current and emerging workforce challenges and skills needs for cultural and creative workers,

and inform the development of industry-driven solutions by the Arts, Personal Services, Retail, Tourism and Hospitality Jobs and Skills Council (Service and Creative Skills Australia [SaCSA]). In addition to informing the development of industry-driven solutions and workforce plans by SACSA, it will also form a critical part of Creative Australia’s evidence base on the skills and workforce needs for the cultural and creative industries. This is expected to be completed in late 2024 and will inform future strategic initiatives and investment in this space.

- **In addition, Creative Australia is working with the Australian Government’s *Creative Industries Youth Advisory Group***, which began in March 2024, to support youth-led solutions to renewing and reviving Australia’s arts, entertainment and cultural sector.

**Music Australia will be well placed in the future to work with the NSW Government on strategic initiatives to support music education outcomes**

- **Music Australia was established under the Australian Government’s National Cultural Policy, *Revive***, and launched in 2023 as a dedicated new body within Creative Australia to support and invest in the Australian contemporary music industry.
- **Music Australia will receive \$69.4 million over four years to stimulate a vibrant and sustainable contemporary Australian music industry** in which artists can thrive through a suite of strategic activity. The work of Music Australia is guided by the expertise of the Music Australia Council. Music Australia’s remit includes the broad ecosystem of contemporary music, from creation and recording to live performance and market development.
- **Specific to this inquiry, *Revive* establishes Music Australia with explicit remit to:**
  - develop new co-investment agreements with states, territories and industry to deliver national sector-wide priorities
  - deliver song writing and recording initiatives in schools.
- **Music Australia plans to convene sessions with the music education sector over the coming years to establish strategic direction, form relationships and where appropriate develop co-investment models with states and territories.** Part of this important work will be developing approaches that better connect music and education to drive outcomes for all Australians. This will include specific focus on ways Music Australia’s investment and strategic work can work to foster a generation of quality songwriters, as well as talented instrumentalists, performers and music loving and valuing audience members.

## About Creative Australia

Creative Australia is the Australian Government's principal arts investment and advisory body.

In line with the functions set out in our establishing legislation, the *Creative Australia Act 2023*, and guided by the vision, pillars, and actions set out in the Australian Government's National Cultural Policy, *Revive*, Creative Australia champions arts and culture for all Australians.

With artists at the heart of what we do, Creative Australia invests in creative talent and stimulates the market for Australian stories to be told on a national and international scale, sharing our rich culture with the world. Our strategic activity includes multi-year investment, grants, targeted initiatives and research and advocacy to support, strengthen and sustain the arts and cultural sector for all audiences to benefit.

## Endnotes

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- <sup>1</sup> World Economic Forum 2016, [New Vision for Education: Fostering Social and Emotional Learning through Technology](#). Easton E and Djumalieva J 2018, [Creativity and the Future of Skills](#). Cunningham S, Theilacker M, Gahan P, Callan V and Rannie A 2016, [Skills and Capabilities for Australian Enterprise Innovation](#).
- <sup>2</sup> NESTA 2018, [Creativity and the Future of Skills](#). Creative Australia 2024, [Artists as Workers: An economic study of professional artists in Australia](#). World Economic Forum 2016, [The Future of Jobs: Employment, skills and workforce strategy for the fourth industrial revolution](#).
- <sup>3</sup> Oskala A et al 2009, [Encourage children today to build audiences for tomorrow: Evidence from the Taking Part survey on how childhood involvement in the arts affects arts engagement in adulthood](#), Arts Council England.
- <sup>4</sup> Creative Australia 2023, [Creating Value: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey](#).
- <sup>5</sup> As above.
- <sup>6</sup> As above.
- <sup>7</sup> See Sydney Opera House, [Creative Leadership in Learning](#).
- <sup>8</sup> Australia Council 2020, [Cultivating Creativity: A study of the Sydney Opera House's Creative Leadership in Learning program in schools](#).
- <sup>9</sup> Martin A et al 2013, 'The Role of Arts Participation in Students' Academic and Nonacademic Outcomes: A longitudinal study of school, home, and community factors', [Journal of Educational Psychology](#) 105:3.
- <sup>10</sup> Sydney Theatre Company, [School Drama](#), viewed 24 June 2024. See also Australia Council 2020, [Cultivating Creativity: A study of the Sydney Opera House's Creative Leadership in Learning program in schools](#).
- <sup>11</sup> Cape Chicago, [Research Overview](#). See also Australia Council 2020, [Cultivating Creativity: A study of the Sydney Opera House's Creative Leadership in Learning program in schools](#).
- <sup>12</sup> Australia Council 2020, [Cultivating Creativity: A study of the Sydney Opera House's Creative Leadership in Learning program in schools](#).
- <sup>13</sup> See ACO Foundations program - [ACO Foundations - Australian Chamber Orchestra](#).
- <sup>14</sup> Thorsby D and Petetskaya K 2024, [Artists as Workers: An economic study of professional artists in Australia](#), Macquarie University and Creative Australia.