

A New Approach (ANA)

01 August 2023

Expert Panel
Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System
NSRA.submissions@education.gov.au

Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System

A New Approach (ANA) welcomes this opportunity to make a submission to the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System, led by the Expert Panel. ANA recognises the joint efforts of the Commonwealth, States and Territories to drive improvements for all school students in Australia through the next National School Reform Agreement.

ANA is Australia's leading think tank focused on arts and culture. Through credible and independent public leadership, ANA helps build an ambitious and innovative policy and investment environment for arts, culture and creativity. We work to ensure Australia can be a great place for creators and audiences, whoever they are and wherever they live.

This short submission focuses on question 2 in Chapter 2 of the consultation paper, drawing on our research into the evidence base connecting arts and culture to education outcomes. We confirm that this submission can be made public.

Below, we also link to our factsheet 'Education and learning: Transformative Impacts of Arts, Culture and Creativity' for your reference.¹ For further detail, please refer to Chapter 5 of our insight report 'Transformative: The Impacts of Culture and Creativity'.ⁱⁱ

In our role as a philanthropically funded, independent think tank, ANA is ready to provide further information about the response in this submission and would welcome the opportunity to discuss.

Warm regards,



Kate Fielding, CEO, A New Approach (ANA)

A New Approach (ANA)

Chapter 2, Question 2:

What are the evidence-based practices that teachers, schools, systems and sectors can put in place to improve student outcomes, particularly for those most at risk of falling behind? Are different approaches required for different at-risk cohorts?

Response:

Two evidence-based practices to improve student outcomes are:

- Increase opportunities for Australian children, especially at-risk youth to experience arts and culture at school
- Develop teachers' arts and culture-based skills

International and Australian research has found arts and culture-based education is beneficial in developing intellectual skills and enhancing educational impacts. Not only does it help future-proof Australia's workforce, it also helps mitigate disadvantage, particularly with students who are "at-risk": who are socio-economically disadvantaged, at risk of prematurely disengaging from schooling, and/or expressing anti-social or non-coping behaviours. The evidence base includes:

- a study of 643 upper primary and high school students in 15 schools across eastern Australia considered outcomes for students who actively engaged with arts and creative activities during their schooling years.ⁱⁱⁱ It found these students have higher levels of motivation and self-discipline, better self-esteem, higher life satisfaction and are better at bouncing back from academic setbacks.
- a comprehensive three-year study of an Indigenous community in remote central Australia conducted by anthropologist Inge Kral.^{iv} The study found that engagement with the arts and culture, particularly via digital and online channels, helped re-engage early school leavers and disaffected Indigenous youth with learning, and facilitated greater engagement with community.
- a major Australian study entitled Risky Business conducted in 2002–05 that explored the use of the creative arts within diversionary programs for "at risk" youth—that is, programs that aim to divert young people away from crime, prosecution and custody.^v This four-year ethnographic study, by the University of Melbourne, and with the departments of Justice and Human Services, VicHealth and Arts Victoria, investigated the qualities and impact of effective arts programs for at-risk youth in urban and rural Victoria. The study concluded that young people who engaged in these arts programs experienced many personal and social benefits, including increased self-esteem, refined artistic skills, improved communication skills, a sense of achievement and wellbeing and a greater connection to their communities.

ⁱ A New Approach. "Factsheet 5 Education and Learning: Transformative Impacts of Arts, Culture and Creativity," August 2021. <https://newapproach.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/ANA-5-Education-InsightReport2-Factsheet5.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ Fielding, Kate, Iva Glisic, and Jodie-Lee Trembath. "Transformative: Impacts of Culture and Creativity." Insight Series. Canberra: A New Approach and The Australian Academy of Humanities, November 2019. <https://newapproach.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/2-ANA-InsightReportTwo-FullReport.pdf>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ennis, Gretchen Marie, and Jane Tonkin. "It's like Exercise for Your Soul': How Participation in Youth Arts Activities Contributes to Young People's Wellbeing." *Journal of Youth Studies* 21, no. 3 (March 16, 2018): 340–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2017.1380302>.

^{iv} Kral, Inge, and Robert Schwab. *Learning Spaces: Youth, Literacy and New Media in Remote Indigenous Australia*. ANU ePress, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.22459/LS.08.2012>.

^v O'Brien, Angela, and Kate Donelan. *The Arts and Youth at Risk: Global and Local Challenges*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008, p.2