NAAE UPDATE

NAAE met in Canberra on 19 & 20 June to discuss a range of outstanding issues affecting implementation of The Australian Curriculum: The Arts. Several projects were identified that would assist classroom teachers, students, governments and other decision makers in the implementation process. NAAE plans to develop these projects in the coming months, and seek partnerships and funding to bring them to fruition.

Background
In a political environment which espouses innovation and 21st Century capacities such as collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking, imagination, communication, agility and empathy, the experiences and learning that a properly implemented arts curriculum offer are profound. The arts provide the logical conduit through which these capacities and related skills, in both the social and emotional domains, can be developed.

NAAE acknowledges that the Australian Curriculum: The Arts has been developed through extensive consultation, and that it has been ratified for implementation by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), and state and territory ministers for education. However, Australian arts educators are now caught between different implementation processes across the country.

Current plans
NAAE has identified several major issues that it believes would raise the profile of arts education and support teachers in schools:

Implementation of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts. Unlike phase one subjects (mathematics, English, science and history) that have been given both a mandate and the resources for across-the-board implementation by the states and territories, the Australian Curriculum: The Arts has received varied levels of support by each jurisdiction. [Note the current state/territory implementation levels of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts is on p.4.]
• We suggest that consistent implementation of the Australian Curriculum: The Arts, with a mandate and support provided, should be in place by the end of 2017 in order to align with the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) Teaching Standards implementation in 2018.

• We will review existing work samples and develop additional samples to map commonality in teaching approaches, adding value to those being developed by ACARA.

Putting the A into STEM: The Arts provide the essential elements of creativity, of seeing and understanding, and multiple ways of identifying both problems and solutions in a process which involves design, creation and evaluation. Arts processes are collaborative and encourage students to take risks with their ideas without fear of failure or ‘being wrong’. Each of the arts forms prioritises the communication of ideas, a skill that is transferable and essential to the STEM subjects. Placing the Arts into STEM provides students with more skills, more tools and a creative approach that can be used not only in STEM subjects but across the curriculum.

• We will develop an NAAE position paper on STEAM by –
  • Researching and developing case studies of successful STEAM projects, e.g. Melbourne Girls’ College and Swinburne University.
  • Working with universities, the Australia Council, the federal Arts Ministry and the Arts8 group to create high profile STEAM advocates.
  • Taking advocacy to wider audience, e.g. Chief Scientist, innovation ministers, education authorities, teacher organisations, etc.
  • Pending outcome of election, invite Wyatt Roy to next NAAE meeting (or whoever has responsibility for innovation agenda).

Pre-service arts provision: After years of advocacy there is still a serious lack of arts provision in teacher training institutions, leading to teachers who are under-prepared, particularly in primary schools, to deliver The Australian Curriculum: The Arts. We need a properly researched evidence base to make the case more strongly.

• NAAE will immediately commence work on a desk audit of teacher training courses, and seek funding for a more in-depth study later this year to provide evidence-based arguments for improved pre-service arts education.

Arts Literacy: More Than Words Can Say: This series of art form-based papers was first published by NAAE in 1995 to challenge the traditional definition of literacy.

• We will approach each of the original authors to update their papers and provide a new foreword which reflects current research in the arts literacy debate.

NAAE members: Art Education Australia, Australian Dance Council - Ausdance, Australian Society for Music Education, Australian Teachers of Media, Drama Australia, Music Council of Australia, National Association for the Visual Arts, The Music Trust (observer)
**Professional learning in the arts:** There are several excellent models that assist teachers’ professional learning in music and the arts. These models need to be supported by research and extended to all art forms, and be appropriately funded.

- We will seek access to research into the success of these models and develop a case for their broader application across all art forms, supported by resources and funding.

**Policy framework for children and young people:** NAAE believes that we need an arts policy for children and young people by funding agencies, including the Australia Council. Lack of such policy is contributing to a perception that the cultural entitlement of young people is not important, and that the provision of arts and cultural access for young Australians does not need further attention.

- We will continue to advocate for an arts and cultural policy for children and young people by the Australia Council and other arts funding agencies. [See our overview of previous attempts to produce cultural policies for children and young people in the arts on p.5.]
Implementation levels of *The Australian Curriculum: The Arts*

Australian Capital Territory
The ACT is currently implementing the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* in its full and current form, replacing the ACT Curriculum Framework.

New South Wales
The NSW government has made no commitment to implementing phase two learning areas, including the Arts. The NSW Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) is yet to commence the syllabus writing process to enable implementation.

Northern Territory
The Northern Territory Board of Studies is working towards full implementation of the Australian Curriculum, replacing the Northern Territory Curriculum Framework. The Arts are available for implementation in NT schools.

Queensland
Implementation of the Arts in Queensland is currently on hold due to advice from the Education Minister that the current implementation strategy for Phase 2 and 3 learning areas needs to be reviewed. The Queensland Education Minister is yet to respond to a Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) report which provides advice on the core curriculum for Queensland schools. Education Queensland is yet to publish a full suite of arts curriculum material for state schools. There has been a limited release with some documents available on Scootle.

South Australia
South Australia has adopted the Australian Curriculum from Reception (Foundation) to Year 10, including the Arts. Schools are expected to have fully implemented phases two and three subjects and be reporting on them by the end of 2016.

Tasmania
Tasmanian schools have been implementing the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* since 2014 and Tasmania is currently in full implementation mode.

Victoria
The Victorian Curriculum (heavily influenced by the Australian Curriculum) is replacing the AusVELS curriculum in Victoria, and is currently being implemented in Victorian schools. One of the four areas of improvement regarding student outcomes was the Arts.

Western Australia
The School Curriculum and Standards Authority, in consultation with stakeholders, is currently re-writing the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* into a year-by-year syllabus, which will be implemented in 2017 in Western Australia. This syllabus will not align with the endorsed *Australian Curriculum: The Arts*.
An arts and cultural policy for children and young people

There have been a number of attempts to establish a federal position (see Creative Australia 2013; Creative Nation 1994). Creative Australia was articulated around five goals, with the intersection of young Australians and the arts located in a statement that noted the need for ‘a universal arts education for lifelong learning and to drive creativity and innovation’ (Australian Government, 2013, p. 77). This statement explicitly supported the inclusion of an arts entitlement for all young Australians in the Australian Curriculum by stating that ‘every student has the opportunity to receive an arts education’ and that ‘creativity in schools is considered as a vital 21st century skill to drive innovation and productivity’ (ibid.). The current (Coalition) government does not have an arts or cultural policy.

Federal policy articulated and activated through the Australia Council for the Arts culminated in the publication of Young People and the Arts (2003). This policy built on the Council’s earlier Framework for Youth and the Arts (1999) and the work of Australia Council’s Youth Panel in the two previous years. ‘The policy [was] about the Australia Council’s role in supporting, promoting and raising the profile of artistic and creative work by, for and with young people and children’ (Australia Council for the Arts, 2003, p. 4).

Most worrying at the moment is the visibility, or more accurately the invisibility, of an explicit arts agenda for children and young people. Tracing through the current Australia Council for the Arts document, A Culturally Ambitious Nation: Strategic Plan 2014 to 2019 (2014) reference to schools is made twice, an education reference only once. The direct statement about arts and young people is captured under Goal Three:

*We will strengthen artistic experiences by, with and for children and young people by facilitating collaboration between young people and more established artists to create new work* (p. 6).

This is about developing artistic product, not about arts education. This strategy and product development orientation is again echoed in another Australia Council for the Arts document entitled Artistic Vibrancy (2014). Under the section outlining Engaged Communities (p.8) it ‘supports participation and engagement by all’ and Vibrant Society and Culture (p. 9) seeks to ‘help make arts part of daily life’. The Australia Council for the Arts has always had as a primary objective the support of excellence, and yet in this policy statement there is no dedicated strategy or framework about the arts as it applies to children and young people in either the strategic plan or policy directions.