

Title	Promoting and Supporting the Arts through Education
Policy type	Element of the Culture Policy
Policy Working Group	Arts, Recreation and Sport
Policy history	New policy – based on Cultural Plan from 2001
Status	Final Draft – to be circulated for comment
Date	20/1/2010
Feedback	Formal submissions and comment should be emailed to <a href="mailto:dean.winter@democrats.org.au">dean.winter@democrats.org.au</a>

## Overview

The arts should be a priority area of budgetary expenditure that is just as important as investment in numeracy and literacy programs. By supporting the arts, we are investing in Australia's future and ensuring a vibrant culture for future generations. The arts should not be treated as an 'optional extra' in our children's education. The arts are one of the eight key learning areas and a basic cultural right that every child is entitled to enjoy.

If Australia is serious about promoting the value of the arts and expanding the ability of Australians to enjoy and actively participate in the cultural life of our nation, then it is critical that this process begins at an early age. Our schools are well placed to provide all children the opportunity to explore their own creative and artistic talents, and to develop an appreciation of the broad spectrum of artistic endeavour.

## The Issue

Research by the Australia Council shows that nearly half of all Australians ascribe a low or very low value to the arts. However, the majority of these people are not antagonistic to the arts, they just have not been given the right opportunity to experience or appreciate them. Governments must reverse the trend at primary and secondary public schools and restore significant components of arts related education that have been cut over the many years.

Additionally, children learn in different ways, and the arts provide multiple ways for students to exercise intellect. Involvement in the arts at school can be a bridge to successful learning in other areas, or provide the means to reach students who are at risk or not responsive to more conventional educational approaches. A rounded education that encompasses the arts is also more conducive to the development of the specific skills and working style that is required in the workplace.

## The Proposal

The Australian Democrats advocate that:

- In determining education budgets, Governments need to appreciate the long-term returns to the individual, the economy and the community generally that flow from investment in arts education.
- Arts education must be included in the national curriculum at both primary and secondary levels. All children should have the ability to study the arts at school.



# Australian Democrats National Policy

- Government needs to invest in the tertiary institutions that prepare Australians, particularly our youth, for professional careers in the arts, film and the media.
- Particular importance needs to be given to providing training in new media and digital technologies to ensure we are equipped to take up these new employment opportunities.
- Vocational education in the arts is strongly supported as a pathway to professional engagement in an arts career, as well as for personal growth study, helping more Australians become the kind of creative, responsive, collaborative employee that business values.
- Support is provided through the public school system to enable talented artist identification and one-on-one education in their chosen specialty where appropriate (in particular for musicians).

## The Goal

By supporting the arts, we are investing in Australia's future and ensuring a vibrant culture for future generations. By supporting the Arts in our education system we can ensure an ongoing new source of talented artists to enrich our culture as well as provide a more rounded education for all Australian children.

## Timeline

It is expected that it will take approximately five years to improve the provision of arts education in the public school system to the required levels.