

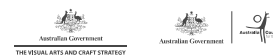
PO Box 60 Potts Point
NSW 1335 Australia
T +61 2 9368 1900
F +61 2 9358 6909
E nava@visualarts.net.au

www.visualarts.net.au
www.artscareer.com.au

ACN 003 229 285
ABN 16 003 229 285

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Patrons: Pat Corrigan AM
Janet Holmes à Court AC
Professor David Throsby



Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Employment
PO Box 6021 Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
ee.reps@aph.gov.au

26th April 2013

Dear Committee Secretary

NAVA submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Australia's Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system and its operation.

The National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) is pleased to have the opportunity to make this submission to comment on Australia's Technical and Further Education (TAFE) system and its operation. We thank you for agreeing to accept this late submission.

NAVA is the peak industry body representing and advancing the professional interests of the Australian visual and media arts, craft and design sector. Currently it has around 3000 paid members and almost 8000 Facebook followers. Since its establishment in 1983, NAVA has been influential in bringing about policy and legislative change to encourage the growth and development of the visual arts sector including in education. It also sets best practice standards for the industry. In addition NAVA provides a number of direct services to its constituents, helping to increase artists' professionalism by offering career development opportunities including a variety of on-line and face-to-face training opportunities, some funded through a devolved grant from Arts NSW.

NAVA continues to work towards all Australians having the opportunity to learn about and practice the visual arts from pre-school through tertiary education and on throughout their lives. NAVA has sustained a consistently active role in advising on and monitoring developments in visual arts education. NAVA's executive director is a member of the Cultural Sector Advisory Committee of Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA). In 2010 she was chair of IBSA's Visual Arts, Craft and Design National Project Reference Group guiding the work on developing the new higher level qualifications Visual Arts, Craft and Design training package for the vocational education and training sector.

NAVA asserts that a sound arts education is fundamental to giving effect to the inalienable right of all citizens to cultural participation and cultural expression which is enshrined in the UNESCO Convention on the Promotion and Protection of Diversity of Cultural Expression, to which Australia is a signatory. As has been acknowledged by the Parliamentary Committee, TAFEs have played a critical role in the training and development of Australians for more than 100 years and it is hoped will continue to provide a critical pathway to training in skills which enable participants both to generate an income through securing employment and running their own businesses as well as contributing to the social and cultural life of the community.

NAVA continues to get anecdotal evidence of the extensive application of the skills acquired by arts trained people across almost every area of the economy. Therefore, we are extremely concerned about the consequences that are arising from the recent cuts made to the subsidy of courses in the TAFE sector in several states. In NSW in particular, cuts have been made to the subsidy of Fine Arts courses including sculpture, visual arts and ceramics despite the fact that they were popular and offered across a number of urban and regional locations. (Exempt from these cuts are Aboriginal Cultural Arts courses and Aboriginal students will continue to be supported).

The justification offered by the NSW Government was “job prospects and completion levels in these courses are low when compared with skills shortage areas such as health, community services, property and business services”. However, they have stated that “in areas where there is predicted jobs growth, courses will continue to have their fees subsidised by government.” NAVA challenges the presumptions behind this decision and will provide evidence further below.

1. Funding Cuts Consequences

These changes which commenced on 1 January 2013 apply to an estimated 4000 students who previously were enrolled in Fine Arts courses. Many of these students use the TAFE system to go on to further study, to practise as artists or to get work in the arts sector and beyond in the creative industries, or indeed to apply these skills in much broader contexts.

Students are still able to enroll in many Fine Arts courses on a fee for service basis and we understand that students undertaking fee for service Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses can apply for VET FEE-HELP loans. However, the prospect of this debt and the huge increase in cost in lower level qualifications is proving a serious disincentive. This is borne out by a recent survey of most NSW TAFEs conducted by campaigner Penny Ryan which is appended to this submission.

In 2011, 53,283 adults were enrolled in TAFE creative arts courses in Australia, with three quarters of these located in NSW, Victoria and Queensland with just over one third of all students in NSW. In addition, it is estimated that around 20% of students at university fine arts courses were originally trained in TAFE, so it is likely that the majority of artists in Australia have at some point in their careers been TAFE trained.

Around 60% of adults in 2011 studied at Certificate level but now these courses are not eligible for fee help. NAVA understands that they now cost anywhere between \$5500 and \$8000 for a Certificate IV and \$2000 to \$4500 for lower certificates. In the above mentioned survey it is evident that certificate courses have been hardest hit, with colleges either not offering them at all or trying to deal with a reduction in student enrolments. Certificate level courses have traditionally been the pathway either to higher level studies or as a starting point for people who lack confidence in their capacity to study art or to undertake study at all. These courses are often taken by people who have lower levels of education, or who are on disability support pensions.

Standards which were traditionally high in TAFE have been compromised as the colleges have had to find ways to accommodate the cost cutting. Most colleges have cut the hour requirements for courses. In 2013, most fine arts courses now have no set requirements around minimum hours and the Diploma course has been reduced to one year, with a ‘suggested’ pre-requisite of a certificate IV or ‘equivalent’. Many colleges are now treating the Diploma as the first foundation year course, with the previous third year Advanced Diploma becoming what was the second year of the original Diploma. This is thus devaluing the qualification.

While the city courses have tried to maintain hours, they have reduced to 16 hours per week, while in some country courses a Diploma is now set at 10 hours per week. The reduction in hours has also impacted on the number and range of artists teaching in TAFE. The cuts to jobs decrease the breadth and intensity of learning exposure for both students and practising artists.

The likely longer term outcome is the deletion of Fine Arts in TAFE. The TAFE art schools are not in a position to immediately switch to running commercial operations. Art in TAFE will probably become a thing of the past, leaving individuals to have to find the substantially higher funds for their own art education. Universities or private colleges will become the only way to gain an education in Fine Arts, thus reducing the capacity of TAFE to develop an educational community that could be “the leading provider of tertiary education.” (NSW TAFE’S Strategic Vision 2011-2013).

TAFE students are drawn from people who may not have access to university due to poor performance and disadvantage, or are refugees and migrants without English language skills or who are mature aged people that can only do art education part time. These people are unlikely to be able to afford an arts education in NSW in the future. This will reduce the number of people with training to become artists or to gain the skills to apply in the creative industries and beyond in other industries.

3. Australian Curriculum: The Arts

The Federal Government has recognised the central importance of an arts education by including the mandating of the inclusion of all five artforms in Phase 2 of the National Curriculum. The arts curriculum is in its final stages of development ready for roll out in 2014. The NSW Premier Barry O’Farrell has just made the important decision to secure new federal funding for school education through the Gonski package. Clearly there should be a smooth trajectory from school, through higher level education to work. Illogically in NSW, the crucial middle step is now imperilled.

3. National Cultural Policy *Creative Australia* – March 2013

At federal government level, increasing attention has been paid to fostering the cultural industries and the recently released *Creative Australia* national cultural policy affirms the Government’s increased support along with the formation of a new entity, Creative Partnerships Australia which is tasked with the responsibility to offer a range of financial stimuli to enhance the work of Australian cultural producers.

Creative Australia has four goals which include ensuring that government support reflects the diversity of Australia and that all citizens, wherever they live, whatever their background or circumstances, have a right to shape our cultural identity and its expression. The goals also include supporting the special role of artists and their creative collaborators as the source of original work and ideas and strengthening the capacity of the cultural sector to ensure Australian creativity thrives in the digitally enabled 21st century, by supporting innovation, the development of new creative content, knowledge and creative industries.

4. Application of arts skills

Fine Arts are a part of the creative industries, which are not only cultural industries; they also drive innovation and add value to commercialization, distribution, marketing and design in all sectors of the economy. Arts trained people apply their design and conceptual skills across a very broad palette of sectors including not only the arts but also all the design fields, media, technology, events, advertising, cultural tourism and heritage, manufacturing and industry and community development.

Creative skills are increasingly being sought for application in the workplace adding value to optimize commercial output. They are part of the emerging services economy which will be a critical part of Australia's future.

Australia's challenge is to integrate cultural production into the economic landscape. The creative industries are enablers of new business models. They contribute 2.8% of gross GDP (more than agriculture; communications; and electricity, gas and water supply). The visual arts, design and architecture make up over 11% of the creative industries and have been growing in terms of employment opportunity. (See the Centre for International Economics, *Creative Industries Economic Analysis* June 2009).

This makes the decision of the NSW Government to no longer to fund fine arts courses in TAFE particularly short sighted. In not recognising where the opportunities for growth lie, the Government is disabling the state from reaching its economic potential.

5. Creative Industries

Reliable data on the size of the cultural and creative industry workforce has been previously unavailable as ABS classifications and data did not fully capture the industry and related occupations. Many people work in the cultural sector in part time arrangements, with their primary income from employment outside the industry.¹ However the release of 2011 Census data has provided industry-specific information which should be acted on in planning for the industry and informing policy development.

The 2011 Census data showsa total of 531 000 directly employed. However when the scope of the sector is expanded to include education, manufacturing, accommodation and construction, it is possible to say that culture is an important element in the jobs of more than 3.7 million Australians. In the same year, more than 400 000 people volunteered for arts and heritage organisations.

Evident is that creative services employment is one of the fastest growing areas as the economy digitises with new business-to-business and business-to-consumer activity. *In the future, creative industries will play a greater role in contributing to the economic prosperity of the nation. Research demonstrates that the economic contribution made by these industries is growing at a rate faster than the broader economy. Employment generated through the cultural and creative industries is also predicted to grow. To ensure Australia sustains this policy momentum and remains competitive on the global stage, the Government will continue to invest in its infrastructure and its people.*

In order to grasp the opportunities, the industry would need to strengthen rather than diminish training provision through the VET system.

6. NSW Creative Industries Taskforce Report

The just released NSW Creative Industries Taskforce report commissioned by the NSW Government makes a strong case for the relationship between arts training and work in the creative industries. Recommendation 45 in the report calls for "NSW Government to recognise the importance of the need for a range of alternative, affordable and practical avenues to education and training that underpin NSW creative industries, including **by reinstating NSW Government funding to those TAFE fine arts courses that experienced cuts to subsidised funding from 1 January 2013.**"

¹ IBSA (2013) Environment Scan 2013 Cultural and Creative Industries, page 1

The Office of NSW Trade and Investment launched their NSW Creative Industries Industry Action Plan (IAP), commissioned to help re-build the NSW economy. Its Preamble states,

The Taskforce sees leveraging NSW's premier status and natural advantage in the creative industries as a key opportunity to position NSW as a global creative centre and an Asia Pacific leader in creative industries. This is not only attainable but smart. Creative businesses located in cities such as New York, London, Paris, Stockholm, and Tokyo enjoy a halo effect based on the creative reputations of their home towns. Sydney should develop a similarly compelling creative brand to facilitate market development initiatives and encourage higher levels of activity and growth. Achieving such a vision would return immense economic and social benefits to NSW.

Central to this vision, the report makes the recommendation to "Position Education and Training to attract, develop and retain creative industries talent and to align more closely with industry needs" and states that Priority Action Areas include, "Better co-ordination to develop key capabilities across the arts, encouraging and developing creative careers, and encouraging creativity."

This report provides statistical evidence that shows:

- NSW accounts for 39.6% of Australia's creative industries workforce.
- NSW creative industries directly employ 4.7% of the total NSW workforce, with a further 2.1% of the workforce employed in creative occupations in other industries.
- More people directly work in NSW creative industries than those employed within the NSW agriculture and mining industries combined.
- Employment growth in the NSW creative industries was nearly double that of the rest of the State's workforce (2.6% vs 1.4% per annum from 2006 to 2011).
- NSW creative industries exports were worth over \$1.5 billion in 2010-11, or roughly 3% of total NSW exports.

The Australia Council has published a report co-authored by Professor Stuart Cunningham, one of the expert members of the Taskforce, which shows that the arts had a range of inputs into the creative industries². "They were generating new ideas; acting as a kind of R&D; they contributed to a general creativity; they provided an institutional infrastructure for new ideas and experimentation; they contributed key skills to the creative workforce; they attracted creative workers to particular locales and enhanced the creative atmosphere of place".

Cunningham also published an analysis after the 2011 ABS data was released which indicated that employment for independent artists (including creative artists, musicians, writers and performers) was the second-highest growth of any category in the employment data, jumping 7.4% between 2006 and 2011.

It is clear from these reports and other published evidence, that in the C21st, people with the kinds of skills that are acquired through learning in the arts - adaptability, versatility and resourcefulness, having innovative ideas and the ability to maximise the value of resources - are increasingly valued by employers across the board: in industry and the corporate and the public sectors. In many other countries this is recognised as offering a

² Stuart Cunningham, Peter Higgs, Simon Freebody and Peter Anderson (2010) 'What's your other job? A census analysis of arts employment in Australia', Australia Council.

competitive advantage in both the application of creativity and 'design thinking' in problem solving and in value adding to their country's products and services.

7. 2013 NSW Skills Priority List

Despite the fact that the state and federal governments are looking to the creative industries to boost economic growth, the 2013 NSW Skills Priority List (released February 2013) now no longer includes high-level qualifications designed specifically to meet significant skills gaps and areas of opportunity and growth.

The SSP Priority List 2013 also no longer funds entry-level arts courses. These are exactly the types of courses that positively affect NSW DEC priority groups such as remote and regional communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and youth at risk. Entry-level courses in art, music, film, dance and drama are those that would allow Australia to meet its Cultural Policy goals of ensuring that government support reflects the diversity of Australia which includes all citizens, wherever they live, whatever their background or circumstances. Importantly the cultural policy affirms that all citizens have a right to shape our cultural identity and its expression. The policy recognises and affirms the special role of artists and their creative collaborators as the source of original work and ideas.

The evidence from Penny Ryan's recent survey makes clear that cuts to funding have had the immediate impact that TAFE Colleges are contracting arts courses because of lack of SSP funding, despite the fact that these programs are the ones that build confidence and skills and provide pathways into work especially for the disengaged.

While just under half of the students in TAFE were school leavers, the remaining age distribution was fairly evenly spread, allowing people in their working, parenting and retirement years to access art education. This was reflected in the number of people doing part-time study – 64% of those enrolled.

TAFE gave adults access to gradual learning around 60% were studying certificate level courses – 39% were studying certificate 1-3 levels, 20% a certificate IV.

Most importantly, TAFE creative arts courses reached the most disadvantaged:

- 32% had year 11 or less schooling
- one third of students were from the lowest 2 quintiles of socio economic disadvantage
- 6.5% were Indigenous
- 12% spoke another language at home
- 29.5% were located in regional areas and 4% in remote areas.

8. Regional development

TAFE in regional and rural areas has become the centre for cultural life, closely networked with regional galleries, local artists and local economies. TAFE employs practising artists, helping to supplement their incomes but also providing a cultural community for artists to interact and develop artistically.

TAFE graduates are vital to regional development and tourism. It is well known that the arts provides a valuable industry in regional Australia and supplements the incomes of farmers and townspeople through tourism, hospitality, heritage interpretation. With the cuts to support for courses in regional TAFEs, enrolments have plummeted and they have become inaccessible to some of the most disadvantaged within the community who are now being discriminated against. If these people are discouraged from having access

to training which builds their confidence and helps them enter the workforce, the result for the NSW Government will be cost shifting from education to the welfare system.

9. Community Cultural Development

The Cultural Understanding for Strategic Planning report commissioned by LGSA NSW and funded by Arts NSW in 2008 (<http://www.lgsa.org.au/www/html/3118-cultural-understanding-for-strategic-planning.asp>) identified that state government departments including health, community services, environment and local government have recognised that community cultural development (CCD) is a key practice in three important areas: engaging communities in education; community renewal and capacity building. It supports NAVA's assertion that arts skills are applied across fields which have important economic and social impact.

The report looked at the cultural practices and needs of 22 councils out of 152 in NSW. It highlighted a number of key themes; particularly that it is common practice for youth workers, health workers, community development officers, Indigenous workers and those working with refugee and migrant communities to use creative techniques to encourage expression, build community capacity and promote community concerns to broader audiences. There is a high demand for these skills.

Artists in all media are often invited to use their skills in this field. However, this work requires training and practical experience to equip them to be diplomatic and able to negotiate effectively, understand diversity, have business skills and be able to budget and manage community programs. It is one example of the many ways in which arts training finds lateral application in areas which are essential to community wellbeing.

The TAFEs are one of the critical providers of training for arts professionals whose work contributes cultural leadership and inspiration for the citizenry. This is especially the case in the regions, where TAFEs are local hubs for the community including people with disabilities or disadvantaged by a range of other factors. The NSW Government needs to understand and subsidise arts training in TAFE to building innovation in the state's economy that will sustainably take us into the next decades. Without this, NSW will continue to lose competitive advantage and social cohesion.

The question to be asked of the NSW Government is why is it blocking the path into higher level education and training? NAVA calls on the NSW Government to reinstate the funding for art in TAFE to ensure the smooth transition for people from school, to training, to work which capitalises on the creative capability of NSW citizens both for productivity purposes and to contribute to their better quality of life.

I would be happy to provide further comment if required.

Yours sincerely

Tamara Winikoff
Executive Director

TAFE Update 19/3/13 from Penny Ryan

North Coast (Lismore)

- Has dropped two certificate 3 and certificate 4 classes (none now offered)
- has dropped one diploma class (one remains)
- hours have reduced from 18 to 12 hours per week for Diploma
- one head teacher lost
- two teachers lost
- full time technical assistant lost
- likely that smaller campuses will close in the next month or so as they sort out amalgamations.

Nepean

- retains Diploma and Advanced Diploma numbers as before
- have lost cert 4 and cert 11 classes
- lost ceramics course
- overall student numbers are 60% of what were in previous years
- six casual staff have gone and six have lost hours

Gymea

- no Cert 2,3 or 4 as in the past (used to run 2 x cert 2, 2 x cert four)
- less than half the number of overall enrolments
- half the teaching hours
- loss of all part time teachers and therefore their specialist skills
- few new students and wouldn't have survived without VET FEE Help.

St George

- lost one certificate class (normally would run 2 with 18 students each, now have 1 with 13 students)
- only 1 full time teacher and will amalgamate with Graphic Design
- St George has retained other students largely because it has been advertising over last year, so had already marketing strategies put in place

Southern Highlands

5. gone from 180 teaching hours to 10
6. Goulburn and Cooma closed
7. Moss Vale has one course for students completing this semester only
8. all part time teacher gone
9. full time staff about to be made redundant

Newcastle

5. art school has halved
6. Singleton closed
7. one head teacher position lost
8. three full time teaching positions lost
9. no certificate courses

Meadowbank

- never ran cert courses and while offered cert 4 this year, no takers (means Diploma has become defacto first year)
- 60% of student numbers from 2012

Riverina

- no courses now in Tumit or Temora
- lost 1 cert 2 course, 3 cert 3 courses
- lost 1 cert 2 and 1 cert 3 ATSI courses
- overall course numbers down, but only slightly.