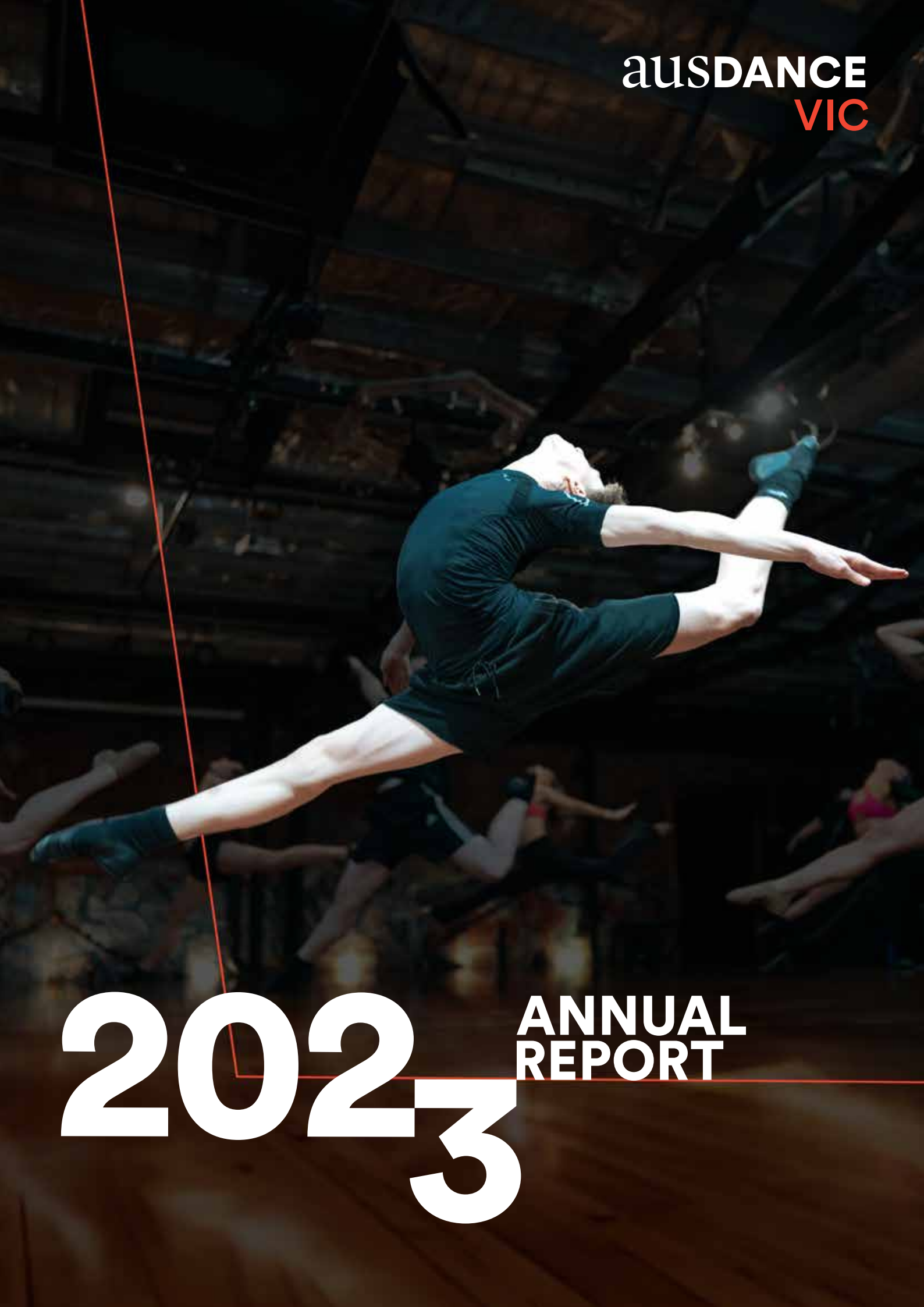


auSDANCE
VIC



2023

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

Ausdance VIC acknowledges and respects the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work and dance.

Sovereignty was never ceded. We pay respect to Elders past and present. We acknowledge the right to self-determination for First Nations People and seek to develop strong and lasting partnerships with Victorian First Peoples to achieve equity and prosperity in the communities we serve across the state.

We acknowledge the Yalukut Weelam Clan of the Boon Wurrung who are part of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land where our primary office is located.

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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2023 AT A GLANCE

54
Member Representations

26
Government Meetings

688
Members

76
Dance Professionals Employed

419
Accredited Dance Training Participants

3,088
Program Participants

86
Schools Engaged

8,821
Social followers

The Australian Dance Council
Ausdance VIC Inc.
RTO 20949 | ABN 18 030 668 584

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FROM THE CHAIR

Helen Haines

I recall reflecting back on the whirlwind that was 2022 at the beginning of 2023 and wondering what could be in store for 2023. As we had our first board meeting already, we had an inkling of what a busy year it was going to be and what incredible goals the team of Ausdance VIC had set for themselves.

As with any industry, and in particular, the arts at the moment, there proved to be peaks and troughs and some interesting challenges and opportunities along the way. By far, our greatest areas of success were within our education departments and through the team's continued commitment to advocacy for the sector.

We bid farewell to our amazing Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, Dr Katrina Rank, at the beginning of 2024. Her contributions have been profound and have been instrumental in making our reach into dance education considerable. It has been her long-term commitment to supporting the evolution of dance in education that has driven incredible programs such as Blue Sky Dance, Creative Ageing, Dance Teaching, and Safe Dance professional learning programs.

Through her, Ausdance VIC has secured over a million dollars in funding and she has ensured the reach of dance across the entire state. She will be missed not only for the incredible work she has done over the past 13 years but her boundless energy and love for all things dance and education. The Board wishes her all the creativity and success for the future.

We also bid farewell to Michelle Silby at the end of 2023, our Executive Director for eight years. When reflecting on her time with Ausdance VIC, it is evident to see the enormous growth and development the organisation has taken under her directorship. Michelle drove advocacy at the heart of everything Ausdance VIC did and ensured our seat at the table on several government advisory boards for dance and the arts. The initiatives and festivals that were run in her tenure include the Big Dance International Festival, Australian Dance Award, and Australian Youth Dance Festival in 2017, 2019, and 2022. Through her, we have secured funding for many initiatives and grown the RTO to what it is today.

Ausdance VIC has always been lucky to have an incredibly passionate staff and board, and even with these changes, 2024 looks bright. The team continues to hone in on its core principles and bring dance to all across Victoria.

Helen Haines
Chair

FROM THE INTERIM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Robbie Carmellotti

As I look back on the whirlwind that was 2023, I'm reminded of the unique challenges and triumphs that have defined our journey as a dance community. From navigating the aftermath of lockdowns, to confronting an unprecedented cost of living crisis, it's been a year of profound adversity. Fueled by passion and resilience, we witnessed our incredible sector prove its strength through these obstacles, and as such, we were motivated to deepen our commitment to dance advocacy and education. We strategically reinvested finances into the sector to increase participation and reach, while allocating more resources to dance education in all corners of the state.

With immense pride, I can share that we've connected dance to over 5,700 students through accredited dance training and Victorian curriculum-based education—a feat made possible by the Victorian Department of Education's response to our advocacy and inspiring belief in the benefits of dance. This collaboration has not only expanded arts education into the heart of regional Victoria, but also ensured that over 80% of these students could immerse themselves in dance, free of charge.

We remained the leading provider of VET dance in Victoria and strengthened our programs by advancing our online learning software to better equip students across Australia with the skills and confidence to pursue their dance careers. Easier access and more streamlined training is contributing to the betterment of standards and outcomes within our industry.

This year marked the launch of our Education Advisory Group, a gathering of some of the most brilliant dance minds. Their wisdom and insights have been instrumental in refining our curriculum and advocacy strategies, paving the way for enriched education for dancers across Victoria.

Our biannual State of the Sector Dance Census provided us with critical, up-to-date data and insights that contribute to guiding our advocacy, education development, and interactions with policymakers and stakeholders. Through 54 engagements, from departmental meetings and industry committees to collaborations with Youth Dance Australia, we've championed the voices and needs of our members.

The collective effort of the Frame: A Biennial of Dance partners was nothing short of inspiring. The festival not only showcased the vibrancy and diversity of our dance landscape but also underscored the critical need for sustained investment in our art form. The festival's success—a testament to the creativity and hard work of 284 artists—captivated 16,000 attendees and sparked a call to action for greater government support.

We recognise that this was a particularly difficult year for our First Nations people and members, and that many wanted a different result from the Voice to Parliament referendum. Notwithstanding the result, our commitment to truth, reconciliation, and uplifting Indigenous voices remains unwavering. As we forge ahead, these principles will illuminate our path, shaping a 2024 program that honours First Nations knowledge and creativity.

The past year has been a journey of passion, perseverance, and community. It's a narrative of a dance sector that, despite the odds, dances on with hope and determination. Here's to continuing our advocacy, expanding our horizons, and to a future where every dancer has the opportunity to shine.

Robbie Carmellotti
Interim Executive Director



ABOUT AUSDANCE VIC

As the peak body and service organisation for dance in Victoria, Ausdance VIC plays a key role in providing high-level strategic advice and vision for the sector. We work across all levels of dance, creating connections and opportunities to increase sector capacity and support individuals, companies, and organisations to flourish.

As the subject association for dance education and a registered training organisation (RTO), we are the leaders of VET Dance programs nationally and provide accredited training pathways for dancers and dance teachers that create jobs and improve professional standards across the whole sector.

OUR VISION

All Victorians have access to opportunities to experience and engage with dance.

OUR MISSION

To advocate for, create, support, and promote opportunities for dance in Victoria, and invest in its ongoing development.

Blue Sky Dance at Hepburn Springs Primary School. Photo by Anna Every and Suzie Ward.

ADVOCACY
AT A GLANCE

54

Member Representations

26

State Government Meetings

688

Members

570

Victorian Dance Census Participants

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Our advocacy initiatives were informed by critical data collated through our biannual Victorian Dance Census, sector consultations, member surveys and feedback, student surveys, and direct consultations.

In 2023, we represented our members and the broader sector on committees and at meetings with:

- Arts and Culture-Related Industries
- Arts Industry Council of Victoria
- Australian Performing Arts Forum and the National Dance Gathering co-hosted by Ausdance QLD and Queensland Ballet
- Australian Performing Arts Market Gathering at Rising Melbourne
- Creative Victoria
- International Association for Dance Medicine & Science
- Independent Reference Committee
- Industry Advisory Group
- The Commission for Children and Young People
- The Department of Sports and Recreation
- The Department of Education
- The Minister for Creative Industries
- The Minister for Education
- The Minister for TAFE
- The Minister for Sports and Recreation
- The Federal Minister for the Arts
- The World Dance Council
- Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority
- Visit Victoria
- Youth Dance Australia

(UP)HOLDING by Tra Mi Dinh. Photo by Gregory Lorenzutti.

Inquiry into the National Cultural Policy

In July, Ausdance VIC represented the dance sector at the Inquiry into the National Cultural Policy at the request of the Federal Government. Working in collaboration with the national Ausdance network, we asked that dance be explicitly recognised across the five pillars and requested more support for First Nations dance across the sector.

Implementation of our Education Advisory Group

In 2023, we recruited a number of new dance artists and educators from across a diverse range of schools for the Education Advisory Group. This collective of experts provided critical insight and feedback on our curriculum and advocacy initiatives, including the Child Safe Induction and our VCAA submission, in partnership with Dancehouse, advocating for the inclusion of an independent Victoria choreographer on the VCE Dance-prescribed list of works.

Servicing Our Membership Base

Our membership base has shifted post-COVID, and 2023 was a year of consolidation as we focussed on understanding their needs and how to best service them. In 2023, we developed resources and education programs aligned with our members' needs and streamlined our communications. We consulted our members through surveys, post-event questionnaires, and phone/email consultations.

Get Active Kids Voucher Program

Following on from our successful advocacy campaigns from 2020 and 2021 with the Victorian State Government, the Get Active Kids voucher program is in its third year. Dance continued to achieve one of the highest activity attendance rates and voucher reimbursements across the state. This program expands accessibility to dance and provides a valuable means of business growth for dance studios and organisations, particularly in regional and rural areas. In 2023, over 1,400 vouchers for dance were reimbursed. All participants were kids from a family/guardian who met the criteria of holding a Health Care Card.

Curriculum Feedback & Education Program Design

As the subject association for dance in Victoria, we maintain strong partnerships with Victorian government departments and are consulted on curriculum development and reform. We then use this knowledge, along with feedback directly from member organisations, as well as RTO partners and teachers, to inform the development of our education programs. Our delivery of nationally accredited training programs also informs our understanding of curriculum application and allows us to influence the quality of graduates entering the arts and entertainment industry.



A Book of Hours by Gerard Van Dyck, Sal Cooper, Kate Neal, and Rubiks Collective. Image by Darren Gill

The Victorian Dance Census is a major data collection initiative, designed to capture a snapshot of the dance sector and unearth insights that will inform future initiatives.

CENSUS KEY TAKEOUTS

Dance Is For Everyone and Every Body

- It creates communities and career pathways, and positively impacts the mental, physical, and social wellbeing of all who engage with it.
- 98% of recreational dancers feel dance is a meaningful social activity.
- 67% of professionals in dance see themselves working in the industry for the next five years.
- 85% of students feel their learning environment is supportive and safe.
- 94% of businesses feel their activity is meaningful.

Dancers Are Lifelong Learners

The dance community shows remarkable dedication to the art form, their ongoing personal learning journeys, and a commitment to helping the dancers of tomorrow. The top three subjects of interest are:

- Dance Training & Education – 60%
- Safe Dance Practices – 57%
- Choreography Practice – 48%

Declining Trends in Student Safety

80% of 16-24 year-olds felt physically safe in their dance classes, compared to 95% in 2021. Major injuries also increased to 26%, up from 20% in 2021. This means more students and pre-professional dancers experienced an injury that required surgery or left them with permanent damage.

Declining Mental Health

In 2023, almost 9% of respondents indicated they were living with a diagnosed mental illness. This is up from 4.5% in 2021. Students had the highest reported rate of mental illness.

Discrimination in Dance

Overall, there is little discrimination based on disability, gender, or sexual identity, but discrimination based on age, race, and physical appearance have been identified. Professionals in dance were more likely to experience all types of discrimination compared to other cohorts.

Precarity for Creatives

- More than 25% do not get paid for their time spent in rehearsal.
- 69% must supplement their income with non-dance-related activity.
- 29% feel their employment is insecure or very insecure.

Businesses Experiencing Financial Strain

- 40% were profitable in the 22-23 financial year.
- 55% supplement their dance income from other sources.
- 41% say their business is likely to be financially unstable over the next two years.

Us and All of This at Bunjil Place. Photo Credit: Rachel Shuttermain.

EDUCATION AT A GLANCE

10

Education & Professional Development Webinars

4

VET Dance, RTO Industry Days

27

Primary schools engaged

36

Secondary schools engaged

23

RTO Delivery Partners

2,466

Primary students in Blue Sky Dance workshops

546

Students in LIFT: Elite Dancer Enrichment Program

28

Primary students in Supercharged! workshops

15

Diploma graduates

25

Creative Ageing graduates

373

VET Dance students

2,330

Students using Activate!

48

Inside Dance participants





Ausdance VIC Programs

We continually develop programs that support and generate inclusive access to dance right across the state. Our programs are informed by and designed in collaboration with the sector; they address skill gaps, are aligned with school and VET curricula, and generate employment opportunities for dance professionals.

In 2023, almost 2,500 students in rural and regional Victoria participated in our Blue Sky Dance education program and 32 primary school teachers received professional development sessions and resources. We are thrilled to announce we have received funding from the Department of Education, through the Rural and Regional School Reform initiative to deliver this popular program again in 2024.

We also launched a new, elite dancer enrichment program aimed at secondary dance students. LIFT provides free access for students from government secondary schools to participate in industry-leading dance workshops, mock auditions, and showcases. Offered over a number of sessions throughout 2023, this program successfully engaged 564 students and employed 23 dance professionals. It has been funded for delivery again in 2024 and 2025, through the Victorian Challenge and Enrichment Series.

Our professional development series, Inside Dance, connected our membership and the broader sector with key representatives from OneMusic, Joel Bray, Dr Katrina Rank, and the Arts Wellbeing Collective. The topics explored included music licensing requirements, choreographic practices, child-safe standards, and mental health.

LIFT Industry Day. Image by Ausdance VIC.



Ausdance VIC RTO

The Ausdance VIC RTO is a leading force of dance education in the country. In 2023, we focussed on improving VCE VET Dance processes, including updating assessment materials and building and launching an online learning management system (LMS) for our 2024 partners. 2023 was also the first time we delivered all four modules of the Creative Ageing Dance Teaching Skill Set CUASS00059.

LIFT Industry Day. Image by Dominic Steele.



2023 Creative Ageing Dance Teaching Graduates. Image by Ausdance VIC.



VET Dance students at LIFT Industry Day. Image by Dominic Steele.



Blue Sky Dance at Tarneit Rise Primary School. Image by Robert Wagner.



LIFT Industry Day. Image by Dominic Steele.

COMMUNICATIONS AT A GLANCE

11

Sector Interviews

208

Sector Promotions

35,359

Website Views

8,126

Subscribers

8,214

Social Media Followers



Ausdance VIC communication and marketing activities utilised paid, owned, earned, and shared channels to engage members, promote our advocacy initiatives and sector opportunities, and encourage participation with our broad dance education offering.

A major emphasis in 2023 was refreshing the Ausdance VIC website. The information architecture was updated to improve the user experience and new content was added to reflect the complete education and program offering. Interviews with high-profile dance artists and teachers, along with updates on advocacy and representation initiatives, ensured the website remained fresh and relevant to returning visitors. This was reflected in the high number of returning visits to the website. Another key driver of website visitation was the partnership with the Department of Education for Education Week 2023. This digital resource was created using the Activate! program and increased concentration in the classroom by using small dance-based brain break activities.



People we interviewed included:

- Damian Smith
- Joel Bray
- Efren Pamilacan
- Sas Cook
- Jan Di Pietro
- Gülsen Özer
- Cassie Simmons
- Phillip Adams
- Rob Ewart

NEWRETRO by Lucy Guerin. Image by Gregory Lorenzutti.

FRAME A biennial of dance

FRAME: A biennial of dance was an invitation to celebrate and connect — to assemble, discuss, participate, and witness dance from across a myriad of cultures, forms, and styles.



SERMON by Rhys Ryan. Image by Caitlin Dear.

FRAME AT A GLANCE

12 Partners	90 Free Classes	192 Works & Events	284 Artists Employed
16,000 Participants	8,169 Hours Invested By Partners	\$125,993 Gross Revenue	\$1.6M Combined Partner & Artist Investment

Data from the Frame Festival Program and Impact Report.



David Prakash at Ausdance VIC's Access Inclusion Workshop. Image by Ausdance VIC.



HERE NOW by Ryuichi Fujimura. Image by Gregory Lorenzutti.



Caroline Bowditch at Ausdance VIC's Access Dance Workshop. Image by Ausdance VIC.



(UP)HOLDING by Tra Mi Dinh. Photo by Gregory Lorenzutti.



David Prakash, Priya Srinivasan, Caroline Bowditch, and Phillip Adams at Ausdance VIC's forum. Image by Ausdance VIC.

Following three years of consultation with the independent dance community and small-to-medium sector, FRAME was co-led and co-designed by an unprecedented number of independent artists and producers.

FRAME's inaugural program featured performances, talks, and workshops presented by principal partners: Ausdance VIC, Dancehouse, Arts House, Bunjil Place, Centre for Projection Art, Chunky Move, Darebin Arts Speakeasy, Lucy Guerin Inc, Punctum, The Australian Ballet, The Substation, Temperance Hall, and more. Frame Festival was created, funded, and resourced by the principal partners.

Ausdance VIC delivered a series of workshops and a dedicated sector forum designed in response to requests from the independent dance sector for a better understanding of inclusion, accessibility, and industry within dance. We connected with industry leaders Caroline Bowditch, Phillip Adams, and David Prakash. Our sector forum featured these artists and was facilitated by Priya Srinivasan.



Phillip Adams at Ausdance VIC's Industry Dance Workshop. Image by Ausdance VIC.



Caroline Bowditch at Ausdance VIC's Access Dance Workshop. Image by Ausdance VIC.

OUR PEOPLE

Board

Chair

Helen Haines

Deputy Chair

Amity Jarvis
(until November)

Treasurer

Kate Outridge

Secretary

Rhys Holden

Board Members

Elle Buthane
Alisdair Macindoe
Carmen Pace
Sonia Sarangi

Staff

Executive Director

Michelle Silby
(until November)
Robbie Carmellotti
(from November)

General Manager

Robbie Carmellotti
(until July)

Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

Dr Katrina Rank

RTO Manager

Gillian Jordan
(until April)
Eilannin Harris-Black
(from April)

Programming Manager

Elise Brennan

Marketing Manager

Ava Kahveci

Communications Officer

Dr Martin Hirst

Dance Development Officer

Gabrielle Bennet
(until November)

Education Advisory Committee

Sally Campbell
Gülsen Ozer
Lou Devoy
Nat Hannaford
Belinda Saltmarsh-Kram
Laura Welsh
Gina Coetzee
Annette Evans
Lee Francis

Dance Educators & Artists

Frame Festival

David Prakash
Phillip Adams
Caroline Bowditch
Priya Srinivasan
Elise Brennan

Blue Sky Dance

Gülsen Özer
Efren Pamilacan
Annette Courtney
Meg Segat
Elise Brennan

LIFT

Juliet Collard
Thern Reynolds
Eilannin Harris-Black
Jason Teasdale
Jordan Pollard
Ngioka Bunda-Heath
Todd Patrick
Cristina D'Agostino
Steven Grace
Jemma Craig
Garry Stocks
Luke Alleva
Neville Parry
Kyll Shanks
Anne O'Connor
David Prakash
Aaron Lynch
Nadia Tornese
Jennifer Ma
Mitchell Fistrovic Doidge
Efren Pamilacan
Tyrone Anthony

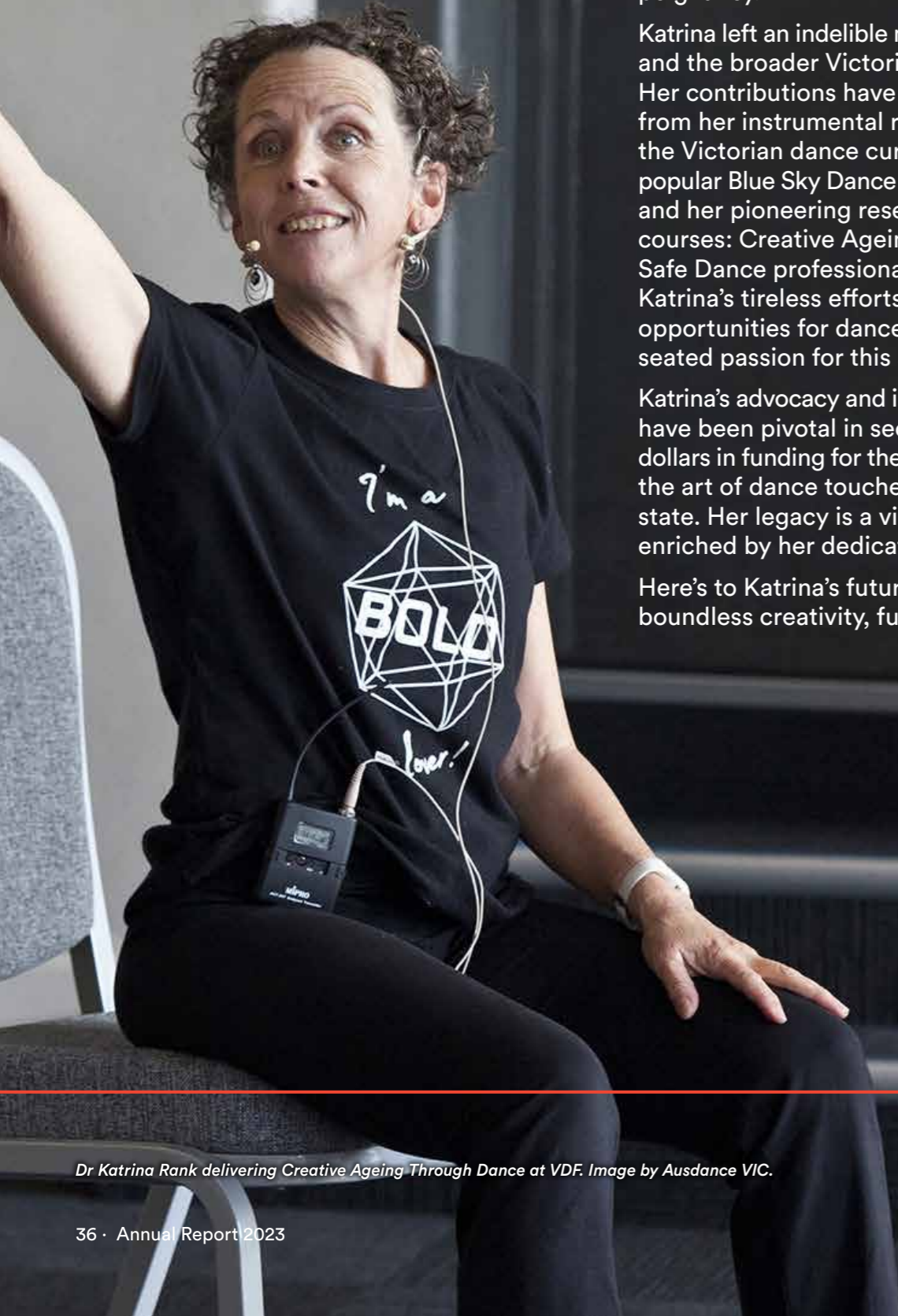
FAREWELL KATRINA RANK

After more than 13 years of dedication and innovation at Ausdance VIC, we bid farewell to our esteemed Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, Dr Katrina Rank. Her departure marks a significant moment in our history, one filled with both pride and poignancy.

Katrina left an indelible mark on our organisation and the broader Victorian dance community. Her contributions have been profound, ranging from her instrumental role in the evolution of the Victorian dance curriculum to the hugely popular Blue Sky Dance primary school program and her pioneering research-informed training courses: Creative Ageing Dance Teaching and Safe Dance professional learning programs. Katrina's tireless efforts have expanded opportunities for dance and fostered a deep-seated passion for this art form for all ages.

Katrina's advocacy and innovative programming have been pivotal in securing over a million dollars in funding for the dance sector, ensuring the art of dance touches every corner of our state. Her legacy is a vibrant dance community enriched by her dedication and vision.

Here's to Katrina's future — may it be filled with boundless creativity, fulfillment, and success.



Dr Katrina Rank delivering Creative Ageing Through Dance at VDF. Image by Ausdance VIC.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Major Funding Partner



Education Partner



Venue Partners



Donors

Gold+

Frank Hancock



NEWRETRO by Lucy Guerin. Image by Gregory Lorenzutti.



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