

MEDIA RELEASE

Creativity in schools essential to preparing young people for future uncertainty and change

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New research released today by the Australia Council for the Arts provides powerful evidence for the wide-reaching benefits of creativity in education.

Cultivating Creativity: A study of the Sydney Opera House's Creative Leadership in Learning Program shows creative learning approaches help build confidence, improve academic engagement and prepare young people for future disruption and change. It also transforms teaching staff and the school community.

The report reveals that applying creativity has the potential to holistically impact children – academically, socially and emotionally - and enhance learning across a range of academic subjects.

Conducted over two years, the joint research partnership between the Australia Council and the Opera House examined the impact of the [Creative Leadership in Learning](#) (CLIL) program, an innovative Opera House program that works with schools to embed creativity in approaches to teaching and learning.

The research shows how creative approaches positively impact school culture, enhance the sense of community and help students to thrive in uncertain times.

It demonstrates that applying creativity in education can dramatically increase student engagement, equipping both students and the teaching community with the skills and capabilities to meet difference, difficulty and the previously unimaginable with confidence.

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher said: “I commend the Australia Council and the Sydney Opera House on partnering to deliver this report, which offers valuable insights into the crucial role of arts and creativity in equipping our young people with the resilience and confidence they will need for the future”.

Australia Council CEO Adrian Collette AM said: “This important research further reinforces what we know – that arts and creativity have the power to transform us, and certainly in education. *Cultivating Creativity* is an optimistic, exciting and useful document that will help educators and cultural organisations adapt for the 21st century.”

NSW Minister for the Arts, The Hon. Don Harwin said: “*Cultivating Creativity* demonstrates that the Opera House's innovative program Creative Leadership in Learning is immensely valuable to the NSW community. Supporting schools and students to teach and learn

through creativity helps build vital relationships and fosters resilience and imaginative thinking, which is so important in this unprecedented year. I applaud the Sydney Opera House and the Australia Council for the Arts on their collaboration that has reminded us all of the power of creativity in shaping our young people's futures."

The report identifies new areas of professional and creative engagement for artists and their work, and points to new and vital areas of outreach and learning activity for cultural organisations.

Sydney Opera House Director of Programming Fiona Winning said: "Over the past 4 years, the Opera House's Creative Leadership in Learning program has opened the Opera House to a new generation of audiences and artists. As demonstrated through the *Cultivating Creativity* report, the program has far-reaching positive impacts within the school ecosystem, embedding a culture of collaboration, creativity, communication and critical thinking – the very skills that are essential for the next generation to navigate and thrive in an uncertain future."

Key findings:

- The [Creative Leadership in Learning program](#) is having **extremely positive impacts** – on teachers, students, families and on the culture of participating schools.
- **Students are experiencing increased engagement** with the curriculum, and elevated excitement for learning. Engaging with creativity at school has encouraged students to take risks, share their thoughts, and try new ideas.
- **For teachers, the program has increased engagement with their teaching practice**, enlivening the curriculum and leading to new flexible experiences with students. Through participation in CLIL's 'teacher professional learning', teachers have enjoyed increased support, collaboration and trust between colleagues, resulting in improved health and wellbeing.
- Principals and teachers spoke about how applying **creativity has the potential to impact the whole child** – academically, socially and emotionally.
- CLIL has led to **increased parent engagement** with both their children's schoolwork and with the school more broadly, enhancing a shared sense of community.
- Within schools, CLIL has **changed the meaning of creativity and its significant potential** for learning across a range of academic subjects, not only those typically associated with the arts. The program is enabling schools to spark a conversation with families, students and other educators about the value of creativity in building new skills such as resilience and adaptability, which will be valued in a new, complex world of work.

- **For participating artists, CLIL has expanded the horizon** and stimuli for creative practice. Artists have experienced new contexts for collaboration, and even new concepts of what artistic collaboration might mean. For many artists, CLIL has also provided a new professional context for their practice, and an important new source of income.
- CLIL has also promoted **a new relationship between schools and the Opera House** – one that is based on collaboration and a connection that lasts over time. For many who might not have previously attended a performance at the Opera House, CLIL has cultivated **a feeling of belonging and connection with this icon of Sydney cultural life.**

Hi res images and footage are available for media use. Download [here](#).

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Background:

Cultivating Creativity contributes to a growing body of evidence of the value of creativity to 21st century skills and the future of educational and cultural institutions.

There is growing evidence of the power of the arts to teach core subjects, to improve both short-term and long-term academic outcomes, and of the effectiveness of creative interdisciplinary learning for rehearsing and preparing for ‘real world’ encounters and problems.

Research also suggests the need for schools to transform themselves, developing deeper, more critical and creative learning environments that are relevant to contemporary social demands.

Sydney Opera House

The Opera House is a masterpiece that belongs to all Australians. It is the nation’s premier tourism destination, a world-class performing arts centre and celebrated community meeting place, welcoming 10.9 million visitors to the site in 2019, including more than 2.1 million

performance and tours patrons. A global beacon for creativity, it is inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, and Deloitte has estimated its total social asset value to Australia at \$6.2 billion. After embarking on a decade of renewal at its 40th anniversary, the Opera House is now more than halfway through a program of major upgrades to ensure this 20th-century icon continues to inspire 21st-century artists, audiences and visitors.

Children, Families and Creative Learning

The Sydney Opera House Presents' Children, Families & Creative Learning program engages more than 190,000 people annually with a suite of programs that playfully encourage creativity and nurture life-long learning. At the Opera House, diverse performances from the best Australian and international theatre-makers are programmed for children, families and caregivers. Schools programming continues throughout the year and is aligned to contemporary learning outcomes including communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity. The main initiatives are: Digital Creative Learning – including live streamed performances, interactive workshops and digital tours that are delivered online into classroom and home-school settings; Creative Learning – rich on-site learning and performance experiences and; Creative Leadership in Learning – a tailored, immersive, three-year program for schools leaders to embed creativity in the heart of their school.