

Drama in the Australian national curriculum – the role of advocacy

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ABSTRACT

The inclusion of Drama as a subject in the Australian Curriculum is largely a result of the unwavering advocacy of national associations (like Drama Australia) and alliances, in particular the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE). This article briefly outlines stages in national curriculum development in Australia and delineates key organisations and individuals who have contributed to the inclusion of drama within Australia's national curriculum. The paper draws from previously published material, interviews with representatives from each state professional association, and extended interviews with members of the NAAE. The authors propose that the most significant contributing factor to the inclusion of drama in the educational entitlement for all young people in the Australian national curriculum has been collaborative advocacy, carefully managed by a national advocacy collective.

KEYWORDS

Curriculum; advocacy; NAAE; Australian curriculum; drama education; arts education

In 2014 the Australian Curriculum: The Arts was endorsed by the federal government and made available for implementation across Australia. This act did not take place by chance but, instead, was the result of systematic and organised advocacy led and managed, for the most part, by a collective of leaders from the national professional associations of each arts education area. The vital role advocacy has played in relation to the inclusion of the arts in curriculum frameworks in Australia has been discussed, to an extent, elsewhere (see, for example, Davis 2015; Gattenhof 2009a; Osterlind 2015; Stinson 2008, Stinson 2009; Stinson and Saunders 2016). This paper concentrates on the role of the umbrella organisation, the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE), discusses the actions of the NAAE, including some key 'sponsors' (Stinson 2009, 33) and considers its contribution to the national agenda for the inclusion of arts education in the national curriculum in Australia.

Setting the scene: a brief history of (some) drama advocates

Our story begins in the late 1960s and early to mid 1970s when professional teaching associations for drama education were founded in each state across Australia. First was the Victorian Association for Drama in Education (VADIE) (now Drama Victoria) established in

1968, followed in 1974 by the Association of Drama Educators (WA) Inc. (DramaWest); the Educational Drama Association (EDA) (Drama NSW) was established in 1975; the Queensland Association of Drama in Education (Drama Queensland) in 1976; and the Tasmanian Association of Drama in Education (TAADIE) (Drama Tasmania) and SAADIE – the South Australian Association of Drama in Education) (Drama South Australia) both in 1977. This edition of NJ coincides with the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the National Association of Drama in Education (NADIE), now known as Drama Australia. Drama Australia is an umbrella organisation, an affiliation of each state and territory association. At this point in time, it is fitting that we consider how the national history of drama education has contributed to the current status of drama in the Australian curriculum.

Drama education in Australia derives much of its philosophy and practice from the British drama in education (DiE) and theatre in education (TiE) traditions. Many of the first immigrant drama educators brought with them to Australia, orientations and practices that were well established in the UK. For example, Clive Sansom and his wife, poet Ruth Large, moved from London to Tasmania in 1949, and became prominent through giving public poetry recitals, and the establishment of the teaching of *The Art of Speech* in all Tasmanian schools. Their influence quickly spread to the mainland. Another influential Australian educator, John O'Toole AM, emigrated to Queensland in 1973 commencing work in teacher education in Queensland. Short-term visitors, offering workshops for teachers or contributing to conferences included: Richard Courtney (1974), Dorothy Heathcote (1974), Gavin Bolton (1979), Ken Robinson (1981), Cecily O'Neill (1987), Norah Morgan and Julian Saxton (1988), and Stig Eriksson and Klaus Jantson (1990). Many of these returned for the IDEA (International Drama/Theatre Education Association) World Congress in Brisbane in 1995, another significant event in drama education in Australia and one which epitomised the collaboration and consultation for which the Australian drama education community is renowned. Reversing this trend, many Australian drama educators travelled to the UK to study, returning to make significant contributions to Australian curriculum. Amongst a long list of those who studied in the UK in the 1960s, 1970s and beyond, and then returned to work in drama education in Australia were John Carroll, Howard Cassidy, Joan Cassidy, Kate Donelan, John Deverall, Peter Lavery, Brad Haseman Mary Mooney, Peter Moore, and Madonna Stinson. Many locally and internationally educated drama teachers, community facilitators and theatre practitioners have made invaluable contributions to the development of drama in schools throughout the country. They, and their contributions, are too numerous to mention here but we hope that the Drama Australia Archive Project, currently underway (see www.dramaaustralia.org.au/ignite.html) will provide a resource that will allow researchers to investigate the many and diverse influences on the history of drama education in Australia.

The 1970s was a vibrant time for drama education in Australia, and drama made inroads into the curriculum provisions in almost every state. The fervour for regular and authoritative professional development and high quality drama education led to the recognition of the need for a national association representing professional drama educators. Thus, in June 1976 a meeting was held in a scout hut near Hahndorf in the Adelaide Hills, to discuss forming a national body that would act as an organisation for the state and territory associations. As a result of this historic meeting, attended by representatives from most states and territories (with the exception of Tasmania and the Northern Territory), the National Association of Drama in Education (NADIE) (now Drama Australia) was created. John O'Toole, who was present at the 1976 meeting, recalls that NADIE was established with three key

responsibilities: advocacy; organisation of a national conference (to be hosted by each state association in turn); and to publish a national refereed journal (Email communication, 13 February 2016). NADIE was, and still is, an association of associations. Its members are the state and territory drama associations, currently: Australian Capital Territory Drama Association (ACTDA); Drama New South Wales; Drama Queensland; Drama South Australia; Drama Tasmania; Drama Victoria, and DramaWest.

The formation of each state and territory association and of the national association, NADIE, paralleled the development of drama as a curriculum offering throughout Australia. Each state and territory association advanced the cause for the inclusion of drama in their respective curriculums. In most states, drama secured a solid place in the curriculum during the last 30 years of the twentieth century, with each state developing curriculum frameworks and supporting materials. Throughout those years, despite an ebb and flow in the strength of, and support for drama at a state level, drama can be considered a well-established subject for study throughout the nation. During the 1990s, and more recently, there have been two attempts at the creation of a national curriculum, each of which included drama as an entitlement for all school students. Later in this paper, we consider both of these attempts in turn, but first we introduce another significant advocacy organisation, which has been highly influential at a national level: the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE).

The role of the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE)

Originally entitled the National *Affiliation* of Arts Educators when established in 1989, today's National Advocates for Arts Education places its role and purpose clearly up front in the title. The NAAE is a network which represents nationally-based arts and arts education professional associations and peak bodies for Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts. The NAAE has unequivocally played a most significant role in successfully advocating for inclusion of The Arts in a national curriculum in Australia. Current chair, Julie Dyson AM, recalls that the NAAE grew from the work of the National Arts in Australian Schools (NAAS) Project,

an initiative by the then Federal Labor Government, in collaboration with the States and Territories. This in turn grew out of a little purple booklet... called *Action: Education and the Arts: A report of the Task Force on Education and the Arts to the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs*, published in 1983. (Dyson 2009, 2)

There was a growing swell of support for the development of an Australian national curriculum consolidated:

in June 1986 when the Australian Education Council (AEC) resolved to support the concept of a national collaborative effort in curriculum development in Australia to make the *best use of scarce curriculum resources and to minimise unnecessary differences in curriculum between states*. (Curriculum Corporation 1994a, 58, emphasis added)

The burgeoning support led to the establishment of the first Australian advocacy group for arts education, the NAAE, with supportive 'sponsors' in high levels of government. Nancy Whittaker, the first honorary secretary of NAAE (1989–1992) and whose husband was Geoff Hammond, the inaugural chair of the NAAE, recorded:

Table 1. The first wave of development contributing to the arts in the Australian curriculum.

The first wave	
1976	The National Association of Drama Educators (NADIE) now Drama Australia founded
1983	<i>Action: Education and the Arts: A report on the Task Force on Education and the Arts</i> to the Minister of Education and Youth Affairs published
1986	Australian Education Council (AEC) announced a collaborative effort to develop a national curriculum
	National Arts in Australian Schools (NAAS) Project
1988	AEC begins drafting the Hobart Declaration
1989	The Hobart Declaration is endorsed
	The National Affiliation of Arts Educators (NAAE) founded
1990–1993	<i>The Arts Statements and Profiles</i> developed
1993–1994	Changes in State/Territory Governments
1994	<i>The Arts Statements and Profiles</i> published but never endorsed for implementation in States and Territories
1996	NAAE defunded by Federal Government

The formation of the National Affiliation of Arts Educators (NAAE) in February 1989 was a timely development which brought together the six national peak arts education associations including the Australian Institute of Art Education (AIAE), Australian Dance Council (Ausdance), Australian Society for Music Education (ASME), Australian Teachers of Media (ATOM), Design Education Council of Australia (DECA) and the National Association for Drama in Education (NADIE). The group met for the first time in the Australian Education Council (AEC) Board Room, in Melbourne, by invitation of the Australian Education Council Secretary, Dr. John McArthur, who had taken a deep personal interest in the collaborative development of the NAAE from its inception. (Whittaker 1996, 98)

Two months after the formation of the NAAE, in April 1989, the Hobart Declaration on Schooling (MCEETYA) was released by the AEC. The Hobart Declaration outlined, 'Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia', one of which was to develop, 'an appreciation and understanding of, and confidence to participate in, the creative arts' (MCEETYA 1989, 1). Whittaker remarked, 'At last the Arts were recognised nationally, by all education systems, as an important and necessary part of the school curriculum' (1998, 1).

Although Whittaker recalled the joy of the moment, the advocacy battle was just beginning for the NAAE. Recently Dyson commented that, 'the NAAE's first challenge was to have the Arts included in the mapping exercise then being undertaken in other key learning areas' (2009, 4). Dyson also asserts that it was as a result of the NAAE's lobbying and the positive relationship with the Australian Education Council Secretary, John McArthur, that the Arts were included in the curriculum mapping project at all (2009, 4).

There have been two significant waves of development of the arts at a national curriculum level (see Tables 1 and 2). The first wave begins with the development of the national association for drama educators in 1976, continues through the development of *The Arts Statements and Profiles*, and finishes with the defunding of the NAAE in 1996. The second wave commences in 2006 with another call for a national curriculum, followed by the development of *The Australian Curriculum: The Arts*, endorsed and made available for implementation in 2014. The national curriculum was reviewed in 2014, following a change in federal government and, at the time of writing has been taken up only to a degree (or not at all) by the states and territories. The implementation of the national curriculum is beyond the scope of this paper, but warrants systematic interrogation.

The first wave

As a result of the *Hobart Declaration* and under the direction of the AEC, the Curriculum Corporation commenced developing the scope and sequence of learning regarded as essential for all students in the compulsory years of schooling. These took the form of Statements (1994a) and Profiles (1994b) (for eight Key Learning Areas: The Arts; English; Health and Physical Education; Languages other than English; Mathematics; Science; Studies of Society and Environment; and Technology). The Statements were essentially the content of each subject area,

a framework for curriculum developing in each area of learning. They defined the [subject] area, outlined its essential elements, showed what is distinctive about it and described a sequence of developing knowledge and skills; while 'profiles' describe the progression of learning typically achieved by students during the compulsory years of schooling (Years 1–10). (Curriculum Corporation 1994b, 1)

Thus, the profiles could be considered achievement standards at each level of the subject area. This was Australia's first attempt at a national curriculum and, happily, one that included The Arts. The development of The Arts statements and profiles was led by Lee Emery and Geoff Hammond (the first NAAE Chair). Associate writers included: Jenny Aland, John Benson, Ralph Buck, Ted Clark, Louise Dressing, Imre Hollosy, Dr. Gary McPherson, Nora Morrisroe, Robin Pascoe, Mary-Jane Whitehead and Kaye Price (Curriculum Corporation 1994b, 166). These writers were nominated by the NAAE member associations and consulted with their relevant arts association and broader networks during the writing process. Whittaker recalled that, '*The Arts Statements and Profiles* took two and a half years to write and throughout the process the NAAE was used as a major consultation group. The arts documents were completed by the end of 1993' (1998, 3).

The 'Statements and Profiles' were endorsed by the federal government and both documents were published in 1994. However, prior to any implementation strategy,

with a swing to conservative governments across States and Territories in 1993, the concept of a 'national curriculum' was scuttled. Instead we saw each jurisdiction adopt the statements and profiles in various ways, by either completely rewriting them, or adapting them in ways unintended by the writers, which was disappointing, given that NAAE's major focus had been on ensuring the integrity of each art form. (Dyson 2009, 5)

The dream of a coherent national curriculum had been quashed and each state and territory adopted or adapted the curriculum framework to varying extents. Some used them as a framework to develop their own syllabi (e.g., Queensland and Western Australia), some adopted the framework in its entirety (e.g., Australian Capital Territory) and others, not at all (e.g., New South Wales).

The second wave

Throughout the 1990s, states and territories worked autonomously in curriculum development and education reform. In 1996 the NAAE lost federal funding, became a voluntary organisation and was largely inactive for the next decade, apart from an annual face-to-face meeting with member associations and the occasional submission to Government. This pattern continued through most of the Howard Government's tenure, and most educators thought an Australian national curriculum was a thing of the past. However, in October 2006, the Federal Education Minister, Julie Bishop, at a History Teachers' conference in Fremantle,

Table 2. The second wave of development contributing to the arts in the Australian curriculum.

The second wave	
2006	Education Minister, Julie Bishop calls for a common national curriculum
2007	Change of Federal Government (Liberal to Labour)
2008	Julia Gillard appointed Education Minister & Peter Garrett appointed Arts Minister Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Act passed and ACARA established <i>The Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians</i> published NAAE reformed and lobbying begins
2009	The Arts are announced as one of the subjects to be developed in Phase Two ACARA appoints a Senior Project Officer for The Arts
2010	<i>The Arts Advice Paper</i> developed ACARA hosts national forum to respond to the initial advice paper The Arts <i>Draft Shape Paper</i> is developed and released for consultation <i>The Arts Shape Paper</i> published
2011	Development and drafting of <i>The Arts</i> curriculum documents commences
2012	Draft curriculum developed and released for consultation
2013	Change in Federal Government (Labour to Liberal/National coalition)
2014	<i>Review of Australian Curriculum</i> (Donnelly & Wiltshire) commissioned by new government
2015	Minor changes to Achievement Standards

Western Australia, called for a common national curriculum. The following year the Howard Government lost the Federal election and the new Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, appointed Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard as Education Minister and Peter Garrett as Arts Minister. Gillard pursued the national curriculum agenda under Rudd's election commitment to an 'education revolution'. By 2008 it was clear that Australia was going to have a national curriculum in some form and, in December 2008, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) Act was passed and ACARA was founded. This organisation was established with oversight of all curriculum, assessment and reporting in Australian schools and did not start operations until May 2009, replacing the responsibilities held by the National Curriculum Board (NCB) (Table 2).

It was during this time that NAAE become active again. Julie Dyson recalls receiving a telephone call from Mark Bailey (President, Drama Australia 2010–2013) asking if the NAAE should do something about trying to include The Arts in the so-called Phase Two subjects. Phase One subjects included English, Mathematics, Science and History, and at the time there was no indication that The Arts were being considered for inclusion at all. As a result of that phone call, Dyson initiated the re-formation of the NAAE.

In August 2008, NAAE members met via teleconference 'in response to the announcement of disciplines targeted for inclusion in the national curriculum' (Gattenhof 2009a, 2–3). Following the August teleconference, the group convened in Sydney for a face-to-face discussion in October that same year. At this meeting, the NAAE agreed to broaden their membership. Dyson stated that she felt the group needed 'additional firepower' (Interview, 29 January 2016) regarding experienced political operators in the Arts Education space. NAAE members invited Richard (Dick) Letts AM, representing the Music Council of Australia (now Music Australia) and Tamara Winikoff OAM, representing the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) onto the group. Drama educator, Sandra Gattenhof represented Drama Australia (with Bailey from 2008 to 2013 and then with Saunders from 2013) at the NAAE meetings from 2008 to the present. Gattenhof noted that it was at this October meeting that the NAAE

modified its nomenclature from alliance to advocates to reflect the re-energisation of the group and its focus of action – advocating for the position of the arts as a learning area in the remit of the National Curriculum Board. (2009a, 3)

Next Dyson secured meetings with politicians and senior advisors at Parliament House, Canberra. In late November 2008, the NAAE met with Peter Garrett (then Minister for the Arts), Julia Gillard's education advisor, Senator Kim Carr, who represented Gillard's education interest in the senate (as well as being a former teacher), and representatives from the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (Gattenhof 2009a). They also met with Shadow Education Minister, Christopher Pyne which was, as later became apparent, a crucial meeting.

At these meetings the NAAE presented a unified front, proposing that The Arts be included in Phase Two of the Australian Curriculum. Prior to the November 2008 meetings in Canberra, Dyson and the group produced a media release: 'Education Revolution? The Arts Have it!' Here the group outlined their agenda and called for the government to:

- mandate representation of The Arts within the curriculum K to 10;
- radically overhaul pre- and in-service teacher education and professional development vastly improve Arts teaching standards, resources and research (NAAE 2008).

The campaign continued. The NAAE met with ACARA's General Manager (Curriculum), Robert (Rob) Randall. Dyson recalls that none of the group knew Randall prior to their work with him at ACARA although he had held senior positions with the NSW Board of Studies and the NSW Department of Education and Training. At these meetings NAAE pushed for the inclusion of all five Arts subjects (Dance, Drama, Media, Music and Visual Art). Randall advised the group that it would not be acceptable to have five separate Arts subjects in the curriculum, although he was willing to discuss the concept. Dyson explained,

So he agreed to attend two NAAE meetings, one in Canberra and one in Melbourne, where we were able to meet at an impressive venue, The Australian Ballet. He played the devil's advocate for The Arts, and said, 'five art forms, you can't do five art forms, you need to come up with a compromise. It is great that you are all around the table but we can't do five art forms'. (Interview, 29 January 2016)

In our interview with Dyson, we asked her if the 1994 Statements and Profiles for The Arts had any impact on ACARA or the Government. Dyson commented,

Those documents didn't seem to influence Rob Randall at all. Quite early in the piece we produced that document and he dismissed it saying that 'we are not going down that path again! It was a total disaster and nothing came from it!' So although this was Rob's take on it, I think the fact that a lot of work had already been done worked well for Peter Garrett and with other politicians. (Interview, 29 January 2016)

It was at this point that the NAAE considered a compromise after receiving the advice from Randall. The *Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians* was published in December 2008 (MCEETYA 2008), naming the Arts (performing and visual) as one of the eight learning areas to be prioritised yet, at this stage, The Arts were not in either Phase One or Phase Two of the Australian Curriculum. Dyson reflected,

I was at a consultation meeting and asked the questions about why The Arts weren't in the plan for the national curriculum when creativity and innovation were mentioned in the Melbourne Declaration as priorities. So the Melbourne Declaration became increasingly important to our cause because it stated 'visual and performing arts'... it was a way into working with ACARA. We drew on the Melbourne Declaration and initially suggested that schools could be given the

option of teaching one subject each from the Visual Arts and Performing Arts, with the other three included and taught at a more basic level. (Dyson 2016)

Gattenhof suggested that the most likely result of this decision would be that schools would select Visual Art and Music as the two representative subjects, since they had strong historical standings in all Australian state and territory curricula. The other three subjects, Dance, Drama and Media Arts would potentially remain on the periphery of the curriculum, particularly in primary schools (Interview, 25 January 2016).

Lobbying continued throughout late 2008 and early 2009. The NAAE proffered Australian and international research illustrating the benefits of the Arts for student learning and well-being. It had become clear to the NAAE that the NCB (National Curriculum Board) were being directed by the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and that it was this latter group that held the power to include The Arts in the Australian Curriculum. The NAAE worked closely with Peter Garrett and his advisors over those few months and gained traction regarding the inclusion of all five Arts subjects in the Australian Curriculum. During this time it became clear to the NAAE that a compromise of one visual and one performing arts subject could harm the teaching and learning of the other three arts subjects. The NAAE returned to arguing for curricula to be written for five arts subjects equally, an outcome eventually achieved (Dyson 2016). Minister Peter Garrett addressed MCEETYA at their April 2009 meeting and spoke of 'the importance of arts education and arguing for the arts to be included in Phase Two' (Gattenhof 2009b, 13).

Also in April 2008, the newly appointed Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd held the *2020 Summit* which aimed to shape future policy directions for the new government. One of the 10 strands of the summit was *Towards a creative Australia*, co-chaired by Cate Blanchett (Co-Artistic Director of Sydney Theatre Company), Dr. Julianne Schultz (Griffith University) and The Honourable Peter Garrett AM MP (Minister for the Arts). One of the major outcomes in the final report of the *2020 Summit* was a recommendation that The Arts be included as a mandated part of a national curriculum (Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet, 2008). Cate Blanchett and Andrew Upton (Co-Artistic Directors of Sydney Theatre Company) also lobbied heavily, and met with most state and federal Education Ministers for the inclusion of The Arts. It is possible that their influence with the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd may have contributed to the decision to include The Arts in a national curriculum.

The NAAE's lobbying to Garrett had worked and the Arts Minister advocated for inclusion of The Arts in the national curriculum. This was undoubtedly one of the most significant achievements for the NAAE. We asked Gattenhof about what she felt were the major arguments that had gained traction in the meetings between the NAAE and Garrett. She reflected:

In the end, I'm not sure it was anything about the arguments we made, I really think it was a turn of good fortune... I can honestly say that we would not have got a meeting with Garrett... if it had not been for Julie Dyson. Now, you know, I can't undersell how important it was to have Julie [living] in Canberra. She was doing an extraordinary amount of 'legwork' while working full time and I don't think she has ever been fully thanked for what she did there. The turn of good fortune was that at the time, Government ministers were jockeying for positions and Garrett wasn't seen in a very good light following the insulation debacle that had happened, and I think he really wanted, from both parliamentary and public points of view, to have a good news story, so he really championed The Arts... I think he saw this as an opportunity to write a good news story for himself... He was very wedded to social justice and he was very wedded to Indigenous Australia and I think he saw The Arts as a way of creating equality in education, for every child to have an opportunity to be successful. (Interview, 25 January 2016)

In his address to MCEETYA on April 17 2009, Garrett said:

Creativity, interpretation, innovation and cultural understanding are all sought after skills for new and emerging industries of the 21st century. Arts education provides students with the tools to develop these skills... Arts education can also help address social exclusion and assist the development of students with learning difficulties. (Garrett 2009, 1)

In April 2009, the NAAE received news from Garrett's office that The Arts would be included in the Australian Curriculum as part of Phase Two. A media release from Garrett on 17 April 2009 announced this enormous win for Arts Education in Australia. He stated that, 'International studies have found that arts education is important to the development of young minds and positively influences learning in other areas' (Garrett 2009, 1), a validation of the NAAE's strategy of using current research as an advocacy tool.

The inclusion of the arts in the Australian curriculum

In June 2009, Josephine Wise, a Drama teacher from Queensland was appointed by ACARA as Senior Project Officer responsible for The Arts. Wise's first task was to manage the development of 'The Shape Paper for The Arts'. This document provided the conceptual framework and structure of the ensuing arts curriculum. Following Wise's appointment, a Curriculum Reference advisory group was established. Membership included Julie Dyson and Sandra Gattenhof, as well as other NAAE representatives such as Roger Dunscombe (Australian Teachers Of Media, ATOM), Richard Letts AM (Music Council of Australia), Jeffrey Meiners (Ausdance), Marion Strong (Art Education Australia), Derek Weeks (ATOM) and Tamara Winikoff (National Association for the Visual Arts).

A National Forum was held in May 2010, to discuss the development of the 'Draft Shape Paper for the Arts'. John O'Toole was appointed Lead Writer of the Arts Shape Paper and the discipline contributor for Drama. Discipline contributors for the other areas were Margaret Barrett (Music), Elizabeth Grierson (Visual Art), Jeffrey Meiners (Dance) and Michael Dezuanni (Media Arts).

Shaping the curriculum

The *Draft Shape Paper*, which proposed a conceptual framework for the curriculum, was released for consultation in August 2010 and defined each of the five Arts subjects, explored potential organising strands for the curriculum and provided a brief overview of the learning that would occur in each Arts discipline from Kindergarten to Year 12. The 26 page document was made available online for consultation and outlined a series of well established Arts subjects, some broad content for different levels of schooling and three organising strands; Generating, Realising and Responding.

Although the NAAE maintained a unified front publicly and in meetings with government, internally there were disagreements. One of these was with a faction in the NSW Visual Arts community, which considered that the merging of visual art into an 'Arts' curriculum sharing commonalities with four other Arts subjects was 'unacceptable to the vast majority of Visual Arts teachers in NSW and other states' (Thomas 2014, 12). The consultation feedback report on the *Draft Shape Paper* stated that 33% of responses 'strongly disagreed' to the organisation of the Arts Curriculum into generating, realising and responding. Interestingly, 33% of all respondents were from the Visual Arts. The final *Shape of the Australian Curriculum*:

The Arts was released in August 2011 and, following a campaign from an active group of visual arts educators (largely from NSW) the curriculum was organised into two organising strands, making and responding. This was a significant compromise for the performing arts subjects (Dance, Drama and Music).

Developing the curriculum

Curriculum development continued and a new Senior Project Officer, Linda Lorenza (with a Music and Drama background) from NSW, was appointed to manage the writing phase following Wise's departure. Curriculum writers (two from each arts discipline) were employed, with their identities being kept confidential to avoid undue lobbying. The writers consulted extensively, through the Senior Project Officer, with the NAAE, Drama Australia other national associations during the writing process. During 2011 and 2012 writing continued and consultation was sought from the broader education community. Both Drama Australia and NAAE provided extensive formal feedback to ACARA during this time.

In June 2013 the ACARA Board approved the first public version of *Australian Curriculum: The Arts*. The NAAE welcomed this decision and encouraged state and territory education ministers to endorse the curriculum at their respective meetings. The NAAE was particularly proud of the successful lobbying that included the central principle of the *entitlement* of every young Australian to an arts education including all five art forms – Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Art.

More change

In September 2013, the Federal election resulted in a change of Government. Christopher Pyne was appointed Education Minister, following his time as Shadow Education Minister in opposition. Immediately, Pyne decided to review the Australian Curriculum and appointed Kevin Donnelly and Kenneth Wiltshire to undertake this task. Arts educators across the nation began to lose hope once more. Just as they considered the fight for the Arts' inclusion in the curriculum had been won, another challenge emerged. Neither the NAAE nor Drama Australia were consulted during Donnelly and Wiltshire's review process.

The NAAE met with Education Minister, Christopher Pyne in March 2014 to discuss the Review of the Australian Curriculum. During this meeting it became clear that the place of The Arts was under threat. Earlier in this article we mentioned a meeting between the NAAE and Pyne in late 2008 while the Liberal National Coalition was in opposition. Following each meeting, Dyson wrote to the minister that the NAAE had met thus confirming, in writing, the key areas that were discussed. Dyson did this in 2008, before the change of government and Pyne had responded saying, 'We [the Opposition] are also concerned that disciplines such as the Arts do not get left behind in the development of a National Curriculum' (letter from Pyne to NAAE, 2008). Dyson reminded the Minister of this earlier commitment to the Arts at their 2014 meeting.

The Review of the Australian Curriculum was published in October, 2014, and made 30 key recommendations including specific recommendations for each learning area. There were seven recommendations pertaining to the Arts, including:

- The arts curriculum should be available to all students throughout all the years of schooling. The learning area should be formally introduced at Year 3 but provide a rich source of resource material for Foundation to Year 2, the Foundation years.
- The core content of all five strands should be reduced and a considerable portion of the current core be included in school-based curriculum and activities, thus augmenting the rich arts programs which most schools are already conducting.
- Two of the arts strands should be mandatory and we recommend music and visual arts. The other three strands would be elective subjects and schools would choose which to offer according to their resources and wishes of the parents and nature of the school context. Media arts should become a separate standalone subject and substantially reduced in content.
- Elements of the current arts curriculum should also be integrated into other learning areas such as English, health and physical education, history and technologies.
- The content of each of the arts forms needs to be restructured and re-sequenced along the lines suggested by the subject matter specialists. The documents need to be expressed in clearer language. The balance between 'making' and 'responding' in each of the strands needs to be revisited involving consultation with arts teachers.
- The considerable resourcing costs associated with delivering the arts curriculum need greater consideration, and professional development for teachers is needed as the years progress. It needs to be acknowledged that arts specialists will be needed at the advanced levels.
- An analysis needs to be undertaken to identify the extent to which the cross-curriculum priorities have produced repetition of content in these strands, and the extent to which they have skewed the content of all the strands, particularly away from Western and other cultures. The cross-curriculum priorities should be integrated, but only where appropriate, and their presence more clearly indicated (Donnelly and Wiltshire 2014, 219).

The Australian Arts education community was incensed. After substantial, open and transparent consultation during the curriculum writing process, two people ('experts' according to Donnelly & Wiltshire, but almost completely unknown to the arts education community) reviewed The Arts curriculum and made these recommendations. Once again, the place for The Arts in the Australian curriculum was looking insecure. Drama Australia, and other professional associations and individuals, immediately provided a written response to each of the seven Arts recommendations, urging the Commonwealth and State and Territory Education Ministers to reject the review and implement the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* in its current form. Drama Australia also wrote to the Commonwealth, State and Territory Education and Arts Ministers about their concerns and sent copies of submissions to the shadow education and arts ministers. In addition Drama Australia penned an open letter to Pyne, inviting members of the community to sign. Over 2000 Drama teachers signed the e-letter showing the Minister that Drama would not depart quietly from a place in the curriculum.

Gattenhof stated,

If the review was taken up and moved forward, we were in the position of losing three art forms. We would have had Music and Visual Art only. That's what the report recommended. And the other three subjects were either to go from the curriculum or be subsumed into other parts of the curriculum. So Dance would have ended up in some horrible fashion in Physical Education,

Drama would have ended up in English as it was in the 1960s and so it was a very retrograde move. So had that review got any sort of traction, we would certainly not have Drama, Dance and Media Arts in the curriculum. (Interview, 25 January 2016)

Following a leadership challenge in the Liberal Party in September 2015, Malcolm Turnbull replaced Tony Abbott as Prime Minister and promised a reshuffle of cabinet. Just days later and prior to a major cabinet reshuffle where he would depart the portfolio of Education, Pyne announced a 'new national curriculum from 2016'. In effect, very little had changed for The Arts apart from the option for schools to report on either the learning area or on each individual arts subject. Hardly a 'new national curriculum'.

In October 2015 the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* was finally endorsed by the AEC, meaning that from this date each State or Territories was permitted to implement the curriculum published by ACARA. Each implementation model has taken a slightly different approach, and will be explored in forthcoming articles.

Conclusion

This paper can only provide a limited perspective on the role of the national advocacy body and its influence on the place of the arts in the Australian Curriculum. However, this is an important story and needs to be told, as a matter of record. The inclusion of Drama in a national curriculum has been a difficult, long and challenging journey lead by the NAAE and Drama Australia. Arts professional teaching associations have emerged out of the need for teachers to work together, and advocate and lobby at both a state and national level. Julie Dyson's extraordinary ability to lobby, maintain a unified front and allow opportunities for each arts subject representative to have their voice heard is undoubtedly one of the most significant factors contributing to the inclusion of the Arts in the Australian Curriculum. Leaders in the field from Art Education Australia, Australian Dance Council (Ausdance), Drama Australia, Music Council of Australia and the National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) have played a vital role in advocating for the arts in a national curriculum. As this article goes to print, the Australia Council for the Arts announced that it was defunding organisations including the Ausdance National, the Music Council of Australia and NAVA. Without the unwavering collaborative advocacy of these associations and the dedicated members who voluntarily give of their time, energy and expertise, it is highly unlikely that the arts would now be represented in the Australian Curriculum.

In many ways the story of The Arts in a national curriculum is a story that has been repeated, over and over again. It is a story not about curriculum or content, but about the passionate few who lead our field and fight for the rightful place of The Arts in the lives of all young Australian. This is a familiar story, and one not unique to Australia, but evident throughout the world where arts educators are able to put aside partisan positions and work together for the benefit of the wholistic development of all young people. Arts education should be an entitlement for all. Now it is time to advocate for adequate and continuing support for full implementation of this new curriculum, Australia-wide.

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Madonna Stinson teaches in Drama pedagogy and curriculum, and Curriculum theory and practice at undergraduate and postgraduate level for the School of Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University. She has been involved in arts and drama curriculum development in Australia, Singapore, Taiwan and China. Current research projects include *Age-Appropriate-Pedagogies* in the early years, for the Department of Education and Training, Queensland, and *Y-Connect*, working with teachers and artists to investigate what might be the benefits of offering an arts-rich curriculum within a Brisbane secondary school with a large refugee student population. Madonna is Director of Publications for Drama Australia.

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