**Template Instructions**

Update text highlighted in YELLOW for your situation.

Take note of GREEN highlight as key areas for you to add or adjust content.

**DO NOT SEND THIS TEMPLATE WITHOUT CUSTOMISATION**

This template has been developed by Ausdance VIC as a tool for members of the dance sector to reach out to candidates in their electorate.

Dear CANDIDATE NAME,

I am a resident and voter in the ELECTORATE NAME electorate. I have lived in the area for YEARS/MONTHS and have voted in many elections. I am writing to express my strong desire that you and your party commit to an arts policy that supports a vibrant creative community in Victoria and helps it to thrive.

Something about you. Keep this brief but relevant. You might wish to showcase your specialty as an artist i.e. I am a professional dancer, choreographer, dance teacher, producer etc

The arts provide enormous direct and indirect economic benefits to our area and to Victoria in general. In total, the arts and creative industries contribute more than $30 billion annually to the Victorian economy. Ausdance VIC, the peak body for dance reports that privately operated dance studios and dance schools alone generate approximately $300M in annual revenue and create an estimated 10,000 paid positions in Victoria.

The arts provide tangible non-economic benefits that enhance community, and social well-being and promote national regional and community identity. Dance is a popular pastime in Victoria, and it is well-supported by audiences. The Australian Council for the Arts has reported that around six million Australians, approximately 30 per cent of the population over 15, attended live dance events in 2019, and eight per cent participated in regularly organised dance activities.

ELECTORATE NAME is home to many creative and arts organisations, as well as music, visual arts, and performance-teaching businesses. As our local representative, it is vital that you acknowledge the importance of the arts and culture sector to the local economy and its contribution to community identity.

Unless the incoming state government recognises the value of arts and culture in our lives, as an expression of individuals, groups and communities and supports the individuals and micro businesses that enable this, we will find ourselves lacking identity and understanding of ourselves as a wider community. Without strong financial support for the arts and culture, many interacting non-arts business economies will be negatively affected.

As a candidate for office, it is imperative that you consider policy settings that support and enhance the arts sector in the state. As an artist / avid supporter of the arts, I would hope that you consider the following suggestions as priority policies for the sector to thrive.

Select, add, delete and adjust points here as relevant to your situation and electorate.

* The development of secure education-to-employment pathways that link dance education in school and VET environments to university entry and identified career opportunities in dance.
* Expansion and extension of schemes such as Get Active Kids Program which provided subsidies for eligible families to encourage children to participate in physical activity.
* Do more to acknowledge the economic, social, and health impacts of the pandemic on arts workers, including creatives and other professionals in dance.
* Enhanced investment in local artworks, performing arts and industry development.
* Specific support for artists through innovative programs, such as opening disused spaces for visual artists and performing artists (dance, music, theatre).
* When programming arts at cultural venues, think outside the square. Offer arts and cultural events that appeal to a range of audiences, and that reflect the diversity of person, culture, age, and situation.
* Continue to engage with art and culture sector representatives to inform equitable and relevant policies of support and assistance for the local arts ecology.
* Endorse and meaningfully support First Nations arts and cultural activity.

I am interested to know more about how you will support a resilient, vibrant, highly skilled, and diverse arts sector in your term of office, should you be elected to serve our community.

Kind regards,

NAME

Contact Details – Email/Phone/Address