

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

Organisation: Come You Spirits, The Garden and Short and Sweet

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Submission to the Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales

Introduction

This submission is presented by three organizations – Short+Sweet Festivals, Come you Spirits and Turner Theatre – each with a powerful commitment to improving arts education in NSW.

Together, we aim to help transform the landscape of performing arts education, nurturing not only better, brighter and healthier artists but also training students from primary to tertiary levels in the performing arts and to connect them with work and career opportunities in Australia and elsewhere.

Our shared belief is that exposure to and participation in the performing arts will cultivate well-rounded, empathetic, and capable individuals, no matter their future careers. Here's our plan of activities commencing February 2025.

Key Activities and Programs

- 1. Curriculum Shakespeare Performances:**
 - For High School Students at The Garden (TAFE NSW Ultimo Campus).
- 2. Touring Company Performances:**
 - Offering performances for High School students at various TAFE NSW campuses across NSW.
- 3. Workshops and Activities:**
 - Providing a comprehensive set of workshops and other activities around the performances.
- 4. S+S Shakespeare Reboot:**
 - Scheduled for March 2025 as part of the Short+Sweet Festival at Turner Theatre (TAFE NSW Ultimo Campus)
- 5. First Nations Artists Integration:**
 - Incorporating First Nations artists throughout all shows and training.
- 6. Internships and Work Experience:**
 - Offering internships, work experience, and other work-integrated learning opportunities for High School and TAFE students in every show and project.

Background: Shakespeare remains important to contemporary Australian students because his works explore timeless human themes such as love, ambition, jealousy, and betrayal, which continue to resonate today. His complex characters and intricate plots provide rich material for developing critical thinking and analytical skills. Furthermore,

studying Shakespeare offers students a deeper understanding of the English language, as many modern expressions and idioms originate from his texts.

For Australian students and emerging artists, Shakespeare's works also serve as a powerful tool for exploring cultural and historical contexts, fostering a global perspective. By engaging with his plays, students can draw parallels between Elizabethan society and contemporary issues, promoting empathy and social awareness. Additionally, the adaptability of Shakespeare's works allows for creative reinterpretations that can incorporate diverse cultural perspectives, including those of First Nations Australians, making his stories relevant and accessible to a modern audience.

Incorporating Shakespeare Reboot as part of the annual Short+Sweet Festival and into other locations around NSW as part of the touring company not only enriches students' literary education but also provides opportunities for them to express themselves creatively, whether through acting, directing, or writing. This direct engagement with the performing arts helps students build confidence, teamwork skills, and a lifelong appreciation for theatre and literature.

The Partners: Short+Sweet (S+S) is the world's premier platform for short-form theatre, established in King Street, Newtown, more than two decades ago. It has since expanded globally, presenting annual festivals in countries such as the USA, England, United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, South Africa, India, and Malaysia. S+S offers a universal stage for diverse linguistic expression, showcasing theatre, dance, film, music, cabaret, and comedy. With approximately 15,000 new short works and 100,000 artists showcased, S+S stands as a testament to the power of brief, impactful storytelling.

Come you Spirits is an acclaimed touring troupe of award-winning actors performing a repertoire of adapted Shakespeare plays in magnificent outdoor and indoor spaces. As one of Australia's best-known Shakespearean touring companies it will present high quality professional performances of Shakespeare works in line with curriculum to high school students as well as a range of courses and experiences.

Turner Theatre and the **Garden** are two venues right in the heart of Sydney and part of the TAFE NSW Ultimo Precinct. In 2024 Short+Sweet presented around 80 new works of theatre involving around 300 local writers, actors and directors. In September 2024 the Sydney Fringe Festival are using Turner Theatre as home base for New Musicals and Dance performances as part of the festival.

S+S Shakespeare Reboot is a dynamic festival program managed and curated by Come you Spirits that is dedicated to reimagining Shakespeare's works through short-form adaptations and reinterpretations. Included in the Short+Sweet 2025 program and open to students, writers, directors, and performers, it encourages the creation of 10-minute pieces inspired by Shakespeare. The program features modern retellings, genre shifts, cultural reinterpretations, and mash-ups, promoting multi-lingual and culturally diverse

adaptations. The S+S Reboot aims to engage traditional theatre-goers and new audiences, providing an accessible entry point to the works of Shakespeare. It offers unique opportunities for artists to innovate with classical texts and for students to link literature studies with creative writing and performance.

Proposal: Enhancing Performing Arts Education through Curriculum Performances, Educational Programs and Shakespeare Reboot

Objective: Leverage the S+S Shakespeare collaboration with Come you Spirits and Turner Theatre to enhance performing arts education for students in NSW, while offering a range of work-integrated learning and professional development opportunities. The extensive touring program includes performances on TAFE NSW campuses around the state.

Key Features and Corresponding Points in the Enquiry

1. Innovative Education Programs (Enquiry Points a.i, a.ii, a.iv, a.vi):

- **Program Overview:**
 - Immersive professional level Shakespeare performances for High School Students at Turner Theatre on TAFE NSW Ultimo campus.
 - Integrates First Nations artistry, showcasing diverse cultural perspectives.
 - Provides educational workshops on Shakespeare, Elizabethan history, and theatre.
 - Professional Learning for high school class room teachers
- **Educational Benefits:**
 - Supports advanced literacy, critical thinking, and analytical skills.
 - Aligns with English, Drama, and Media Arts curricula, enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes.
 - Opportunity for TAFE NSW to connect directly with High School students about courses and facilities.
- **Relevance to Enquiry:**
 - Addresses the quality and effectiveness of arts education by introducing innovative teaching methods and content (a.i, a.ii).
 - Demonstrates the role of arts organisations in developing creative skills and supporting educational objectives (a.iv, a.vi).

2. Work-Integrated Learning (Enquiry Points a.v, a.vii, a.viii):

- **Program Overview:**
 - Provides TAFE NSW and High School students with hands-on experience through roles in event management, technical production, and marketing.
 - Involves students in the creative process, from script adaptation to performance.

- **Educational Benefits:**
 - Enhances practical skills and industry knowledge.
 - Offers real-world applications of classroom learning.
 - **Relevance to Enquiry:**
 - Demonstrates the efficacy of integrating work-integrated learning opportunities into the curriculum (a.v).
 - Ensures inclusive resource allocation for regional schools by involving students from diverse backgrounds (a.vii).
 - Coordinates with the education system to support the development of creative skills (a.viii).
- 3. Professional Development (Enquiry Points a.iii, a.iv, a.vi):**
- **Program Overview:**
 - Conducts training workshops for teachers on teaching Shakespeare and playwriting.
 - Collaborates with professional playwrights and theatre companies for educational content.
 - **Educational Benefits:**
 - Enhances teacher effectiveness and confidence in delivering arts education.
 - Provides continuous professional development opportunities.
 - **Relevance to Enquiry:**
 - Supports robust and evidence-based arts education in initial teacher education courses (a.iii).
 - Emphasizes the role of arts organisations in education and professional development (a.iv).
 - Improves the quality of the primary and secondary school curriculum in delivering arts education (a.vi).
- 4. Community Engagement (Enquiry Points a.iv, a.vi, a.viii):**
- **Program Overview:**
 - Come you Spirits community engagement builds on existing collaborations with First Nations artists and elders with professional theatre makers to create new work inspired by First Nations stories and Shakespeare.
 - Ongoing collaborations with First Nations elders and artists throughout all shows and training.
 - Performance opportunities for students from ages 7 – 18.
 - Events and festivals designed alongside local community committees.
 - Encourage discussions on the interpretation and relevance of Shakespeare in a modern context.
 - **Educational Benefits:**
 - Strengthens community ties and cultural awareness.

- Comprehensive set of workshops for students from ages 7 – 18 designed around performances.
 - Promotes inclusivity and diversity in arts education.
 - **Relevance to Enquiry:**
 - Highlights the role of arts organisations in fostering community engagement and cultural diversity (a.iv).
 - Ensures inclusive arts education that respects and integrates First Nations perspectives (a.vi, a.viii).
- 5. Entrepreneurial Skills and Industry Experience (Enquiry Points a.ix, a.x):**
- **Program Overview:**
 - Provides students with opportunities to learn entrepreneurial skills through festival organization and management.
 - Facilitates industry connections by partnering with local theatres and media production companies.
 - Organizes public performances and potential online showcases to enhance real-world experience.
 - Build connections with like-minded artists and students internationally through the extensive Short+Sweet networks.
 - **Educational Benefits:**
 - Prepares students for careers in the arts by developing entrepreneurial and industry-specific skills.
 - Increases job readiness and practical experience.
 - **Relevance to Enquiry:**
 - Supports the development of entrepreneurial skills and industry experience for job readiness (a.ix).
 - Addresses factors influencing student decisions to pursue further arts education, such as course relevance and practical application (a.x).

Practical Steps and Scheduled Activities

Thanks to a partnership between Short+Sweet, Turner Theatre, and Come you Spirits, we have already committed to and scheduled several practical steps to enhance arts education:

1. Curriculum Shakespeare Performances for High School Students at The Garden (TAFE NSW Ultimo Campus):
 - Delivering curriculum-based performances tailored for high school students.
 - Relevance to Enquiry: a.i, a.ii, a.iv, a.vi
2. Touring Company Performances for High School Students at Other TAFE NSW Campuses Across NSW:
 - Expanding the reach of Shakespeare performances to students throughout the state.

- Relevance to Enquiry: a.v, a.vii, a.viii
- 3. Workshops and Activities Around Performances:
 - Provide comprehensive workshops to complement the performances.
 - Relevance to Enquiry: a.i, a.ii, a.iv, a.vi
- 4. S+S Shakespeare Reboot in March 2025 as Part of the S+S Festival at Turner Theatre (TAFE NSW Ultimo Campus):
 - Launching the Reboot program during the festival to showcase innovative adaptations of Shakespeare’s works.
 - Relevance to Enquiry: a.i, a.ii, a.iv, a.vi
- 5. Integration of First Nations Artists Throughout These Activities:
 - Ensuring representation and inclusion of First Nations perspectives in all aspects of the program.
 - Relevance to Enquiry: a.iv, a.vi, a.viii
- 6. Internships, Work Experience, and Other Work-Integrated Learning Opportunities for High School and TAFE Students:
 - Offering hands-on learning experiences for students in every show and project, bridging the gap between education and industry.
 - Relevance to Enquiry: a.v, a.vii, a.viii

Support Needed from Government

To ensure these initiatives are repeatable and effective, we need the following support from the government:

- 1. Engagement and Dialogue:**
 - Facilitate ongoing conversations with appropriate government departments and persons to align objectives and resources.
 - Relevance to Enquiry: a.iv, a.vi, a.viii
- 2. Funding and Resources:**
 - Initial financial support for the development and implementation of performances, workshops, and educational programs.
 - Relevance to Enquiry: a.v, a.vii, a.viii
- 3. Policy and Curriculum Integration:**
 - Support the inclusion of these innovative programs in the formal education curriculum.
 - Ensure policies that encourage and facilitate partnerships between educational institutions and arts organizations.
 - Relevance to Enquiry: a.iv, a.vi, a.viii
- 4. Professional Development and Training:**
 - Support professional development programs for teachers to equip them with skills to teach Shakespeare using modern methods.
 - Support workshops and training sessions for educators and students.
 - Relevance to Enquiry: a.iii, a.iv, a.vi
- 5. Infrastructure and Facilities:**

- Use existing facilities and technological infrastructure to enhance performances, workshops, and other programs.
- Ensure regional and remote schools benefit from similar high-quality experiences as capital city schools and colleges.
- Relevance to Enquiry: a.v, a.vii, a.viii

Conclusion

The Short+Sweet Shakespeare collaboration with Come you Spirits and the Short+Sweet Shakespeare Reboot presents a unique opportunity to revolutionize arts education in NSW.

By integrating innovative short-form theatre, cultural diversity, practical learning experiences, we aim to make Shakespeare accessible, relevant, and exciting for contemporary students. This initiative will not only enhance educational outcomes but also prepare students for successful careers in the creative industries.

We look forward to the Committee's consideration of our proposal and are eager to discuss the potential for implementing these initiatives to benefit students, educators, and the broader community in New South Wales.

Summary

- Key Activities and Programs: a.i, a.ii, a.iv, a.v, a.vi, a.vii, a.viii, a.ix, a.x
- Innovative Education Programs: a.i, a.ii, a.iv, a.vi
- Work-Integrated Learning: a.v, a.vii, a.viii
- Professional Development: a.iii, a.iv, a.vi
- Community Engagement: a.iv, a.vi, a.viii
- Entrepreneurial Skills and Industry Experience: a.ix, a.x
- Practical Steps and Scheduled Activities: a.i, a.ii, a.iv, a.v, a.vi, a.vii, a.viii
- Support Needed from Government: a.iii, a.iv, a.v, a.vi, a.vii, a.viii, a.ix, a.x