



auSDANCE
WA

//IN MOTION//

Ausdance WA Dance Sector Consultation
March 2024

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VALUE
VISIBILITY
& VOICE

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Acknowledgement

Ausdance WA and PUSH Mangement acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Disclaimer

This report has been produced independently by Push Management on the request of Ausdance WA. The information, statements, statistics and commentary (together the 'Information') contained in this Report have been prepared by Push Management from publicly available material, documents provided by, and discussions held with Ausdance WA.

Push Management does not express an opinion as to the accuracy or completeness of the Information provided, the assumptions made by the parties that provided the Information or any conclusions reached by those parties. Push Management has based this Report on Information received or obtained, on the basis that such Information is accurate and, where it is represented to Push Management as such, complete. The Information contained in this Report has not been subject to an audit.

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1 Executive Summary

This report details the key needs of the Dance Sector in WA as identified by the sector itself.

The identified needs will inform strategies to support the development of a road map for dance in WA.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the IN MOTION consultation project was to gather direct input from a broad cross section of the dance sector in WA to:

- Identify short, medium and long-term sector needs;
- Identify priorities to support the dance sector;
- Develop a road map and recommendations to meet those needs (pathways to solutions);
- Draft a plan for the development of resources (tools, programs and initiatives); and,
- Provide policy makers with important information for consideration.

OUTCOMES

The desired outcomes of the consultation project were to enable:

- A better connected industry;
- Revitalised communications, information and resources for the industry; and,
- Government support for the industry.

SCOPE

The scope for the consultation project as a whole was expansive, including a breadth of the dance sector, with a focus on five key sub-sectors, including:

- Dance teachers in schools;
- Dance studio owners;
- Subsidised dance companies;
- Independent dance artists; and,
- Youth dance company advocates.¹

METHODOLOGY

The methodology took place in two distinct phases. In the first phase, an online survey was undertaken utilising the online survey tool Survey Monkey. While the focus of the scope was the Western Australian dance sector, the survey was open to responses from people resident outside of

¹ We acknowledge that First Nations and cultural/ community dance sectors were not addressed as discreet sub-sectors, largely due to scope/ limited capacity and time frame, and to some extent, limited contacts within Ausdance WA's existing networks. However, some representation has been achieved both through the online survey and facilitated workshops.

WA with involvement in the WA sector. The survey received 72 qualified responses. The design of the online survey was informed by the content created by Alison McArdle who undertook a sector-wide consultation process as part of the FutureMoves strategy in 2007. This allowed for analysis of comparisons on some key issues over the intervening 14 years.

RESPONDENTS

Representation of the dance sector in the online survey, across areas of involvement was broad, with a prevalence of respondents noting their primary area of involvement in the WA dance sector as being either independent artists (31%) or teachers in schools (28%). Notably, 36% of respondents stated that they worked in 'Other' areas of dance. This included researchers, lecturers, students, dance company alumni, dance writers/critics, health professionals and Board members.

- 72 of 79 responses were deemed to have sufficient information to be included in the sample set.
- 37 organisations were represented by respondents.²
- 82% of respondents stated they had been active in the industry for more than 10 years.
- The median age group was 40-49 years old.
- 98% of respondents were located in Western Australia.
- Only 3% of respondents identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The data from the survey provided valuable insights and informed the second phase of the project which involved six facilitated workshops involving 51 participants in total. Workshops were conducted with each of the five sub-sectors as well as an online workshop to enable regional participation. Participants attending the workshops pertaining to each of the five key sub-sectors also provided a diverse and representative sample of their area of practice. A full survey respondent profile and list of workshop attendees is attached at Appendix A.

KEY FINDINGS

In general, the consultation identified a committed and passionate sector, keen to share their views and ideas, and appreciative of the invitation to contribute and be heard. The sector's dedication was recognised as both a major

contributor to its success and maintenance, and cause for concern in terms of the human and financial resources committed by individuals and the sustainability of this resource.

The key successes and challenges of the Dance Sector are described in detail in the body of the report.

In summary, key factors that the dance sector noted as working well in the industry included:

- The Dance Community and Collaboration – “A sense of community.”
- Artistic and Professional Development – “Opportunities for learning and personal development.”
- Education and Outreach – “The Dance teaching network: education resources.”
- Performance Opportunities and Support – “Lots of short works being made with STRUT support.”³
- Innovation and Adaptability – “Perseverance of local artists.”
- Cultural Respect and Diversity – “Indigenous ways of being are being respected and followed.”

Key challenges reported by respondents are addressed under Recommendations on page 25 and include:

- Value and Advocacy;
- Regional Support;
- Diversity, equity and inclusion;
- Funding and Investment;
- Industry Communication, Connection, and Networks;
- Infrastructure;

² Respondent organisations ranged from dedicated dance companies, private studios and Education sector schools, to industry associations and accreditation bodies.

³ This concerns contemporary practice only.

- Marketing, promotion and visibility;
- Professional Development, Wellbeing and Work;
- Accreditation and Codes of Practice; and
- Youth dance.

Several factors that were raised as working well were also presented as challenges. This recognises that there are common issues of awareness, and whilst the awareness is evident and, in some instances, leading to improvement, there is an identified need for more to be done to achieve success.

CONTEXT

By way of context, the Dance Sector operates amongst a set of circumstances that are specific to dance (notably different to other artforms).

- Dancers must maintain a technical and physical readiness for work, regardless of their work situation;
- This maintenance work is costly and presents particular challenges when balancing this need with other work and life factors;
- The performance life of a dancer is limited in comparison to other artforms, though this paradigm is slowly shifting;
- Performance and rehearsal almost always require specialised facilities (e.g. sprung wooden floor, large, open, unobstructed space) to enable Safe Dance[®] Practice conditions;
- Specific touring conditions for dance often require longer set-up periods tending to make it a more costly and risky artform to present;
- Performance seasons are typically very short (3-5 days) – noting the exception of West Australian Ballet;
- Audience appeal of non-traditional practice is typically limited (appealing to a specific aesthetic);
- The dance ecology is highly interdependent; that is, the different elements of the dance ecology are highly reliant on each other (e.g. a lack of high quality secondary dance education affects student uptake, which in turn can affect career opportunities,

performance standards and audience education and expectations);

- The outcomes associated with dance are often improperly valued and neglect to recognise benefits such as mental health, collaboration, discipline, social support, fitness, self-expression, safety and confidence.

Notably, the scale of the industry in Western Australia, which while supportive, does not present the extent of opportunities that our east coast counter-parts are afforded. This can be as simple as the ability to find a place to undertake daily dance class, or as complex as the ability to sustain a career and living wage as an established dance artist.

In the national dance landscape, the WA Dance Sector is highly regarded and sometimes envied, having resources and opportunities that exist in entities such as STRUT Dance - The National Choreographic Centre of Western Australia, our professional companies, the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts, and up until 2019 Ausdance WA. Importantly, Ausdance WA historically operated somewhat differently to that of Ausdance offices in other States and Territories, with a focus that provided valued services beyond dance education.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this consultation, the West Australian Dance sector has once again shown its commitment to sustaining and developing the industry in W.A. by providing critical and clear input. This is a sector that 'shows up'. It presents itself as united and prepared to collaborate and share its vast knowledge, resources, support and effort.

This research indicates that providing coordination and structure that supports the key issues will leverage the existing resources and talent of the WA Dance Sector in ways that can significantly contribute to the cultural wellbeing of the State.

2 Background

Ausdance WA is a membership-driven organisation that works across all forms of dance and exists to:

- **Provide leadership for dance in Western Australia as an informed and active advocate and service provider, supporting industry development and capacity building for the sector;**
- **Educate, train and support the dance community;**
- **Facilitate participation and develop audiences for dance;**
- **Support the dance industry through advocacy.**

With the cessation of core funding from the state government in 2018, Ausdance WA operated on reserves during 2019 and, between 2020 and 2023, existed mainly in a volunteer capacity thanks to the generosity of Director Gabrielle Sullivan, supported by former Finance Manager Natalie Johnson and former Memberships Manager Miranda De Baughn.

During this time, strong partnerships with the national Ausdance network ensured that advocacy projects could continue. The local sector has also sought support and guidance, particularly in the last 12 months.

Ausdance WA has had minimal presence in the private dance studio sector in the past. Ausdance WA's involvement has predominantly involved providing access to general education and Safe Dance® Practice resources produced by Ausdance National.

These circumstances have prompted this sector-wide consultation project; a chance to 'health check' the dance sector and identify short, medium and long term needs, identify priorities to support the dance sector and develop a road map of delivery.

Ausdance WA is operating with a small project grant from the state government through the Department of Local Government Sport and Cultural Industries, and has secured investment to run an annual program to implement sector imperatives across the 2024-2025 financial year.

Ausdance WA has represented the sector in a number of conversations and projects in recent months. Nationally this has included:

- National Dance Gathering (held in Qld 2023, produced by Ausdance Qld, supported by Queensland Ballet, Creative Australia and Ausdance National, the report from the gathering provides a national overview of priorities and will be used as a tool to lobby government for support;
- Network of National Dance Organisations (NONDO), facilitated by Creative Australia, previously the Dance Managers' meeting; a gathering of subsidised dance companies and organisations from across the country.
- Consultation with Service and Creative Australia's Cultural and Arts Sector Arts Scoping Study being delivered as part of the National Cultural Policy, Revive.
- Advising the MEAA, Dancers Australia Code regarding dance teacher pay rates.
- Made a submission to the Analysis and Strategic Advice Report on Children, Young People and the Arts being conducted for Creative Australia.

Locally, Ausdance WA has been involved with:

- Establishing a Dance Teachers Accreditation Reference Group and developing a Terms of Reference to establish the scope of this project. WA is leading the project to progress accreditation and will be supported by the national network and specialist advisers;
- Youth Dance Stakeholders – Two meetings were held in 2023 to develop ideas and progress the (re) formation of a youth dance company;
- WA Secondary dance teachers in schools met in September 2023 to discuss areas of need – Ausdance WA was proposed as a possible model to provide an existing framework for teachers to progress resources and professional development relevant to this need;

- Youth Arts and Performing Arts gatherings – Theatre Network Australia (TNA) meetings for WA delegates held in mid-March 2024;
- A proposal with FutureNow to establish traineeships for dance teaching;
- Meeting with Child Safeguarding Implementation Unit to discuss imminent state regulations ⁴ and preparation in reference to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

In the broader arts sector, locally and nationally, several environmental factors indicate a sector that is in transition.

Some of these factors include the development of a 10-year Vision for Arts and Culture in WA, a renewal of the Chamber of Arts and Culture WA, a continued focus on cultural infrastructure (redevelopment of the Perth Concert Hall, Film Production Studio, relocation of the West Australia Academy of Performing Arts into the CBD, redevelopment of the Convention Centre, and the new Aboriginal Cultural Centre), consequences of the unsuccessful Voice referendum, the Raising Their Voices: National Music Industry Review highlighting the extent of sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination in the industry, the relatively new Revive Australian cultural policy (and associated workplace reforms), the closure of several major contemporary music festivals, and forthcoming state and federal elections.

In this context, Ausdance WA determined that consultation was required because:

- They understood that the sector had urgent needs that need to be addressed;
- There was a need to hear directly from the sector to identify and confirm the needs;
- There was a need to identify specific issues and needs within sub-sectors, and general issues and needs across the sector as a whole;
- There was a need to inform the design of support and improvements for the sector, and to confirm that what Ausdance WA understood about the sector was accurate;
- There was a need to prioritise the needs due to capacity constraints; and,

- To ensure future action would meaningfully address the priorities.

This project is important and timely, particularly in regard to ensuring that a voice for dance in W.A. contributes to conversations and development of arts and culture in Australia. It is also important as it ensures that information about the sector in W.A. as it currently exists and operates, is drawn directly from, and representative of, the sector.

⁴ Each state is developing its own set of regulations.

3 Project Brief

Ausdance WA's project brief required a consultant to design and conduct a process collaboratively that would maximise participation and input from the sector, and appropriately support the desired project outcomes.

These outcomes include:

- A better connected industry;
- Revitalised communications, information and resources for the industry; and,
- Government support for the industry.

The process required industry consultation, analysis of primary and secondary research, and the development of a report that identifies short, medium and long-term needs of the dance sector in Western Australia, and recommends strategy imperatives to meet those needs.

Further, the brief required the development of a road map for the implementation of programs and initiatives, and the development of resources to support identified needs, as well as advocacy.

Whilst Ausdance WA has a long history of research into the needs of the dance industry in WA, it was anticipated there would be new, significant needs that have emerged from the impacts of the COVID pandemic, and Ausdance WA's limited involvement in the sector since 2020.

The project brief determined that outcomes of the consultations would provide important information for consideration for relevant policy makers.

Ausdance WA noted the intention to share the project research outcomes initially with the Culture and Arts Division of the WA Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, the federal Office for the Arts, the State and Federal Minister and Shadow Minister for the Arts, the Arts and Culture Trust, the Chamber of Arts and Culture WA, other relevant state-based service organisations, and Creative Australia.

The information will subsequently inform future consultations that impact on the sector such as Fair Work Commission's Modern Awards Review (which includes a review of the Live Performance Award) and the Analysis and Strategic Advice Report on Children, Young People and the Arts being conducted by Creative Australia.

Ausdance WA anticipated that reinvigorated communications with all sub-sectors of the industry would enable them to identify priority projects to be developed for delivery later in 2024 and beyond, noting that future program development would be subject to their ability to secure financial support and partnerships.

The project brief required the consultant to work with Ausdance WA personnel to determine project logistics including dates and venues for the sector meetings.

The brief noted that the consultant was required to work across five sub-sectors (noted above in Scope). Ausdance WA suggested that a face-to-face workshop would be required with each of these groups.

Subsequently, an additional online consultation session was scheduled, to enable input from regionally-based people, and/or those unable to attend the in-person workshops.

Ausdance WA noted they would be responsible for promoting the workshops and online survey to ensure awareness of the opportunity. Ausdance WA would also be responsible for managing all communications with the sector using their current database, industry networks, and social media platforms.

In summary, key deliverables for the project included:

- Identification of short, medium and long-term needs of the sector;
- Identification of priorities to support the dance sector;
- Development of a road map and recommended strategies to meet needs of the sector;
- A plan for the development of resources (tools, programs and initiatives); and,
- Provision of important information for policy makers' consideration.

The project brief outlined the following timeline:

February-March 2024

- Conduct industry consultation.

April 2024

- Research and recommendations delivered, published/distributed for comment; and,
- Consultant to review comments and prepare a final report identifying priority matters to be addressed across the short, medium and long-term. Ideally, a maximum of three priorities will be identified for each sector, to ensure Ausdance WA capacity to deliver.

May 2024

- Based on sector determined needs and responses to the research recommendations, plan implementation of the program to commence July, subject to funding makers' consideration.

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4 Methodology

The methodology took place in two distinct phases.

PHASE ONE

In the first phase, an online survey was undertaken via the online survey tool Survey Monkey.

The survey was developed via a process of consultation with Ausdance WA Directors and information shared about each of the subsectors. The survey design was informed by the 2007 FutureMoves survey, with some questions from that survey being repeated to allow for a comparative assessment.

Documentation from the National Dance Gathering in Brisbane in 2023, along with reports from two workshops regarding the potential need/development of a youth dance company in WA, and a meeting initiated by dance studio leaders regarding the need to improve the quality of dance teaching, also provided valuable intelligence that informed the survey design.

Subsequently, a broad and extensive list of potential questions were drafted. These were reviewed and amended in an iterative process between Push Management and Ausdance WA.

The basic structure of the survey asked what was working well in the dance sector, what the challenges were, and what solutions might address the challenges. It then sought to ascertain levels of satisfaction across multiple areas of the sector.

The survey was intentionally comprehensive and included sections that focused on the sub-sectors. This was designed to allow respondents to skip sections not specifically relevant to their involvement with the sector.

The majority of questions were closed. However, an option for comment to allow for further clarification was also offered.

Key open ended questions sought input on what was working well in the industry, key challenges, and

unprompted ideas and solutions that could help address the key challenges that the respondents had identified.

This resulted in 191 responses about what was working well and 238 responses about challenges in the industry.

These responses were analysed by the consultant to identify key themes.

The survey was undertaken between February 23 and March 26, 2024.

The survey was distributed via a link that was sent via email to Ausdance WA contacts, through social media as well as via relevant Facebook groups. The link was also available via the Ausdance WA website and was sent to Ausdance WA's communications contacts for sharing beyond their own networks, including Regional Arts WA, Community Arts Network, Chamber of Arts and Culture WA, Department of Education, Catholic Education Office WA, Association of Independent Schools WA, and CircuitWest.

Respondents were given the option to 'opt in' to keep their responses confidential, and were advised that any contact details gathered as part of the survey would only be used for follow-up purposes and would not be provided to any third party without the respondent's consent.

Survey recipients were advised that the survey was necessarily comprehensive and would take approximately 15-25 minutes to complete. It was also noted that not all sections would be relevant and it was appropriate to skip sections not applicable to their area of involvement in dance.

Data cleaning was undertaken to remove respondents who did not complete a majority of the questions. This determined seven responses as insufficiently complete. None of the data from those respondents was included in the information presented in this report.

PHASE TWO

Phase two comprised five face-to-face workshops tailored to each of the five sub-sector groups plus an additional online workshop to enable regional participation.

Outcomes from the survey information were used to inform the face-to-face consultations.

The summary findings from the survey were presented in each of the workshops, with participants asked to provide their views on the relevance and veracity of the summary findings.

In addition, workshops involving the Dance Studio Owners and the Subsidised Companies asked participants what was working well, what the key challenges were, and what potential solutions might be. Input was gathered and ranked by the group in terms of importance.

In workshops with the Youth, Independent, and Teacher sub-sectors, participants were guided through the key findings of the survey, asked for their responses to the findings, and asked to provide input regarding any additional gaps that they could identify and potential solutions to support the key challenges.

Open discussion was encouraged in all workshops that further elucidated the key issues and potential solutions to support the dance sector.

The information from the online survey and the confirmation, clarification and additional input provided in the workshops was collated and analysed.

This information was also compared and contrasted in reference to current and past reports regarding the dance sector.⁵

⁵ References included:

- Future Moves report (2007)
- Future Moves Implementation Plan (2008)
- Current Ausdance WA Strategic Plan
- National Dance Gathering report (2023)
- Reports from the two Youth Dance meetings (2023)
- Independent Dance Sector Report (2024)
- Revive: National Cultural Policy.

5 Key Findings from the Online Survey

In summary, the key findings from the online survey relate to the following general issues:

- **Regional Support:** Respondents emphasised the importance of outreach and regional infrastructure for engagement and training in the dance sector. Advocacy to local governments and collaboration among regional organisations were also seen as potentially beneficial for addressing key challenges.
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:** There is a clear commitment to inclusivity and respect for diverse perspectives. Recognising the value of First Nations stories and increasing the diversity of dance productions were highlighted as important aspects of fostering inclusivity.
- **Funding and Investment:** Additional investment and improvements to funding programs were identified as crucial for addressing challenges in the sector. There is a strong consensus on the need for closer collaboration with government funding agencies.
- **Industry Communication, Connection, and Networks:** Enhancing communication within the sector and expanding connections with other networks, particularly the education sector, were seen as beneficial. A central calendar of dance events was deemed highly valuable.
- **Advocacy and Recognition:** Empowerment through advocacy was highlighted as essential for positive change in the sector. There is a perceived lack of advocacy and recognition for the contributions of the dance sector to the cultural life of Western Australia.
- **Infrastructure:** Issues related to infrastructure, including access to affordable rehearsal and performance venues, were identified as challenges that need to be addressed.
- **Marketing, Promotion, and Visibility:** Improving access to marketing support and increasing public support for dance were noted as areas needing improvement. Visibility of the sector was noted as being linked to advocacy and recognition issues.
- **Professional Development:** There is a need for more opportunities for professional development. Affordability, regularity, and availability of professional dance classes were also highlighted.
- **Accreditation and Codes of Practice:** Respondents emphasised the importance of accreditation of teachers of dance and recognised the need for agreed minimum standards for teaching. However, there were differing opinions on the applicability of accreditation in certain contexts.
- **Wellbeing and Work:** Employment opportunities, conditions, and career development were noted as specific issues of concern. In addition they were noted as factors negatively impacting the wellbeing of people in the sector. There is a need for investment in mental health support and research.
- **Youth Dance:** The absence of a youth dance company was lamented, with respondents highlighting its impact on pathways for future artists and audiences for dance. There is a perceived decline in opportunities for secondary dance students to attend performances.
- **Ausdance WA's Role:** Respondents valued Ausdance WA for its role in providing access to information, networking, professional development, support, advocacy, and visibility. There is a strong need for a coordinated body like Ausdance WA to address sector challenges effectively.

More specifically, outlined below are the key factors in the industry that the dance sector noted as working well:

- **The Dance Community and Collaboration** – “A sense of community”
- **Artistic and Professional Development** – “Opportunities for learning and personal development.”
- **Education and Outreach** – “The Dance teaching network: education resources.”
- **Performance Opportunities and Support** – “Lots of short works being made with STRUT support.”⁶
- **Innovation and Adaptability** – “Perseverance of local artists.”
- **Cultural Respect and Diversity** – “Indigenous ways of being are being respected and followed.”

Key challenges reported by respondents in the online survey include:

- **Funding and Financial Support** – “Insufficient support/funding.”
- **Infrastructure and Resources** – “Lack of adequate facilities.”
- **Education and Training** – “Lack of professional learning.”
- **Leadership and Advocacy** – “Shared vision and advocacy for whole sector.”
- **Collaboration and Networking** – “Communication and outreach.”
- **Wellbeing** – “no initiatives to scope dance teachers’ awareness/interest in learning about... or providing education/professional development on social and emotional wellbeing.”

Notably, several of the factors that were raised as working well were also presented as challenges. This appears to indicate that there are common issues of awareness, and whilst the awareness is evident and, in some instances, leading to improvement, there is recognition of more to be done to achieve success. In addition, the challenges highlighted deficiencies in specific circumstances, that is, whilst common themes existed between what was working well and what were regarded as challenges, the challenges tended to be less generic.

Survey participants were also asked to share significant challenges outside of their primary area of involvement with the dance sector. These issues complemented those highlighted above, with some additional insights:

- Challenges in developing programs that engage a wider range of participants across different age groups.
- Difficulties in attracting males to consider dance as a recreational or professional career option.
- Competition with other recreational activities.
- Concerns about respect and wages in independent dance and private dance schools.
- Lack of government recognition for the dance sector.
- Calls for more collaboration, support, and shared resources within the performing arts industry as a whole.
- Desire for a shift away from competitive attitudes towards collaboration and mutual learning.
- Lack of support for youth dance
- Need for more affordable classes for professional dancers.

Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent a number of prompted options regarding sector improvement might address the issues they had raised as sector challenges.

The prompted areas of improvement were separated into four categories:

- Networks and Communication
- Professional Development
- Investment and Funding
- Producing and Venues

In summary, the key prompted areas of improvement that respondents considered would help address the challenges they’d raised under each category were:

- Advocacy for the dance sector;
- Communicating/promoting the value of dance outside the sector;
- Codes of practice agreed standards for teaching environments;
- Providing services to the dance sector in regional WA;
- Additional financial support/investment;
- Better designed, or more appropriate support/investment programs;

⁶ This concerns contemporary practice only.

- Availability of appropriate venues for performance; and,
- Availability of appropriate venues for rehearsal.

When removing classification by categories, the options that almost two-thirds or more of respondents considered would most help address the challenges they'd raised were:

- Advocacy for the dance sector **93%**
- Additional financial support/investment **87%**
- Communicating/promoting the value of dance outside the sector **87%**
- Better designed, or more appropriate support/investment programs **86%**
- A calendar of dance events **81%**
- Improved communication within the sector **76%**
- Notifications about funding/support programs **73%**
- Access to and/or advice about philanthropy/sponsorship **71%**
- Codes of practice / agreed standards for teaching environments **68%**
- Providing services to the dance sector in regional WA **67%**
- Availability of appropriate venues for performance **65%**
- Cultural Safety training **64%**

When comparing these percentage outcomes to the four categories, a focus on Networks and Communication, and Investment and Funding were most prevalent with the top eight areas of improvement falling into these categories, with Professional Development next most dominant, and Producing and Venues noted as the area of improvement least likely to address the challenges faced by the dance sector.

It is important to note that the areas of improvement were predetermined and may not precisely reflect the core needs of the sector.⁷

Subsequently, respondents were asked to provide solutions (unprompted) to help address the challenges that they noted.

Unprompted solutions provided by respondents focused on the following key areas:

- Streamlined Grant Application Process
- Accreditation and Professional Development
- Feedback and Mentorship
- Building the Dance Community and Collaboration
- In-school Dance Education
- Infrastructure and Resource Accessibility
- Professional Development and Training
- Community Engagement and Promotion
- Venue Accessibility and Liability Concerns

The above unprompted solutions are strongly aligned with the higher ranked prompted solutions.

This information formed the basis of investigation for facilitated workshops with each of the sub-sector groups.

⁷ Predetermined areas of potential solutions may have inadvertently focused on subsidised companies and independent practice, potentially skewing the responses of schoolteachers or studio teachers, who make up a significant percentage of the respondents.

6 Key Findings from the Facilitated Workshops

Facilitated workshops were conducted with each of the five sub-sectors, plus an online workshop to enable regional participation.

The workshops used information from the survey to direct further investigation. Specifically, workshop participants were asked to assess the validity and comment on key issues identified as part of the survey. In addition, workshop participants were asked to identify and prioritise issues specific to their sub-sector.

None of the key issues identified via the online survey were noted as immaterial by the workshop participants.

Workshop participants confirmed generic industry-wide issues and contributed additional sub-sector issues - this forms the basis for the structure of how recommendations are presented in this report.

Specific issues were assessed along with more generic issues to identify key priorities.

Key issues in each sub-sector are outlined to the right. It is important to note that some generic issues (e.g. networking and communication, funding and investment) are not noted under each sub-sector as participants regarded these as known existing issues.

It is also important to note that the issues listed below are those that were considered priorities for that sub-sector and as such the list of issues for each sub-sector is intentionally non-exhaustive.

Industry-wide issues identified as part of the online survey were subsequently confirmed by the workshop participants, and include:

- Communication connection and collaboration (within the sector);
- Funding and investment;
- Industry leadership, coordination and resource sharing;
- Advocacy; value, visibility and 'a voice' for the dance sector;
- Accreditation / minimum standards / codes of practice;
- Audience development;
- Diversity and Inclusion; particularly Cultural safety – practice and training;
- Work conditions and wellbeing;
- Youth dance;
- Training and professional development;
- Infrastructure (performance and rehearsal venues)
- Regional support; and,
- Child safety.

The issues in the table on page 16 are highly consistent with issues raised in national reports and meetings.

KEY ISSUES

STUDIO OWNERS/TEACHERS	SUBSIDISED DANCE CO'S	YOUTH SECTOR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child safety. • Professional development and teacher qualifications. • Communication and connection. • Pay scales & work conditions. • Access to funding and investment for private entities. • Career paths. • Lack of regulation in private dance sector (particularly competition based programs). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access, pathways and reach. • Performance and rehearsal spaces. • Funding and investment. • Audiences / audience development. • Coordination and collaboration in the sector. • Leadership, advocacy and profile raising. • Lack of a 'dance sector strategy'. • Capacity to provide industry support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth dance as a gap in the ecology. • Social and emotional support/development of young people. • Lack of suitably qualified dance teachers. • Lack of knowledge of what's happening in the sector. • Changing nature of young people (impact of social media).

INDEPENDENTS	TEACHERS IN SCHOOLS	ONLINE WORKSHOP / REGIONAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable careers and livelihoods. • Opportunities to work (create/present). • Practice sharing opportunities. • Mentoring for early career artists. • Performance and rehearsal spaces. • Grant application feedback. • Producing support and services. • Accessible, affordable and consistent training sources (e.g. daily class). • Invisibility of their sub-sector and individual artists. • Specific support for early career artists. • Value of dance and health (e.g. connection to Dance for Parkinson's). • Different needs at different career stages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child safety and mental health/wellbeing. • Appropriately trained teachers. • Mentoring and training opportunities. • Flexible work conditions. • Encouragement of students to take dance as an ATAR subject (and communication of the associated value). • Resource sharing. • Lack of boys in dance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available and appropriate spaces. • Cultural awareness, safety and training. • Pathways for regional choreographers (exposure and visibility). • Rare opportunities for artists' development, upskilling and collaboration with metropolitan-based companies. • Access to skilled dancers. • Business and practice sustainability issues. • Lack of First Nations pathways particularly for young people • Lack of connection (inter-regional and regional-metro). • Quality arts experiences particularly for young people. • Lack of arts and cultural policy plans in regional areas.

7 Analysis

The information below draws relationships and deductions from the findings from both the online survey and face to face workshops.

The issues raised and outlined below form the basis of recommendations and strategic priorities.

Draft Recommendations were reviewed by an advisory group and Ausdance staff. This process sought feedback and additional information.

It also allowed for further prioritisation of the issues raised and necessary actions to be taken.

The focus of this research has been concerned with identifying common and priority issues across the various sub-sectors. Recommendations are based on ideas suggested throughout the consultation (online and in-person), desktop research, discussions with Ausdance staff, and the consultant's knowledge and experience.

Further discussion and consultation will be undertaken to explore the practicalities and expand further, the identified solutions to ensure the action taken to address the key issues are appropriate and achievable.

7.1 Value and Advocacy

In addition to the issues detailed below, a consistent implicit theme exists that pervades all sub-sectors, and appears in much of the feedback. This theme primarily concerns recognition of the value of the dance sector (and its participants) and similarly, the visibility, and a voice for the dance sector. This is demonstrated by the importance placed on the need for advocacy in the sector noted by respondents and participants.

Likewise, empowerment of the sector was an important and recurrent theme.

One third of respondents did not feel that they had the

capability, capacity or influence to deliver solutions to address the issues they had raised. This appears to be related to broader systemic issues as opposed to individual challenges. Commentary suggested that the passion and perseverance of sector participants tends to enable them to overcome smaller issues.

This is reflected by responses that suggest that support is sought at levels that are out of reach for respondents.

This was also reflected in responses regarding the need for change in the dance sector with 61% of respondents indicating the sector needs major change and 39% reporting that sector needs to make minor change.⁸ No respondents considered that the sector need not make any changes.

Closely aligned to empowerment was advocacy. This was the factor that most respondents (93%) indicated was likely to affect positive change. A majority of respondents (55%) reported that they were dissatisfied with the current level of advocacy being undertaken by the sector.

The perceived lack of advocacy and low levels of empowerment are indicative of a sense, portrayed by some aspects of the sector, that it is not recognised as a valuable contributor to the cultural life of W.A., and nor are the individual efforts of its constituents. This is reflected

⁸ Responses from the 2007 Future Moves survey are similar, noting that 62% said the sector needs to make major changes, and 36% said the sector needs to make minor changes.

in practical ways such as remuneration, along with less tangible factors such as simply being listened to.

This notion was also apparent (predominantly in the Independent subsector) where issues of ‘agency’ and ‘self-determination’ were raised. Somewhat contrarily, this group often reported the desire for administrative, management, and/or producing support. Maintaining independence and having appropriate support in such a way that enables empowerment of the independent subsector appears to require tailored solutions specific to the circumstances.

Collectively these issues indicate an absence of, and a need for, sector leadership – in particular, a connector/coordinator of information and resources, and a driver of industry support and development.

Many of the recommendations outlined below do not require significant resourcing. Moreso, they require the identification, coordination and direction (or redirection) of existing resources.

The information gathered as part of this research strongly indicates that a wealth of talent, skills, experience and information exists within the current dance sector. However, this critical resource is not being efficiently shared or leveraged to address identified gaps in the sector.

An entity such as Ausdance that centralises and distributes information is a consistently reported need that would support (to varying extents) many of the issues identified in this research.

Ausdance WA's role in the sector

Drawing the above elements together, many respondents made comments in reference to ideas and solutions that might address the challenges in the sector that included, ‘who would coordinate...’, or ‘who would manage that’, or ‘if there was a centralised source of information...’, or ‘if this could be standardised...’.

A number of the challenges raised by respondents were common to many in the dance sector and indeed reflect common issues raised at the National Dance Gathering of the sector in Brisbane in 2023 (e.g. advocacy, funding strategies, career issues, access to appropriate infrastructure, cultural safety and child safety) and a recent report comprising a national scan of the Independent dance sector in Australia authored by Carl Sciberras, Joshua Lowe, Frankie Snowdon.

Centralised and coordinated services and resources represents a cost effective way to help address sector issues. Indeed, resourcing one agency well is likely to have an exponential benefit to the industry as a whole in terms of effectively managing and directing people to existing resources. Similarly, specific local dance sector knowledge is critical to the design of systems and processes to support the sector – relying on leadership, support and services from non-local and/or non-dance entities is unreliable and ineffective.

Three key areas summarise the main reasons why respondents valued Ausdance WA. These include:

- Access to Information and Networking
- Professional Development and Support
- Advocacy and Visibility

The alignment between the issues raised as needing attention and the value previously provided by Ausdance indicates a strong need for a body such as Ausdance WA to exist.

It is important to note that a centralised body should not be expected to possess all the information, resources and opportunities required by the sector, nor should they be burdened with the responsibility of seeking out all the available resources. As a centre-point or hub, it would provide a known and understood ‘go to’ point of contact for the sector as the place to seek resources. The act of being asked for resources, would alert a centralised body to the need for those resources and in doing so prompt them to add to their existing resource bank. This would also ensure a centralised body is consistently kept abreast of sector needs. In some instances the function of such a body may just be to direct people, from inside and outside the sector, to reliable external resources. In this way, Ausdance acts as a valuable connector.

The absence of such a resources creates significant missed opportunities that would otherwise support many aspects of the sector. Therefore, the core function of such a body would be to act as a resource collator and director, and distiller and communicator of industry needs. This is akin to the function of an air traffic control tower at an airport: not flying the planes, but directing the traffic to enable coordination, safety and efficient use of the system. The information below provides further discussion about the general key themes.

7.2 Regional Support

Outreach was a factor that the industry reported was working well. However, regional support was also a significant issue that was raised by a majority of respondents as a factor that could help address key challenges. Specifically, this was in terms of providing services to the dance sector across WA.

Regional infrastructure for ongoing engagement and training was noted as a need, as was support for increased investment in touring.

The connection between regional support and a priority to support awareness, training, and implementation of cultural protocols and culturally safe practice was also drawn.

Advocacy to local governments in regional areas was another factor that was reported as potentially contributing to support the sector and was recognised as an area that could affect positive change if appropriately resourced.

The potential for bringing regional organisations together to work on a collective strategy was also identified as a need. Organisations including Regional Arts WA, CircuitWest, Co3, WA Ballet, Marrugeku and the WA Museum were suggested.

Providing additional regional support for dance was also noted as a means to more equitably provide resources and opportunities.

Participants in the online workshop noted their appreciation for the opportunity to contribute to the consultation project. They also noted their desire, and need, to have a means of communicating challenges that are faced in a regional context. This is consistent with a need for greater connection in the sector to help reduce isolation and allow for more information sharing and support.

Regional commentary noted the groundswell of interest in dance regionally and several factors that were working well including:

- Informal network of First Nations' dancers;
- Regional Arts and Cultural Investment Program (RACIP) funding (DLGSC);

- Work of CircuitWest;
- Increasing awareness of cultural respect;
- Positive appetite and feedback; and
- Increasing numbers of dance teachers in the regions.

7.3 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

A commitment to inclusivity and respect for diverse perspectives was prevalent throughout much of the commentary and responses in the online survey and in face to face workshops.

Specifically, this related to recognising the value of First Nations stories, opportunities for learning, and personal and professional development associated with cultural protocols, and performance opportunities for diverse artists.

Respondents noted a lack of meaningful engagement with First Nations practitioners in WA. Just over one third (34%) of survey respondents noted both in terms of First Nations practice and all abilities practice that they were 'not at all', or only 'a little bit' informed and able to include such practice and artists into their area of work.

Almost two thirds (65%) of respondents noted that an increase in the diversity of dance product (e.g. shows) would contribute to addressing challenges they raised about the sector.

82% of respondents agreed that advocating for education concerning cultural safety is important.

It appears that there is a need to address these issues collectively and holistically to provide for more inclusive and culturally appropriate practices.

This is consistent with the recent national scan of the independent dance sector (authored by C. Sciberras, J. Lowe and F. Snowdon, 2024), which reported that indigenous, cultural and intellectual property was a critical area that required additional support, noting the burden of poorly resourced labour for cultural consultancy and educating others (particularly organisations).

Other issues concerning equity and inclusion concerned the equitable distribution and availability of resources.

Participants noted the perception of a ‘select few’ being consistently supported (and successful in grant rounds). This notion was raised by early-career artists who similarly noted the lack of supportive environments, pathways and feedback that appeared available to other parts of the dance sector. Importantly, these comments were raised in order to explore options for greater support for early-career artists (not to criticise those artists receiving support more consistently).

A similar issue concerned a lack of curatorial influence for independent artists, noting the need to ‘fit in’ with the curatorial framework of others, thus limiting their agency.

Inequity of opportunities and resource availability and distribution was also noted by regional participants. Exposure for regional artists/creators, practice sharing opportunities, and network opportunities (favouring metropolitan areas) were specifically noted.

Issues regarding the inequity of wages, fees and work conditions/benefits associated with independent practice (gig workers) were also noted. Specifically noted was the fact that wages/fees associated with casual and short-term contract work do not realistically reflect the preparation and administration of providing these services.

No notable mention of culturally diverse practice or audiences was raised. This is likely to reflect the lack of cultural diversity represented amongst the participants in the consultation process. Dedicated research in this space is recommended.

7.4 Funding and Investment

Additional investment in the sector was, not surprisingly, offered as a solution to many challenges by the majority of respondents. Importantly, almost as many respondents (86%) noted that improvements to funding programs (program design) was as important as additional investment alone (87%).

This sentiment is also reflected in respondents’ views in which 86% of respondents believed that the WA dance sector as a whole would benefit greatly from working more closely with local, state and federal government funding agencies.

Learning and feedback opportunities in regard to the grant application process were also noted as being valuable.

74% of respondents noted that they wanted sector change regardless of the availability of additional funding. This is compared to 52% of respondents from the Future Moves survey in 2007 indicated that they were desirous of change even with no increases to the current level of sector funding. This indicates an increased willingness for change regardless of funding and may suggest a reduced reliance on funding support and/or confidence of achieving success in securing increased funding. These assumptions require further investigation.

86% of respondents indicated that additional funding is required to consolidate what the sector is already achieving (compared to 64% from the Future Moves report). This suggests that the sector may not be sustainable under current levels of funding.

96% noted that additional funding is required to expand on what the sector is already achieving⁹. Sentiment in the commentary suggests that some parts of the sector are in survival mode. Sector-wide sentiment suggests that sustainability is an appropriate goal, and that a flourishing and/or growing sector may well be too ambitious to consider.

Investment was noted as being required across many aspects of the sector including performance, learning, training and career pathways. Several comments noted the need for specific investment directed at early-career artists.

Independent artists noted that their potential to attract corporate and philanthropic support presented challenges due to both their own capacity limits, and their perceived value of what they could supply in return.

This is an area worthy of further investigation, noting that smaller contributions (e.g. \$1-\$5K) could potentially provide significant benefits to smaller scale projects, professional development and accessibility programs.

The inability of private studios to access funding to

⁹ This is consistent with the Future Moves report which noted that 93% want additional funding to expand on what sector is already achieving.

support non-commercial aspects of operations (e.g. providing equity and access programs) was also noted as an issue.

7.5 Industry Communication, Connection, and Networks

Increasing communication and networks was positively and consistently reported by participants, notably both within the dance sector and by connecting the dance sector with other networks.

A primary strength of the sector was a generalised sense of connection; a belief in supporting the dance sector and building relationships through collaboration and connection with like-minded individuals and the broader dance community.

This provides a strong base from which to expand and coordinate sector communications and networks.

In spite of the existing sense of connection in the dance sector, 75% of respondents noted that improved communication within the sector would positively address the challenges they had raised. This was evident with many participants noting that several good written resources exist that many seemed unaware of.

In terms of connection and communication, establishing relationships between the various subsectors was noted as being beneficial. This was well articulated by a respondent to the national scan of the independent dance sector¹⁰ with the following statement:

“... I need a facilitated dialogue between companies... and independent artists... How can we create a space where independents can express their needs and organisations can discuss their limitations, and from there we can find what is possible within all of our capacities.”

Extending connection to other networks was also noted with 95% of respondents agreeing that the WA dance sector would benefit greatly from working more closely with the education sector. This is indicative of the potential benefits of expanding connections and communication beyond the dance sector.

A strong indication of the need for simple and effective communication in the sector was reflected in the significant response by respondents (91%) noting that a

centralised calendar of dance events would be extremely or very valuable.

Respondents across all subsectors noted the need and potential benefits of centralised information.

More specifically, respondents noted the need and potential for shared resources and a shared vision for the whole sector. This extended to the idea of directories/databases for producers, teachers, artists, services and facilities. These issues are closely aligned with value and advocacy needs highlighted at 8.1.

It was also noted that high levels of experience and information (intellectual capital) are located within a relatively limited number of individuals – a means of capturing, sharing and leveraging this experience and knowledge appears warranted.

7.6 Infrastructure

Lack of adequate facilities was noted as one of the key factors reported by respondents when asked to contribute three factors that they felt were challenges in the dance sector.

Key factors concerning infrastructure that were raised by respondents included improving access to affordable rehearsal and performance venues that appropriately meet dance performance and rehearsal needs (i.e. accommodate Safe Dance Practices).

Creating purpose-built facilities for dance rehearsal and performance in regional areas was also identified as a need.

Respondents noted existing programs that enabled artists to have low-cost access to facilities for creative development in regional areas (when venues were not otherwise programmed).

Infrastructure was consistently raised as a major challenge, noting the significant cost associated with addressing the issue.

¹⁰ Independent Dance Sector Report: A National Scan of the Independent Dance Sector in Australia (C. Sciberras, J. Lowe and F. Snowdon, 2024).

7.7 Marketing, Promotion and Visibility

Improving access to marketing support through government and independent bodies (e.g. Arts and Culture Trust and Perth Festival) was noted as a need by the sector. This issue however, was not raised as a major priority. This may be due to low expectations in the sector, as it is apparent that audiences (predominantly for contemporary dance) seem limited. The absence of prioritisation of audience development in the sector is unresolved and requires further attention.

Only 38% of respondents reported that they were satisfied with the level of audiences attending paid performances. A further 59% noted that the level of public support for dance presents a barrier to the development of the sector, and almost one third (32%) were dissatisfied with the promotion of dance to audiences.

This broadly suggests an opportunity for improvement in marketing communications and audience development. At the broader level it appears that the low visibility of the sector (with audiences and other stakeholders) reported by participants, may be limiting sector sustainability and growth, which indicates that support at a brand/positioning level might be beneficial, particularly in regard to addressing perceptions that contemporary dance is inaccessible.

Together, audience development and visibility factors contribute to the recognition issues raised above, and an associated perceived lack of respect and value of and for the dance sector and the individuals in it. This is not the same in all aspects of the industry, with greater prevalence in the independent and subsidised sectors. As such, strategies must be tailored with respective targets and outcomes in mind.

7.8 Professional Development, Wellbeing and Work

Professional development issues were strongly linked to accreditation issues (note below).

Respondents indicated that of the options provided regarding Professional Development, 'codes of practice

/ agreed standards for teaching environments' was the factor that would most positively affect sector challenges they raised (68%).¹¹

93% of respondents had undertaken their own professional development/training since becoming a teacher, and 100% of respondents noted that they seek opportunities to further their teaching skills and knowledge.

Some commentary noted the notion of recognition for prior learning might be applicable, providing the potential to evaluate a person's skills, knowledge and experience gained through work skills and their exposure to the industry.

Opportunities that are available to further teaching skills and knowledge appears to be an issue with 43% of respondents noting they were dissatisfied with existing opportunities and for teachers in schools, 63% expressed that professional development opportunities are inadequate.

The affordability and regular availability of professional dance classes was also noted.

Wellbeing and work

Respondents noted the extent to which the sector does not reliably provide employment with 62% of respondents undertaking work outside of dance in order to gain additional income.

A majority of respondents (70%) noted that they have one or more additional dance related occupations. 38% of respondents have two or more additional dance related occupations. This indicates the extent to which much of the dance sector must 'multi-task' across various roles in the sector to secure an income.

¹¹ Historically, Ausdance WA has been recognised as the primary provider of PD for dance teachers in schools in WA. A strong relationship with School Curriculum and Standards Authority has meant ongoing offering of the ATAR Set Solo workshop, with a range of other curriculum-specific practical PD opportunities offered in conjunction such as technique, choreography or improvisation.

The stressors related with unreliable work, particularly in relation to cost of living pressures and the current housing crisis, were commonly noted as contributing to wellbeing and mental health issues.

74% of respondents whose primary area of involvement in the dance sector was as an independent artist were dissatisfied with the salary/fee they earn.

The adjacent issue was raised in commentary about the limitations this places on being able to specialise or indeed concentrate effort to master one area of the dance sector (performing, choreographing, teaching etc.). Similarly, associated protections of work conditions for artists was raised with two thirds of respondents noting that having union representation was important.

Similarly, the availability of employment opportunities was noted in varying degrees as a barrier contributing to career development.

Wellbeing was raised as one of the top three factors that respondents noted were challenges in the sector. This appears to not only be an issue with those working in the sector (i.e. their wellbeing) but also the wellbeing of the people they are working with, particularly young people.

Factors associated with work opportunities, conditions, and career development appear to contribute to the wellbeing of individuals as well as the 'health' of the sector at large.

As such the provision of education/professional development on social and emotional wellbeing was specifically noted. Similarly, mental health training was noted by respondents. Commentary also reflected the need for investment into research regarding the wellbeing of dancers and issues associated with their careers. The need to recognise and support the mental health impacts associated with the sector more generally was also raised.

7.9 Accreditation and Codes of Practice

78% of respondents noted that teacher accreditation was important and 85% of respondents noted that they always practice Ausdance Safe Dance® Practices.

A very strong proportion of respondents (90%) noted that

base-line accreditation such as Working with Children Checks, police clearances and first aid were necessary. This reflects dance teachers' awareness and responsibility to deliver a duty of care.

71% of respondents agreed that they would support compulsory dance teacher qualifications. Cost, affordability, time and accessibility were noted as potential barriers to compulsory training. Further investigation is required as to the specifics of required qualifications as 25 different types of qualification/accreditation were suggested by respondents.

Agreed standards of teaching was a factor that was raised in respondent commentary. Notably, no direct tertiary pathway to dance teaching exists in WA. There also appears to be an issue of misinformation in that reportedly there is a lack of demand for such a course, in spite of commentary to the contrary.

Further exploration of the mandatory nature of qualifications and accreditation was undertaken in the workshop settings. This was the subject of differing opinions, noting that in some instances, such as some culturally specific dance forms, mandatory accreditation may not be appropriate.

Mandatory qualifications and accreditation were also raised as being dependent on the teaching environment, noting that whilst the dance teacher may not have specific accreditation, support staff in the immediate environment (i.e. inside the classroom/studio) with accreditation may provide an appropriate solution.

The question of mandatory qualifications and accreditation was unresolved. Proposed solutions included that such accreditation should be a 'strongly advised' requirement as opposed to mandatory. Alternatively, that a standard of best practice could be established with teachers or schools/studios noting their compliance (or otherwise) with such an agreed standard. The intention of this was to shift the onus of responsibility (or choice) to the parent/carer/guardian of the student.

7.10 Youth dance

Commentary concerning Youth Dance was strong, with many respondents lamenting the loss to the dance sector ecology as a result of the absence of a youth dance company like the former Steps Youth Dance Co, and the

youth activity formerly undertaken by Co3.
Almost half (46%) of respondents noted their dissatisfaction with the amount of dance presented by young people.

Commentary from workshops noted related impacts of that absence, including pathways for future artists and audiences for dance, the absence of work that was more relevant to young people, the supportive opportunities afforded to boys and young men who might not have an affinity with sport, the non-competitive nature of such a company (as opposed to dance competitions), and more broadly as a constructive means for young peoples' self-expression.

An associated issue was the ability of secondary dance students being able to attend dance performances with a majority of respondents agreeing that they believed there are fewer opportunities of evening excursions to see dance performances than five years ago. 60% of respondents agreed that it was more difficult to arrange excursions than five years ago.

The lack of opportunity for young people to experience (observe) professional dance productions was noted in workshops (notably in both metropolitan and regional settings). Associated consequences were raised regarding dance career options, expectations regarding the standards of dance, and future dance audiences.

Participants in workshop sessions also raised issues regarding the changing nature/behaviours of young people including attention span and physical capacities for dance. They also noted the impact of a lack of professional dance educators in primary school, having follow-on effects in a secondary teaching setting where a reduction in the uptake and interest in dance was reported. Similarly, a focus on academic success was reportedly dissuading students from taking dance as an ATAR subject.

Programs offered by West Australian Ballet and Perth Festival were positively regarded.

An issue associated with youth dance that crosses over into many other issues associated with teaching environments, value, recognition, communication, inclusion and advocacy is that of the perceived benefits of dance. This was most strongly reflected by comments from a teacher in a workshop about their 'promotion' work undertaken with the principal in their school to reinforce all the good things that dance can do for students:

"...the principal realises the wellbeing, fitness, expression, safety, confidence, friendships that exist among high school."

8 Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION	IMPORTANCE	AUSDANCE WA'S ROLE
Leadership, Advocacy and Relationship Management		
1. Develop a WA Dance Strategy including a dedicated campaign to increase re-sources for dance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake 1-day facilitated planning session with working party/reference group and valued contributors to inform dance strategy. • Develop a plan to increase the visibility and salience of dance in the minds of decision-makers who are associated with the allocation and/or availability of resources for dance. e.g. government representations, information presentations at industry events such as CircuitWest Showcase, letter writing campaigns etc. 	High	Lead and Initiate
2. Ongoing relationship management to build greater connection with Education sector.	High	Lead
3. Targeted strategy to increase the visibility of dance with government and major influencers.	High	Lead/Initiate
4. Establish relationships with key organisations that could provide support to the dance sector (e.g. Reconciliation Australia, Government departments, WA Local Government Association, Industry service organisations, MEAA, Office of the Arts, Creative Australia etc).	High	Lead/Initiate
5. Communicate the narratives, data, and needs distinctly for each sub-sector.	High	Lead/Initiate
6. Facilitate greater understanding of the needs of the Independent Sector and the capacity of the funded dance organisations to provide support to them.	High	Lead/Initiate
7. Encourage and promote inter-organisational collaboration e.g. co-presenting and commissioning.	Medium	Influence
8. Support improved communication of the role of Strut.	Medium	Influence
9. Develop a strategy to influence WA Primary Principals Association re value/outcomes of dance (creativity, confidence, critical thinking skills, wellbeing, fitness, collaboration, friendship).	Medium	Influence/Pass on
10. Establish an annual relaxed gathering for the industry to provide updates, information sharing and to connect the industry (unwaged are paid to attend).	Medium	Lead

Regional		
1. Partner with Regional Arts WA and/or CircuitWest to provide systems and mechanisms that enable inter-regional and metropolitan-regional connections specifically for dance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bi-annual facilitated online forum; • Bursaries to assist with travel for 'connection events'; • One-day connection event prior to CircuitWest's annual Showcase. 	Medium	Influence/Pass on
2. Encourage and support WA Dance Studio Owners (WADSO) to be more inclusive noting WADSO's value.	Medium	Influence
3. Advocate for funding opportunities for FIFO artists (potentially in-kind with resource sector e.g. flights) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the potential to establish 'tours' of professional artists into regional private dance studios – potentially supported by the Resource sector. 	Medium	Influence
4. Promote the need for development of arts and culture plans in regional areas	Medium	Influence
5. Investigate the viability of a Local Government supported 'off-season' program to provide residencies in regional communities that make use of unused spaces – providing in-kind accommodation and supporting travel and per diems (injecting business into the local economy in 'down' periods).	Low	Influence

Regional		
6. Actively seek engagement with Local Government regarding arts infrastructure development projects.	Low	Influence
7. Explore viability of a touring model for short dance performances (under 15mins) – aligned with workshop program in regional areas e.g. five dancers/teachers – 5 x 10 min works + Q&A – funded for three year minimum to same regional towns/com-munities to build relationships, a dance language, and audiences.	Low	Influence
8. Advocate for increased quality professional arts experience in regional areas (particularly for young people).	Low	Influence
9. Advocacy strategy with Local government to communicate the difference between commercial and subsidised performances their respective benefits and outcomes.	Low	Influence

Equity Inclusion		
1. Advocate for funding bodies to acknowledge and accommodate the ‘time’ factor involved in a First Nations context in regard to building trust and relationships and undertaking appropriate cultural safety practice, and the impact this has on projects.	High	Influence/Pass on
2. Advocate for programs that increase knowledge and action in the dance sector, regarding Indigenous Cultural Intellectual Property (ICIP), cultural protocols, and practice.	High	Influence/Pass on
3. Develop a program that supports awareness, training and implementation of cultural safety and inter-cultural practice. (Potentially partnering with Government departments, Reconciliation Australia, Blak Dance etc).	High	Lead and Collaborate

Funding and Investment		
1. Advocate increased investment in dance using the strategy developed as part of Regional Recommendation 8.	High	Lead/Initiate
2. Advocate for artform specific funding and assessment with the DLGSC.	Medium	Influence
3. Advocate for more meaningful feedback mechanism for grant applicants / post grant round as a training and support opportunity (to help address wellbeing and sector development - could be linked to CACWA Employee Assistance Program).	Medium	Influence
4. Investigate potential for a ‘micro investment’ program – matching donors with small scale investment needs of independent and early-career artists.	Medium	Influence
5. Advocate for grant assessors to be required to write a statement as to why a grant application is less competitive than others, as part of their formal assessment process.	Medium	Influence

Infrastructure		
1. Facilitate venue support/access/affordability/subsidy and coordination of venues’ ‘dark periods’ for creative development (city and regional) – based on Dance Artists In Residence (DAIR) program.	High	Lead and Initiate
2. Establish a database/directory of suitable rehearsal and performance spaces for independent practice.	Medium	Influence
3. Instigate a dance facility needs assessment in regional WA.	Low	Influence
4. Share Safe Dance Practice information that can be used as a tool to inform arts infrastructure projects (for integration into cultural centres).	Low	Lead
5. Identify and establish a list of appropriately skilled consultants that can provide expert advice in regard to dance needs associated with cultural infrastructure.	Low	Lead

Marketing and Audience Development		
1. Make representations to government to increase awareness of the conditions specific to the dance sector to allow it to thrive.	High	Lead/Initiate
2. Advocate for better coordination of marketing data and services (e.g. Arts and Culture Trust and Perth Festival) to support marketing of performances (notably for Independent projects).	Medium	Influence/Pass on
3. Advocate for CACWA to provide greater representation of the dance sector.	Medium	Influence/Pass on
4. Influence company Chairs to communicate the value of dance in their networks.	Medium	Influence/Pass on
5. Investigate opportunities to provide basic marketing advice for the Independent sector (potentially as part of PD/Arts Management day).	Low	Influence/Pass on

Training and Resources		
1. Establish, communicate and implement minimum standards in child safety practice – work with existing appropriate organisations (e.g. Sport West) to develop?	High	Lead/Collaborate
2. Update and provide templates regarding codes of conduct, child safety, protocols for working with children and young people.	High	Lead/Initiate
3. Establish a recommended code of conduct (minimum standards) like a 'quality mark/certification' that dance schools/studios/teachers can elect to comply with, and accordingly promote as part of their business/practice.	High	Lead/Initiate
4. Establish minimum dance teacher accreditation (focussed on safety and code of conduct) NOTE: narrower than the above point, designed specifically for dance teachers.	High	Lead/Initiate
5. Develop an online listing of organisations conducting 'company' class to support affordability and access to daily class for Independent artists.	Medium	Influence
6. Develop a WAAPA arts management graduate program aligned to a dance organisation to enable producer support for independent artists, practical learning opportunities and employment for graduates, and human resource support for funded organisations. (Akin to a one-year arts management apprenticeship.)	Medium	Influence
7. PD day for early-career artists, connecting early-career artists with producers/grant writers – a day specifically about arts management for dance.	Medium	Lead/Collaborate
8. Create an online directory of peripatetic teachers available to take workshops in schools.	Medium	Initiate
9. Advocate for (provide evidence of, need for) specific Dance Teacher training at tertiary level. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure demand for qualified teachers to inform training institutions. • Investigate tertiary dance teacher training models (e.g. QUT). 	Medium	Influence
10. Coordinate inclusion of dance PD at existing schools' meetings/events/platforms (like DramaWest) e.g. CEWA and AISWA network days.	Medium	Influence/Pass on
11. Develop a mentorship program linking mature artists to early-career artists/teachers/producers.	Medium	Lead and Initiate
12. Encourage opportunities for practice sharing (e.g. in First Nations and all-abilities space).	Medium	Influence/Pass on
13. Collaboration with subsidised companies to provide high quality PD for a pool of teaching artists (in turn ensuring practitioners maintain relevant skills and organisations know who these contacts are).	Medium	Lead and Initiate

Wellbeing and Work

1. Identify and promote opportunities for mental health training (potentially in partnership with CACWA's Employee Assistance Program).	High	Influence/Pass on
2. Develop a 'dance career' information session that can be conducted in high-schools prior to ATAR subject selection period (also available online).	Medium	Influence/Pass on
3. Advocate for the development of information sessions on contracts and work conditions specific to dance (potentially partnering with Performing Lines, Live Performance Australia, MEAA, Strut etc)	Medium	Influence/Pass on

Producing and Presentation

1. Undertake youth dance pilot performance (a new version of STEPS model). • Investigate Quarry Amphitheatre 'Cavern' as potential low-cost venue.	High	Lead
2. Advocate for a performance coordinator in the Education Department (linking professional performances with schools).	High	Influence/Pass on
3. Facilitate the provision of mentoring support (management and creative) via paid and volunteer sources.	Medium	Initiate
4. Advocate for more 'low stakes', short performance opportunities (like Short Cuts and IN.HOUSE).	Medium	Influence/Pass on
5. Create an online a directory of producer contacts to enable early-career artists and producers to connect.	Medium	Initiate
6. Commission a 'dance producers' guide' – simple manual providing guidance on key dance-producing functions.	Medium	Initiate
7. Re-establish a 'boys-can-dance' initiative to encourage males to be involved with dance.	Low	Influence

Research

1. Research project regarding the wellbeing of dancers specifically investigating issues associated with their careers and work conditions (potentially in partnership with Creative Workplaces, an initiative of the Australian Government's National Cultural Policy: Revive)	High	Initiate/Pass on
2. Explore models of art/business training such as Creative Plus Business model in NSW, with a view to replicating in WA.	Medium	Initiate/Pass on
3. Undertake research into independent dance sector funding, collating data and tracking and identifying trends to provide insight to help address challenges.	Medium	Lead and Initiate
4. Map needs of sub-sectors at each stage of development (early, mid, established).	Low	Lead
5. Evaluate the successes and challenges of previous dance touring models – Made to Move, Roadworks, Mobile States to support development of regional touring development.	Low	Influence/Pass on
6. Source research into changes amongst attitudes/adaptive behaviours/consent/lifestyle of young people to support the pilot of a youth dance pilot performance.	Low	Influence/Pass on

9 Appendix A

- Respondent Profile

The total number of respondents was 79. Of the 79 responses 16 were incomplete (did not complete the survey or did not enter 'submit') representing an 80% completion rate. Of the 16 incomplete responses, 7 responses were deemed to have insufficient information to be included in the sample set.

The average time spent to complete the survey was almost 42 minutes.

Respondents represented 37 organisations associated with dance, from dedicated dance companies to Education System high schools, to industry associations and accreditation bodies.

82% of respondents stated they had been active in the industry for more than 10 years. 50% stated they had been active for more than 20 years. 5% of respondents had been active in the industry for less than five years.

The median age group was 40-49 years old. The highest percentage of respondents was in the 30-39 year old age group (28%) followed by the 50-59 year old age group at 19%.

98% of respondents were located in Western Australia. A breakdown of the location of respondents is as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------|
| • Metropolitan Perth | 84.5% |
| • Regional WA | 11.3% |
| • Remote WA | 1.4% |
| • Metropolitan (not in WA) | 1.4% |
| • Regional (not in WA) | 1.4% |

Only two respondents (3%) identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Representation of the dance sector across areas of involvement was broad, with a prevalence of respondents noting their primary area of involvement in the WA dance sector as being either independent artists (31%) or teachers in schools (28%). Notably, 36% of respondents stated that they worked in 'Other' areas of dance. This included researchers, lecturers, students, dance company alumni, dance writers/critics, health professionals and Board members.

Figure 1 provides the breakdown of all respondent's primary area of involvement in the sector.

Appendix A

- Respondent Profile

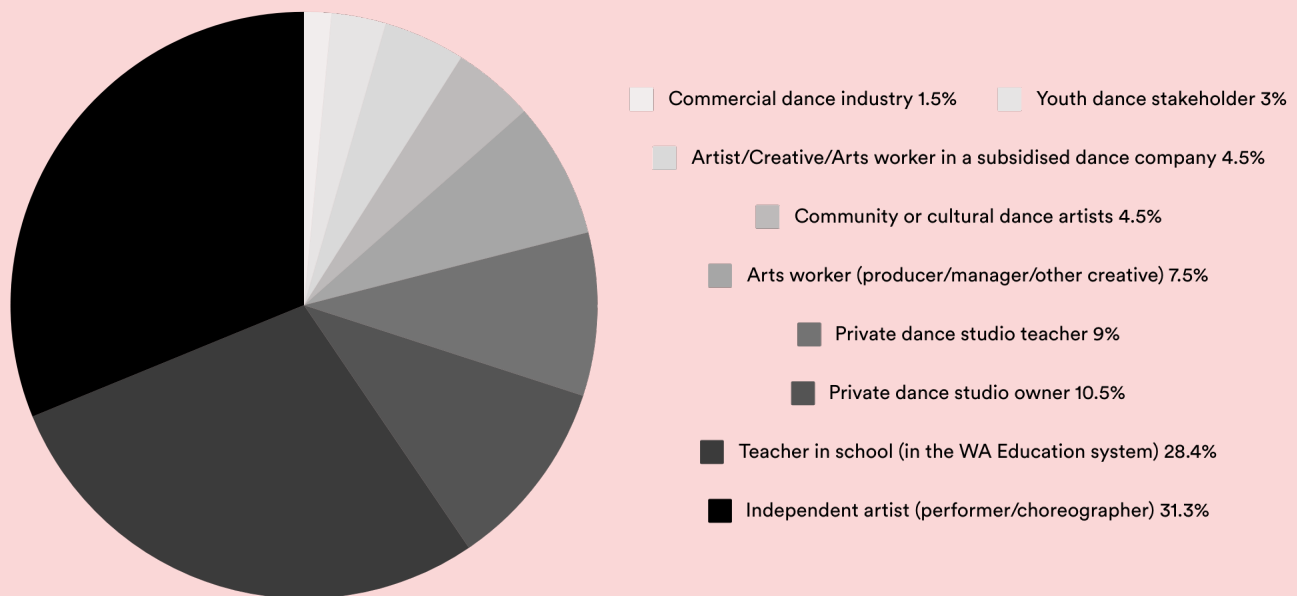


Figure 1 - Respondent's Primary Area of Involvement

Noting that many people involved in the dance sector are active across multiple areas, respondents were asked to note other areas of the sector in which they were involved which was not their primary area. The following graph (Figure 2) represents their responses and shows a consistent prevalence of independent artists and dance teachers, with arts-worker (producer, manager, other creative) being significantly more prevalent at 38% as opposed to the primary area of involvement at 7%.

Appendix A

- Respondent Profile

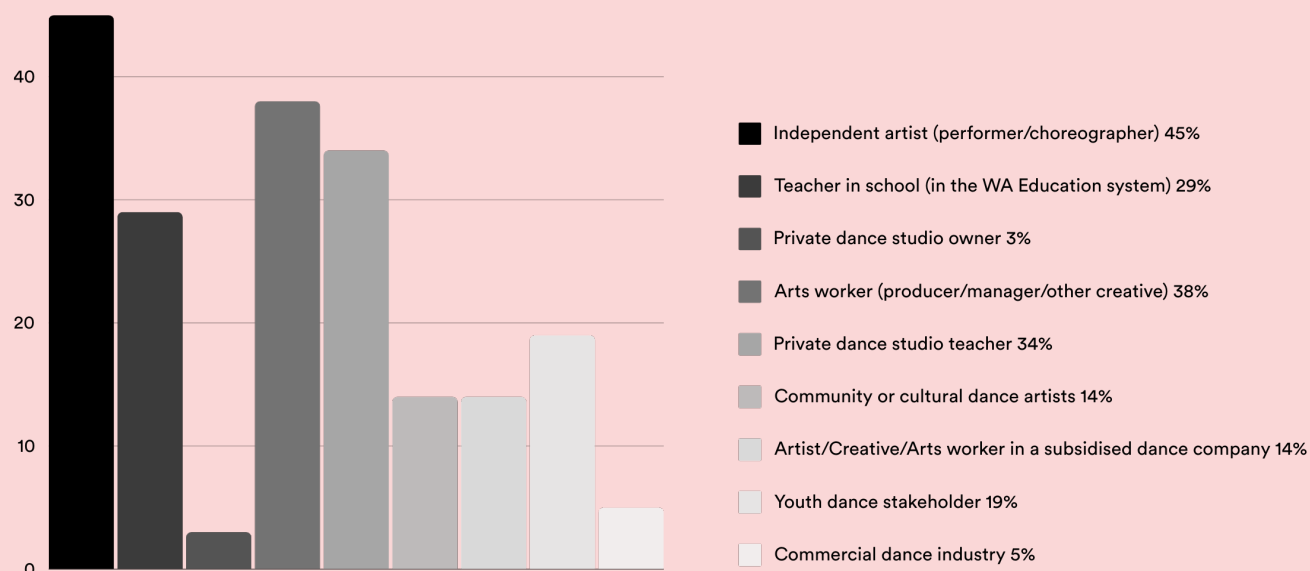


Figure 2 - Other Areas of Dance Involvement

Respondents were asked which genres of dance they were involved in (allowing for multiple responses). Contemporary dance was reported as the most common dance genre (78%). Other responses are listed below.

- Contemporary dance **78%**
- Classical ballet **50%**
- Commercial - Jazz/ Tap / Lyrical dance **38%**
- Community dance practice **24%**
- Culturally specific (Flamenco, Bhangra, Belly dance, Irish, Salsa etc) **22%**
- Hip Hop / Street / Breakdance / Krumping (B-boying/B-girling) **22%**
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (First Nations dance) **7%**
- Social / Ballroom dance (e.g., Waltz, Foxtrot, Tango, Swing dance) **4%**
- Other (please specify) **29%**

Appendix A

- Respondent Profile

Workshop Attendance in person (51)

Teachers in Schools

- Tarryn Runkel - John Curtin College of the Arts
- Narelle Codalonga - All Saints College
- Caroline Edwards - Harrisdale Senior High School
- Rachael Bott - Creatives Moves WA
- Janaea Barrett - Currambine Primary School
- Dr Maria Gamble - Edith Cowan University
- Mollie McPhail - Bob Hawke College
- McKenzie Goldsmith - Willetton Senior High School
- Sharon Dalla-Costa - Youth Ballet WA Inc
- Jessica Wynn - Santa Maria College

Youth

- Bernadette Lewis - Independent artist
- Jacqui Hume - Former dance artist, dance engagement officer, dance teacher.
- Natalie Allen - Dancer/choreographer/teacher
- Rachael Bott - Creative Moves WA
- Sarah Francis - Dancer/choreographer/teacher
- Jessica Wynn - Dance teacher
- April Vardy - West Australian Ballet
- Michelle Saunders - Education/Dance - expertise in youth dance/STEPS Youth Dance company
- Claudia Alessi - Independent
- Sue Peacock - Dance Course Coordinator WAAPA

Independents

- Bernadette Lewis - Independent artist
- Xin Ong - Independent artist and private dance studio teacher
- Natalie Allen - Dancer/choreographer/teacher
- Sarah Francis - Dancer/choreographer/teacher
- Isha Sharvani - Dance maker. Indian traditional dance & aerials
- April Vardy - West Australian Ballet
- Kimberley Parkin - Independent
- Sue Peacock - Dance Course Coordinator, WAAPA
- Paige Gordon - Lifespan Dance
- Tammy Meeuwissen - iJourney

Dance Studios/Teachers

- Sharon Dalla-Costa - Youth Ballet WA
- Kate Buchan - Dance Etc.
- Xin Ong - Independent artist and private dance studio teacher
- Deby Holmes - Agent, Teacher
- Kristal Twilight - K2Dance
- Virginia Norris - Irina Asotoff Ballet School
- Terri Charlesworth - Charlesworth Ballet School
- Rachel Morris - Glitterati Performance Company
- Diana de Vos - Studio teacher
- Tanya Shillington - WA Classical Ballet Teachers Assoc

Subsidised Companies

- Meagan Walsh - West Australian Ballet
- Hilary McKenna - Co3
- Raewyn Hill - Co3
- Guy Boyce - Marrugeku
- Deborah Robertson - Perth Festival
- Alica Byfield - STRUT Dance
- Sukhjit Kaur Khalsa - The Blue Room Theatre
- Joel Evans - The Blue Room Theatre
- Jeremy Smith - Performing Lines WA
- James O'Hara - STRUT Dance
- Sofie Burgoyne - STRUT Dance

Workshop Attendance Online (5)

- Annette Carmichael - AD Southern Edge Arts
- Brie Healy - Private Dance Studio owner/operator studio (Tom Price)
- Philippa Lynas - Regional Manager Royal Academy of Dance
- Janine Oxenham - Independent Dance (Busselton)
- Catherine Driver - General Manager, Regional Arts WA



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