

A New Approach (ANA)

10 January 2025

Australia's Productivity Pitch
Productivity Commission
(via submission portal)

Title	Carving pathways for creative and critical thinking to meet tomorrow's challenges in our economy and society
Description	<p>Australia's teenagers rank fourth in the world for creative and critical thinking, which are skills essential for a productive workforce and economy. The OECD's first-ever assessment of creative and critical thinking in 64 countries reveals Australia's comparative advantage in these skills.</p> <p>Australia should act to harness this strength, leveraging creative and cultural engagement's capacity to benefit the key determinants of productivity. We also need to maintain and grow this strength, including by ensuring our students continue to have opportunities develop these skills.</p>
Tell us more about your idea for improving productivity, including the likely benefits	<p>Creative and critical thinking are essential skills that will equip Australia to face future problems and confront economic challenges. This is why researchers include these skills in the '4Cs' of 21st century skills. Our industries and workforce need creative and critical thinking to generate and refine diverse, original ideas for a productive and prosperous future. This is why Australians need lifelong opportunities to learn and strengthen these skills.</p> <p>New evidence shows how arts and cultural activities can contribute to creative and critical thinking. Prime examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading fiction plays a unique role in developing people's capacities for critical thought, as distinct from reading non-fiction.• Creativity and arts - including speculative fiction - open new educational experiences and enquiries around climate change problems and the future.• Creative activities undertaken in early childhood settings and at home could contribute to increasing children's mental function and metacognitive capacity.

Contact

Find

	<p>There are exciting opportunities to develop creative and critical thinking during childhood and to sustain and spread them in the workforce, enhancing productivity. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Embedding activities related to creative thinking in national curriculums, as the OECD recommends. The OECD recommends engaging students in tasks that require creative thinking on a 'regular but considered basis' (e.g. as part of lessons taken once or twice a week).• Tapping into creative and critical thinking skills to spread innovation beyond creative industries. When other industries employ creative workers, this enables creative and critical thinking skills to spill over beyond creative industries. Analysis of the latest Census data by Dr Marion McCutcheon and Professor Stuart Cunningham confirms more than half of the 409,000 workers in creative occupations were employed outside of creative industries.• Identifying ways to leverage Australia's high levels of childhood participation in cultural activities to bolster creative and critical thinking. ABS data shows that 94% of Australian children aged between 5 and 14 participated in a cultural activity outside of school hours in 2021-22. Such activities include screen-based activities, drama, singing or playing a musical instrument, dancing and creative writing.• Building pathways to translate strong creative and critical thinking at a teenage level into a more creative and productive workforce. This could explicitly map problem solving and idea generation needs in the workforce to learning outcomes, which are part of a continuum already developed by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority. <p>For sources and further details, see the Insight Reports 'Transformative Edge 2024' and 'Accelerate' by A New Approach (ANA).</p>
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<p>Image</p>	 <p>Australia ranked 4th in creative & critical thinking.</p> <p>We should harness this for a productive & adaptive workforce.</p>
<p>Does your policy idea specifically relate to any of the topics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a dynamic and resilient economy • Building a more skilled and adaptable workforce