**Submission by DRILL Performance Company Inc. to 2021-22 Pre-Budget Submission**

Dear Minister,

We write to provide comment on the budget in relation to arts funding received through the Australia Council.

Funding from the Australia Council for the Arts to the small to medium arts sector has drastically reduced in real terms in recent years, and has a significant impact on organisations like DRILL, that rely on grant funding to subsidise our programs, and make them affordable for our community.

We have noted that the likelihood of success of our organisation receiving a project/program grant from the Australia Council has drastically lowered compared to 2005/06 (the last year the Australia Council annual reports included a full grants list). In that year 22 organisations received funding from the Dance Panel for projects, initiatives or programs (not including multi-year funding or international marketing) totalling over $800,000. If that amount was increased by CPI to today, it would total over $1.1 Million. In 2019/20, only 8 dance organisations were supported by the Australia Council for projects/programs totalling $508,000. This implies that the likelihood of any dance organisation receiving project/program Commonwealth arts funding has halved since 2005/06.

Conversely, funding to the National Performing Arts Partnership Framework (Previously called Major Performing Arts) has increased from 57% to 62% of the total Australia Council funding. That 5% increase equates to $8.6 Million, and has indirectly impacted on the funding available to the small to medium arts sector via the Australia Council.

While the RISE funding that has been announced is a welcome support for the sector, with the large minimum request, it is focussed very clearly on large organisations. The expectation for small organisations to be able to dedicate the time and resources to firstly, developing a consortium, and then a combined vision for an application, is a clear disincentive to making an application. Support for smaller organisations and individual artists should also be provided by the Commonwealth Government.

**We would like to request an increase in funding to the Australia Council for the Arts, with a focus on small-to-medium companies and individuals.**

Investment in the arts leads to a stronger economy. A KPMG report on the Victorian Arts and Cultural Sector found that every $1 spent on cultural institutions contributed $0.56 in value added to the Victorian economy. Additionally, gross state product in Victoria and employment was reported to be higher than if the funding had been invested elsewhere in the economy. (<http://docplayer.net/23302395-Economic-impact-of-the-victorian-arts-and-cultural-sector-kpmg-com-au.html> )

Combined funding from Arts Tasmania and the Australia Council for the Arts provided around 60% of our income attributed to projects in 2019 ($117K), but this allowed us to raise an additional 13% ($25K) from other grant sources, and 27% ($52K) from earned income, while at the same time allowing us to keep the costs for our participants either free or highly subsidised (Senior Company member fees equate to under $2 per contact hour).

It is important that there are opportunities for young people to engage in artistic activities, especially those that develop their physical fitness, increase social cohesion, maintain their wellbeing, and can also provide them with diversions from unhealthy or illegal alternatives.

DRILL is the only organisation in southern Tasmania providing accessible opportunities in dance for young people, and provides services in four out of the five Tasmanian state electorates. Our schools and participants are in traditionally low socioeconomic areas (with IRSAD scores of 1-2, and some of the lowest SEIFA ratings in the state, according to ABS 2016 census data) and opportunities to engage in physical or creative programs are limited, and often too expensive or too far away.

Research shows dance to be of greater benefit to children in developing their physical health than traditional physical education, as well as improving school participation, self-esteem, and improving social relationships. ( <https://www.communitydance.org.uk/DB/resources-3/cool-facts-hot-feet-dancing-to-health-a-review-of-?ps=j4dU0HzarF_S4ouAbmlEVvB9ogiMdZ> )

Evidence shows that arts practice in schools has a positive effect on academic results as well as wellbeing and self esteem. (<https://naae.org.au/evidence-and-research>)

Our schools program, Dance Nexus, is specifically designed to be in schools to remove barriers around cost, transport and availability, so that all students have the opportunity to participate, regardless of their background.

Involvement in the arts is shown to improve subjective wellbeing.

<https://www.bypgroup.com/news/2019/9/24/wellbeing>

DRILL creates a safe and inclusive community for many young people and their families to connect to, providing a platform for self-expression, self-discovery, mentorship and forging strong friendships and support networks. Many DRILL participants have experienced mental health issues or issues with social connectedness, and our programs allow them to build resilience and a support network to make positive change in their lives.

Participants have commented on how their involvement has built confidence, improved physical fitness, promoted positive body image, provided relief from stress and mental illness, given them focus for their futures, and linked them to an important support network. DRILL encourages students to think critically and creatively, work as a team, and demonstrates their own potential to turn their ideas into real outcomes.

## DRILL PERFORMANCE COMPANY INC.

## OUR VISION

More young Tasmanians being active and engaged members of the community, empowered through dance and creative thinking.

## OUR MISSION

To create meaningful contemporary dance experiences that unite and strengthen young Tasmanians in our community.

## ABOUT DRILL

DRILL Performance Company Inc. is a not-for-profit incorporated association, and a registered charity with the ACNC.

DRILL is one of Australia’s leading youth dance companies, dedicated to fostering the growth of the contemporary dance industry, through a youth lens, in lutruwita/Tasmania. Based in nipaluna/Hobart, we connect young Tasmanians with inspiring professional and emerging artists, to create ambitious dance works, through artistic programming and schools-based programs. This work unites and strengthens our community through the experience of collaborative process and shared performance.

DRILL empowers the next generation of leaders, thinkers, nurturers, and change-makers with a commitment to collaborative creative process and peer to peer learning. Our works encourage young people to tell their stories, share their values, and voice their thoughts through performance and physical expression. We bring young people together to form a tight-knit community of like-minded peers fostering a space for self-development and discovery built on trust and supported by kindness.

We excite our audiences by challenging the preconceptions of dance and the form it takes. Through site-specific performances we create unpredictable, immersive experiences, which remove barriers and reset the permissions for audiences attending, enjoying, and investing in dance.

DRILL programs include:

* Senior Company – approximately 25 young people aged 14 – 30, which presents a professional major season each year, with six months of development and rehearsal, as well as an additional smaller season.
* Junior Company – approximately 25 young people aged 9 – 14, which is delivered through an eight week intensive development and rehearsal period.
* Dance Nexus - in partnership with groups of Department of Education schools, a DRILL choreographer works with students in up to six schools over five weeks to co-develop a combined dance work for public performance. Approximately 200 students take part in a usual year.
* BOLT – where older members of our Senior Company and more experienced dancers create professional work.
* Workshop programs in schools, which are delivered to up to 1,500 students across Southern Tasmania.

In 2020, despite program cancellations and changes due to COVID-19, DRILL successfully delivered the following projects

* *By George and All Of Us,* a new work by DRILL’s Senior Company, performed to sold out audiences at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery as part of the *Burning Desire* Festival.
* Dance Nexus Clarence where 80 school students from four schools participated in five weeks of workshops culminating in a performance that was video recorded at schools.
* Dance Nexus West Coast where 100 school students from four schools participated in five weeks of workshops culminating in a performance that was video recorded at schools.
* Junior Company – An 8 week intensive program and co-creation of a new work with a cast of twenty-two, performed to sold out audiences at Moonah Arts Centre.
* The Choreographic Program – supporting and mentoring emerging local choreographers from our Senior Company to develop their choreographic skills.
* 24 Carrot Dance workshops: delivered to nearly 800 school students in collaboration with MONA.

In 2019 we ran 389 rehearsals, workshops, classes and presentations (a total of 697 hours) for 3,473 participants. That makes a total of 100,637 hours of dance participation by young Tasmanians.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission.

Yours sincerely

**Isabella Stone Cathryn Williams (née Gurrin)**

**Artistic Director General Manager**