



11 May 2022

Drama Australia Statement on Drama Education and the 2022 Federal Election

Drama Australia is the national association for Drama Education representing Drama educators across Australia. Drama Australia provides quality and research-informed professional learning to Drama educators and practitioners. The association is a volunteer, not-for-profit professional teaching association, that represents, supports, and advocates on behalf of all Drama educators in early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, and community contexts.

Drama is both a discreet subject within The Arts learning area, but also a unique pedagogical approach which can be incorporated across other curriculum areas.

Drama is a curriculum area that humanises learning, it is a mode of learning that challenges and supports students to make meaning of their world and enables them to express and communicate ideas in the artform. Drama fosters artistic and aesthetic knowledge and skills and is relevant to those considering a career in The Arts. However, Drama also builds and fosters a valuable range of transferable skills, including creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills; communicating ideas and information; collaboration, group negotiating and decision-making skills; skills in working as a team and independently; intercultural understanding, and so much more. A substantial amount of Australian and international research also demonstrates the positive impact Drama Education can have on improving student literacy and wellbeing.

We, therefore, advocate for all political parties and politicians to acknowledge the powerful and unique role Drama Education plays in the lives and education of young people.

Drama Australia advocates to all political parties to:

- acknowledge the value and contribution of Drama Education and Arts Education, particularly the significant positive impact Drama Education can have on increasing student literacies, creativity, and wellbeing.
- increase federal funding in Drama Education professional learning programs for early childhood and primary teachers (through both Initial Teacher Education and professional learning) to ensure teachers have a strong understanding of teaching Drama.
- create and support Drama Education professional learning programs, particularly through a national teaching artist fund available to existing and future programs administered by the Australia Council for The Arts.
- increase federal funding for Arts organisations that provide quality education and engagement programs for students.

- provide funding for programs such as Creative Communities Partnerships (former Australia Council program) and Artist-in-Residence programs for schools and communities, particularly First Nations artists, to improve teacher professional learning in the arts by strengthening and sustaining arts pedagogies with creative impacts for learners.
- expand the National Music Teacher Mentoring Program (established in 2015 and delivered through the Australian Youth Orchestra) to include Drama, Dance, Media Arts and Visual Arts education in primary schools.
- subsidise early childhood, primary and secondary students access to cultural experiences, particularly viewing live theatre.

Drama Australia also recommends that all political parties commit to the stipulation of:

- The Arts (as in the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* – including the five subjects: Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music, and Visual Arts) be recognised as an area of primary specialisation for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) program accreditation (Program Standard 4.4) in all States and Territories, and that all primary teachers receive increased training in at least one arts subject with an understanding of all five through ITE.
- A shift of focus from STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, **Arts** and Maths) to foster STEAM creativity and innovation.
- Provide federal funding for the National Advocates for Arts Education’s proposed Review of The Arts in Australian Schools, to investigate the current state of Arts Education in Australia.

Drama Australia recommends all political parties consider and endorse the above-mentioned policy statements regarding Drama and Arts Education to ensure all young Australians have access to high quality Drama and Arts learning.

Drama Australia

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Drama Australia Member Associations:

ACT Drama Association, Drama Territory, Drama New South Wales, Drama Victoria, Drama Queensland, Drama Tasmania, Drama South Australia & DramaWest.