

Media Release
2 December 2008



Education Revolution? The Arts Have It!

Unless the arts are included as a key learning area in the development of a national curriculum for schools, children coming through the system will be illiterate in the new skill areas essential for the C21st.

So says a new lobby coalition, the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE) which has just spent two days meeting with politicians and arts advisers in Canberra. Comprehensively representing dance, drama, music and visual arts education, the NAAE is urgently calling for the immediate inclusion of the arts in the work of the National Curriculum Board and the Early Years Learning Framework.

NAAE believes that a culturally rich education is central to realising the Government's priorities for a genuine education revolution and fostering **creativity, innovation, cultural understanding** and **social inclusion** in the Australian workforce.

Recent Australian research evidence* backs international findings that arts education develops these skills as no other subject area can. It demonstrates that visual, aural and kinaesthetic abilities are essential for Australians to compete in the global marketplace where the economy of the cultural industries is growing in importance.

The NAAE is planning a campaign for 2009 involving teachers, school principals, parents, university teacher education bodies, industry and a range of other sectors with an interest in the future of the education system.

NAAE members want to see:

- mandated representation of the arts within the curriculum K to 10
- radically overhauled pre- and in-service teacher education and professional development
- vastly improved arts teaching standards, resources and research.

The NAAE delegation provided evidence to those with whom it met, which confirmed that arts education uniquely develops the aesthetic, emotional, physical, social and cognitive capacity of all students.

"We need an expanded notion of literacy which is not just about being able to read, write and manage numbers confidently. It must also encompass students' cultural comprehension and self-expression. Current brain research must be applied in the National Curriculum if we are to achieve an education revolution that fosters innovation and creativity in next-generation leaders and thinkers," said an NAAE spokesperson.

*National Review of Visual Education (2007) & National Review of School Music Education, (2005)

For comment contact:

Marian Strong, Art Education Australia - ph: 0438 028 038

Julie Dyson, Ausdance - ph: 0412 211 513

Sandra Gattenhof, Drama Australia - ph: 0438 199 480

Dick Letts, Music Council of Australia - (02) 9251 3816

Tamara Winikoff, National Association for the Visual Arts - ph: 0411 162 156