



## National Advocates for Arts Education

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

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## The National Advocates for Arts Education and the National Curriculum in the Arts Update – September 2009

### Background to the involvement of the NAAE in the development of a National Curriculum in the Arts

In 2008 the Australian Government embarked on the development of a National Curriculum. Initially, announcements were made about the development of learning areas in Phase 1 (English, mathematics, science and history) and subsequently Phase 2 (geography and languages) were released. Beyond this, there was no guarantee of any further phases of development and certainly no guarantee of the inclusion of the arts.

In 2007, in a joint statement made by the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and Cultural Ministers Council (CMC) it was stated that:

All children and young people should have a high quality arts education in every phase of learning. (Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs and Cultural Ministers Council, 2007, 5).<sup>1</sup>

### Establishment of NAAE

The National Affiliation of Arts Educators (NAAE) Inc was established in 1989 with the support of the Joint Council of Cultural and Education Ministers. It has a long history of working with government, being instrumental in ensuring that the Arts were established as one of the eight key learning areas in the Australian curriculum. This group had significant carriage of the consultation and writing of the 1992 *The arts – a statement on the arts for Australian schools* and the companion document *The arts – a curriculum profile for Australian schools*.

NAAE was subsequently provided with funding from the Department of Education & Training to employ a full-time researcher for three years (until 1996), and maintained its activity after

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<sup>1</sup> Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs and Cultural Ministers Council. (2007). *National Education and the Arts Statement*. Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs and Cultural Ministers Council: Carlton, Victoria.

funding ceased, holding its AGM, making submissions to federal inquiries, publishing papers and advocating for Australian arts education research. A teleconference occurred in August 2008 in response to the announcement of the disciplines targeted for inclusion in the national curriculum.

The first meeting of NAAE concerning the National Curriculum occurred in October 2008. It was decided to change the name from the National Affiliation of Arts Educators to the National Advocates for Arts Education to better reflect the group's work in getting the arts recognised as a vital part of any national curriculum. It was confirmed that the artforms and their representation would be: Dance (Ausdance); Drama (Drama Australia); Music (Australian Society for Music Education and the Music Council of Australia) and; Visual Arts (Art Education Australia and the National Association for the Visual Arts). The Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) were original members of NAAE, and rejoined in December 2008.

At this time a strategy was developed for an advocacy plan that targeted significant members of both political parties whose portfolios were concerned with education and the arts. Letters were prepared introducing NAAE and requesting meetings with the NAAE when Parliament was sitting in Canberra. In November 2008, the NAAE was able to meet with Minister Peter Garrett, Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard's education advisor, Minister Kim Carr's education advisor and representatives from the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. NAAE provided a two-page executive summary position which called for the inclusion of the arts as a learning area in Phase 2 of the development of the National Curriculum.

At the same time, NAAE made strong representations to the government for the inclusion of the arts in the Early Years Learning Framework which deals with the education of children from birth to 8.

Approximately a week after the Canberra meetings, MCEETYA released the *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians*. Goals are described that include arts-rich aspects such as the cultural, creative abilities and the aesthetic. Importantly, however, the declaration lists a range of learning areas including the arts (performing and visual).

In December 2008, following the Canberra meetings, NAAE issued a media release outlining its position. This was taken up by the ABC AM program in January 2009, with subsequent articles and letters to the editor in *The Age* newspaper in support of this position.

The NAAE subsequently wrote to Professor Barry McGaw, Chair of the Interim National Curriculum Board (NCB), requesting the arts be included in the National Curriculum. Professor McGaw informed NAAE that MCEETYA determines the scope of the National Curriculum. When questioned for further clarification, it was noted that additional subject areas would be presented to MCEETYA for approval at their mid-year meeting. Letters were also sent to all MCEETYA Ministers by NAAE member associations, the Australian Academy of the Humanities and the Council for the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS), the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Australian Council for University Art and Design Schools.

Prior to Minister Garrett's announcement on 17 April 2009 that the arts would be included in Phase 2 of the National Curriculum, the NAAE had met with Mr Rob Randall – Acting General Manager, Curriculum for the National Curriculum Board. Mr Randall suggested that NAAE discuss and prepare a position that could be presented for the provision of arts education in Australia, specifically targeting questions that related to how many artforms students must study and for how long this study should be. Mr Randall also suggested to NAAE that it undertakes an environmental scan or audit of arts curriculum from around the country and develop a position that summarised what would be considered essential content for each of the artforms.

This work has resulted in literally hours of discussion among NAAE members and has produced a set of recommendations from NAAE to the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA – formerly the interim National Curriculum Board) together with overviews of each of the artforms. The NAAE has made the strongest representations to ACARA staff that each artform must be considered separately and that its own histories, traditions, content and pedagogies be acknowledged with separate curriculum. The NAAE supports the development of content in each artform and does not support a generic “arts” curriculum.

NAAE has maintained a healthy relationship with ACARA through two further meetings with Rob Randall in June and in August of 2009. At the August meeting the Project Manager for the Arts, Ms Josephine Wise, was also in attendance.

### **Consultation with peak bodies**

Each member of the NAAE has consulted with their constituents in a range of ways on the development of overviews and the recommendations. A summary of strategies for consultation is listed in Appendix A.

In addition, consultation has occurred with the Australian Primary Principals' Association (APPA) through meetings with its president, correspondence and a successful teleconference. As a result, APPA has informed NAAE of its support of the work undertaken so far and its in-principle support of the recommendations that NAAE is providing to ACARA. It is important to note that the NAAE undertakes to continue providing ACARA with strategic advice when ACARA's process of curriculum development and consultation commences.

## NATIONAL ADVOCATES FOR ARTS EDUCATION (NAAE) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ARTS LEARNING IN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

The Arts (Performing and Visual) are identified in the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (December 2008) as a learning area with a specific discipline base. These are included as part of the Declaration's goals to achieve a world-class curriculum.

How might the Arts (Performing and Visual) be implemented in the National Curriculum from 2012?

NAAE's long-term aspiration is for all young Australians to have access to sequential and continuous learning in each artform. However, in order to offer flexibility and a realistic approach, and recognising the challenges of the crowded curriculum and implications of teacher expertise, the NAAE recommends the following for this next important phase of curriculum development in arts education:

- (a) Primary and secondary students should have sequential and continuous learning provisions in at least one artform from the field of Performing Arts (Dance, Drama, Music) and one artform from the field of the Visual Arts (Visual Arts<sup>1</sup>, Media), selected by the school, i.e. at least two art forms will be chosen *for continuous and sequential learning* as a minimum for arts learning.
- (b) This will enable students to demonstrate achievement, progression and development in content (skills, knowledge, understanding) identified for at least two artforms. Teachers should report on student achievement within the school's chosen two artforms.
- (c) This approach will facilitate choice for schools, taking account of staffing, resources, community interests and provision. It will also support a 'whole school' approach to build strengths, expertise and the capacity to implement arts curriculum.
- (d) The first years of schooling should build on the Early Years Learning Framework to provide a broad and interrelated approach to the arts that acknowledges the richness this can bring to young learners.
- (e) Throughout the primary years, in addition to the two selected artforms, students should also have rich learning experiences in the remaining three artforms, with schools reporting achievement in these artforms in less formal ways.
- (f) In the secondary years, at least two artforms, one from the Performing Arts and one from the Visual Arts, should be offered in sequential and continuous courses. Provision should also be made for the remaining three artforms, enabling students to exercise choice.
- (g) In the senior years, it is desirable that schools offer courses in all five artforms and for students to be able to specialise in the artforms of their choice.

<sup>1</sup> NAAE's views with regard to Visual Arts and Design are still under consideration

## **Discussion**

The NAAE recognises the importance for all students in Australia to have access to sequential, developmental and continuous learning in each of the artforms. NAAE also recognises that existing school structures, competing priorities, existing resources and expertise limits this goal. The recommendations listed above provide for what would be considered to be the minimum acceptable standard for the implementation of the national curriculum in the arts. A statement such as this strengthens the provisions that currently exist in many states and territories around the country.

The NAAE would also acknowledge the importance of the Arts in early childhood education and recommends that any curriculum that is to be developed should build upon the Early Years Learning Framework and allow for an arts-rich learning environment that reflects good practice and pedagogy with children of this age group. This position also intends to promote and enhance the provision of arts learning in the secondary curriculum and supports a notion that a continuum of learning be developed that allows for increasing degrees of specialisation as students progress through to the senior years.

In addition to this, the NAAE advocates for a review of pre-service teacher education. It notes through a number of studies the inadequate provisions and training provided by tertiary institutions are clearly not preparing teachers for the demands of the existing curriculum, let alone a new National Curriculum.

Each member of the NAAE has consulted with their constituents in a range of ways on the development of overviews and the recommendations. A summary of strategies for consultation is listed below:

<p>Dance</p>	<p>Ausdance maintains an ongoing consultative process to support the development of dance education. The Ausdance network has been committed to promoting the value of dance in schools, to resourcing its teachers and to partnerships with other arts organisations in advocating for its inclusion in arts curriculum documents. Several national initiatives in dance education have helped to define the work of Ausdance in this sector over the last decade. It has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Commissioned the position paper <i>Dance education in Australian schools</i>, which fed into the curriculum framework later developed by the NAAE through the Curriculum Corporation (<i>The arts – a curriculum profile for Australian schools</i>, 1994).</li> <li>○ Steered the politically complex teacher competency standards through development and agreement with the private studio sector. Training packages are now being developed by Innovation &amp; Business Skills Australia (IBSA), of which Ausdance is a committee member.</li> <li>○ Facilitated two Dance Education in Australian Schools (DEAS) roundtables (2001 and 2005), including education departments, teachers and the Ausdance network. Participants continue to provide advice to Ausdance.</li> <li>○ Undertaken a national consultation process in 2008 with the Australia Council, to produce the recommendations and strategies for dance education in <i>Dance Plan 2012</i>. The dance community's recommendations included the addition of the arts to the National Curriculum, for which Ausdance has continued to advocate.</li> <li>○ Planned a series of forums during 2011 to measure progress and to ensure that the dance community as a whole understands what needs to be done to achieve the <i>Dance Plan 2012</i> ambitions. Politicians, funding bodies, schools, tertiary institutions, dance companies and independent artists are all included in mapping the way forward.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Drama</b></p>	<p>Drama Australia is the peak national body that represents and advocates on behalf of all state and territory drama education associations in Australia. All members of state and territory drama associations are automatically members of Drama Australia.</p> <p>Drama Australia has maintained communication with members about developments in the National Curriculum since mid-2008. State and territory-based drama associations disseminate information about drama and the arts in the national curriculum to their members. Consultation and information delivery includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Keynote speeches and presentations by Drama Australia board members.</li> <li>○ Quarterly reports to Drama Australia Board, state/territory drama association presidents and DALOs.</li> <li>○ Development of drama curricula overview by board member responsible for Arts Education and Arts Industry Partnerships in consultation with Drama Australia board and Australian drama education experts and researchers.</li> <li>○ E-group communication of key decisions and documents to state and territory drama associations.</li> <li>○ Access to NAAE publications and media releases through link to NAAE website.</li> </ul> <p>In 2009 Drama Australia has dedicated an edition of its refereed publication NJ to curriculum and has commissioned a number articles about the advocacy strategy, development and implications for drama and the arts in the National Curriculum. This edition of NJ will be released shortly.</p> <p>Consultation with Drama Australia members and interested parties has continued in an effort to develop a position for drama and the arts in the National Curriculum. This year's AGM will allow state and territory drama association presidents, DALOs and other members to question and debate Drama Australia's position and responses to NAAE.</p>
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<p>Media</p>	<p>Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM) is the peak national body formed from the state-based teacher organisations ATOM ACT, ATOM Qld, ATOM Vic, and SAAME, and encourages the development of similar organisations in Western Australia and Tasmania. ATOM has maintained consistent communication with members in regard to developments with the National Curriculum since 2008. State bodies are responsible for transmitting developments to their members. Consultation has included the following forms of dialogue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Presentations at professional development programs throughout 2008 and 2009</li> <li>○ Annual general meetings</li> <li>○ Forums at state conferences</li> <li>○ State board meetings</li> <li>○ sub-committees.</li> </ul> <p>ATOM has also used its national publication <i>Screen Education</i> to inform members about key developments. In addition, state bodies continue to communicate information and engage in dialogue electronically. ATOM state organisations' web sites are linked to the NAAE website.</p> <p>The chairs of each state organisation met in Melbourne in December 2008 to discuss our approach to the National Curriculum agenda and decided to lobby for membership of the National Advocates for Arts Education. The Chair of ATOM Vic and the President of ATOM Qld were elected as the representatives to NAAE.</p> <p>Consultation with members and interested parties has continued as the NAAE's position has developed. This consultation is delivered via electronic distribution lists, forum discussions at state conferences and agenda items at executive meetings. In 2009 ATOM completed a curriculum survey of Media courses in Australia and published an extract of core essential learnings in Media Education. This was distributed and disseminated at state level.</p>
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<p>Music</p>	<p>As an Australia-wide organisation, ASME operates under a National Executive and representative National Council who work through chapters in all of Australia's States and Territories. At the State and Territory levels, ASME is represented by Chapter Councils. ASME is Australia's only affiliate organisation of the International Society for Music Education (ISME), which exists under the auspices of UNESCO's Music Council.</p> <p>Discussion regarding the National Curriculum began in June 2008 at the National Council Meeting in Launceston. These discussions continued at National Executive level and the NAAE Overview prepared on behalf of ASME was presented for endorsement to both National Executive and National Council in July 2009. This material was then presented to delegates of the National Conference in Launceston in July 2009 at a forum devoted to the National Curriculum during which the Arts Project Manager from ACARA spoke, as did the NAAE representative. Further to this, these materials have been placed on the ASME website and have been made available to Chapters for their use and further discussions at state chapter and network levels.</p> <p>The Music Council of Australia (MCA) is the national peak organisation for music, with 50 members representing the broadest range of music sector interests. MCA gathers and provides information, conducts research, undertakes advocacy, ensures representation in relevant forums, and initiates and realises projects that advance musical life. It is the Australian affiliate to the International Music Council, Paris.</p> <p>The MCA and its national campaign, Music. Play for Life, have carried out key research and played an important role in instigating the National Review of School Music Education. It provided members to the National Review, the Minister's Music Education Advisory Group (MEAG) and IBSA's music industry package. It has collaborated in advocacy with other relevant organisations such as NAAE, the Australian Music Association, ASME and ACSO.</p> <p>The MCA is building broad public support for music education. Projects include websites, an advocacy kit, the Flame Awards (with ABC national networks) to publicise exemplary school music programs, and Music. Count Us In, last year involving 460,000 school children in a simultaneous performance to raise the status of music in schools (Recommendation 1 of the National Review), among others.</p> <p>The MCA Board, MCA Councillors and the 5,500 members of its networks are regularly informed and consulted about its activities in the music education sphere through email bulletins, email blasts, the annual conference and articles in its quarterly journal, Music Forum. The Board meets every two months and reviews policy and operational issues including those related to music education and advocacy. Music Forum has reported on developments around the National Curriculum and the role and policy formulations of the NAAE throughout 2009, including a thousand word article in the most recent issue.</p>
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<p>Visual Arts</p>	<p>The National Association for the Visual Art (NAVA) is the peak body representing and advancing the professional interests of the Australian visual arts, craft and design sector. NAVA has played a continuing role in visual education over many years, both as an advocate and policy adviser and in providing professional development training and resources to its constituency.</p> <p>From 2003 NAVA has convened and managed the Visual Education Roundtable, which includes representatives of school education, parent groups, primary and secondary school principals' and teachers' associations, teacher training institutions, commercial galleries, national and state galleries, visual arts, craft and design service organisations and art supplies retailers. In 2004 this group was instrumental in persuading the Federal Government to commit funding of \$250,000 for the National Review of Visual Education, and NAVA became a member of the reference group.</p> <p>NAVA formally joined the National Advocates for Arts Education in 2008 and has since worked as an active member to advance the arts education agenda. Presentations at conferences and membership of boards of cultural industry skills councils have been a major strategy in providing policy advice and consulting with members.</p> <p>Art Education Australia Inc (AEA) is the peak national body of art educators that represents and advocates on behalf of the combined state and territory visual arts education associations and individual members. AEA represents Australian visual arts teachers at national arts and education forums and in national and international peak associations. AEA is a foundational member of the NAAE and the Teaching Australia Network, and member of the National Education Forum, Visual Education Roundtable, InSEA [International Society for Education through Art] and is represented at the World Alliance of Arts Education [WAAE].</p> <p>Information regarding the development of the National Curriculum has been disseminated for discussion to the state and territory art education associations through email, the website and at the Annual General Meeting.</p>
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