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**a1SDANCE**  
**VIC**

**20**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**24**

**A Year of Renewal, Resilience, & Readiness**

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**This image:**

Welcome to Country performed by Djirri Djirri at AYDF 2019. Photo by Shutterstock

**Cover image:**

Lift Dance Industry Day. Photo by Dominic Steele Photography

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# Acknowledgment of Country

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.

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Lift Dance Industry Day Workshop with Issy Fox  
Photo by Dominic Steele Photography

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# From the Chair

Dear Stakeholders,

It has been an honour to step into the role of Chair of Ausdance VIC in December 2024, following my initial appointment as a member of the Committee of Management earlier in the year. I am grateful to my fellow Board members and the wider team for their trust and support as I bring my lived experience—as a Creative Director, Community Leader, Entertainment Lawyer, Cultural Peace Broker, and Choreographer—to serve this dynamic and vital organisation.

As a Franco-Beninese (West Africa) woman whose leadership has been shaped by community, creativity and cross-cultural dialogue, I am deeply aligned with Ausdance VIC's mission: to champion dance in all its forms and foster a thriving, inclusive sector. Dance is a powerful language – one that holds memory, celebration and resistance and I believe in its capacity to heal, connect and transform. This year, I've seen first-hand the dedication, care and adaptability of our staff in navigating change while remaining firmly grounded in servicing the dance community.

The work of 2024 has laid a strong foundation for the next chapter—one that is bold, collaborative, and strategically aligned with the evolving needs of the sector.

As we look towards 2025 and the development of a new four-year strategic plan, I am energised by the opportunity to lead a process of transformation. My vision is one of sustainable growth, sector-wide inclusion, and deepened partnerships across community, industry, and government. Drawing on my own advocacy work, I am committed to embed representation and accountability into every level of our work.

To all who make up the Ausdance VIC community—thank you. Your commitment to dance as a collective movement and a powerful cultural force continues to inspire. I look forward to working with you as we shape a future that truly reflects the full richness of our sector.



**Gracieuse Amah**  
Incoming Chair

# From the Managing Director

Dear Stakeholders,

The world is changing faster than ever. How do we keep pace while preserving what makes us human—that deep need for connection? Dance, unlike any other art form, bridges audiences, artists, and educators. As both an art and a sport, it connects people through movement, thought, and emotion—essential in today’s fast-evolving world.

At Ausdance Vic, we embraced the changing landscape in 2024, marking a year of renewal to strengthen our ability to foster connection through dance. I stepped into the role of Managing Director in July, following the invaluable leadership of Interim Executive Director Robbie Carmellotti, whose expertise guided the renewal process in the first half of the year. My vision is to provide tailored support to the sector, ensuring more Victorians experience the benefits of dance for their health and wellbeing.

In May, we welcomed Gracieuse Amah to our Board, bringing her expertise as both a lawyer and an artist. By December, she was elected Chair, succeeding Helen Haines, whose six years of dedicated service provided strong governance and unwavering support.

Programming Manager Elise Brennan has delivered the highly successful Blue Sky Dance to 550 regional primary school children. She also expanded the Activate! resource, now accessible to all primary teachers via our website, and introduced our professional development program, Inspire, to registered teachers.

Our VET Industry Days remain a highlight, drawing sought-after teaching artists and receiving outstanding feedback from students. Meanwhile, our RTO team, led by Eilannin Harris-Black and Stephanie Clare-Cover, has streamlined systems to enhance efficiency, compliance, and customer service.

Finance and HR systems have also undergone improvements, ensuring a strong foundation for future growth. Complementing this, Marketing Manager Ava Kahveci has strengthened our branding and digital presence, most notably with our new website. Featuring a refreshed membership portal, course offering, and news section, our website, newsletters, and socials ensure we stay connected—supporting dance and the people who bring it to life.



**Deborah Prentice**  
Managing Director

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# About Ausdance VIC

## About us

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.

## Vision

Our vision is to be the leading force in dance education and learning in Victoria. Through advocacy, education, training, and representation, we empower dance students, educators, artists, choreographers, and organisations — creating a future where every dancer can flourish.

## Mission

We develop inclusive education, training and professional development programs that create sustainable career pathways and meaningful industry partnerships. We shape policies that nurture lifelong learning and connect communities.





Robbie Carmellotti in conversation with Natalie Weir at VDF 2024  
Photo courtesy of VDF

## Values

### Connection

We prioritise partnerships and use connection to listen and respond to the sector.

### Inclusion

We dance as an ensemble and work together to uplift and celebrate all dance.

### Accountability

We embrace the falls to perfect the performance. This gives us the courage to think in decades, not days.

### Excellence

We wear dance shoes! Our people, programs and initiatives support the evolution of dance.

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# Our People

## Staff Members

### Executive Director

Robbie Carmellotti  
(until July 2024)

### Managing Director

Deborah Prentice  
(from July 2024)

### RTO Manager

Eilannin Harris-Black

### RTO Administrator

Joanne Narayan  
(until July 2024)  
Stephanie Clare-Cover  
(from October 2024)

### Programming Manager

Elise Brennan

### Marketing Manager

Ava Kahveci

### Digital Marketing Officer

Ricardo Magno  
(until June 2024)

### Communications Officer

Marty Hirst  
(until February 2024)

## Board Members

### Chair

Helen Haines  
(until December 2024)  
Gracieuse Amah  
(from December 2024)

### Vice Chair

Alisdair Macindoe

### Treasurer

Kate Outridge

### Secretary

Rhys Holden

### Ordinary Board Members

Carmen Pace  
Elle Buthane  
Gracieuse Amah  
(from June 2024)  
Sonia Sarangi

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# Our People

## Blue Sky Dance Teaching Artists

Chimene Steele-Prior  
Gülsen Özer  
Leah Hamlet  
Skylar Delphinus

## Industry Day Teaching Artists

Adrian Ricks  
Benjamin Cure  
Brett Fisher  
Bridget Fiske  
Chloe Sismanis  
Cristina D'Agostino  
Freya List  
Garry Stocks  
Issy Fox  
Jasmin Johnson  
Jason Teasdale  
Jordan Pollard  
Kahlia Davis  
Kara Sims  
Kyall Shanks  
Michael Ralph  
Nadia Tornese  
Neville Parry  
Ngioka Bunda-Heath  
Paul Malek  
Samantha Dodemaide  
Siobhan Power  
Skylar Delphinus  
Trish Squire

# Farewell to Our Exiting Chair

After six years of dedicated service, Helen Haines stepped down as Chair of the Board at Ausdance VIC in December 2024. Her tenure has been marked by significant transformation, strategic growth, and a strengthened presence in the dance community.

During her tenure, Helen played a pivotal role in refining the organisation's strategic direction. When she first joined, Ausdance VIC was engaged in a broad range of activities, which, while valuable, posed challenges for a small team. Over the years, she helped focus the organisation's efforts on three key pillars: advocacy, programming, and education.

A key highlight of her leadership was the transition to a skills-based board with strong industry representation. Under her guidance, the board evolved to include individuals deeply connected to the dance sector, ensuring that decision-making remained informed and relevant to the needs of the community.

Helen's leadership has left an enduring mark on Ausdance VIC, reinforcing its role as a vital advocate and supporter of the dance sector. We thank her for her invaluable contributions and look forward to continuing the work she has helped shape.

While Helen has moved on from the role of Chair, she remains connected to Ausdance VIC through the Fundraising Committee and her work at Patrick School of the Arts.



Helen Haines and Nathan Pinnell at the opening night of 'Wicked' in Melbourne.

# 2024 Highlights

## A Year of Renewal, Resilience, and Readiness

2024 was another big year for Ausdance VIC. We celebrated the growth of our programs, farewelled key members of the team, welcomed new leadership, all while continuing to advocate for dance across education, the arts, and the community.

Guided by our vision for a thriving and inclusive dance sector, we championed opportunities for artists, educators, and young people across Victoria. Our programs and advocacy work reflected our strong commitment to excellence, education, and access, as well as a renewed emphasis on sector sustainability and cultural safety.

In 2024, we deepened our engagement with government and educational stakeholders, strengthening our profile as a trusted voice for dance in schools, training, and community. We also invested in internal systems and governance to support sustainable growth — including the formation of a new fundraising subcommittee and plans for our next four-year strategic plan.

# 14,000+

Participants

# 550+

Members

# 100+

Schools engaged

# 23

Education & training partners

# 23

Meetings with government

# 87,000+

Social reach

# 3

New courses on scope

# 1

New fundraising sub-committee

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# Advocacy

## A Collective Voice for Dance

Throughout 2024, we continued to advocate for dance by actively participating in committees, consultations, and roundtables with key government agencies and sector partners. We proudly represented the dance sector in meetings with:

AICV  
Ausdance Network  
Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority  
Creative Australia  
Creative Skills Australia  
Creative State Roundtable  
Creative Victoria  
Creative Workplaces  
Department of Education  
Federal Department of the Arts  
International Association for Dance Medicine and Science  
Industry Advisory Group for Arts, Personal Services, Retail, Tourism and Hospitality  
National Network of Dance Organisations  
National Office of Child Safety  
Service and Creative Skills Australia  
Stonnington City Council  
Theatre Network Australia  
Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership  
Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority  
VicHealth  
Wage Inspectorate Victoria  
Youth Dance Australia

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# Advocacy

## CUA Training Package Updates

In 2024, we deepened our relationship with Service and Creative Skills Australia (SaCSA), the newly established Jobs and Skills Council for the arts and related sectors. Our input into training package updates has ensured the voice of the creative industries remains front and centre.

We contributed to the Unit Currency Audit Project's Initial Consultation Survey, advocating on behalf of the dance sector. Looking ahead, we'll continue this vital work in 2025, including early engagement on key initiatives such as the proposed cuts to Victorian Government Skills Training Funding and the development of a national VET workforce project.

## Advocating for Safe Dance

We continued to build on the findings of the 2023 Victorian Dance Census by launching the Safe Dance Practice online course in mid-2024. This course—created in response to strong sector demand—offers professional development grounded in more than 30 years of research into injury prevention and dancer wellbeing by the Ausdance network.

Following a successful launch in Victoria, we plan to roll out the course nationally across the Ausdance network in 2025—turning research into real-world impact.

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Independent Dance Sector Gathering hosted by Theatre Network Australia  
Photo by Deborah Prentice



Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership roundtable  
Photo by Eilamin Harris-Black



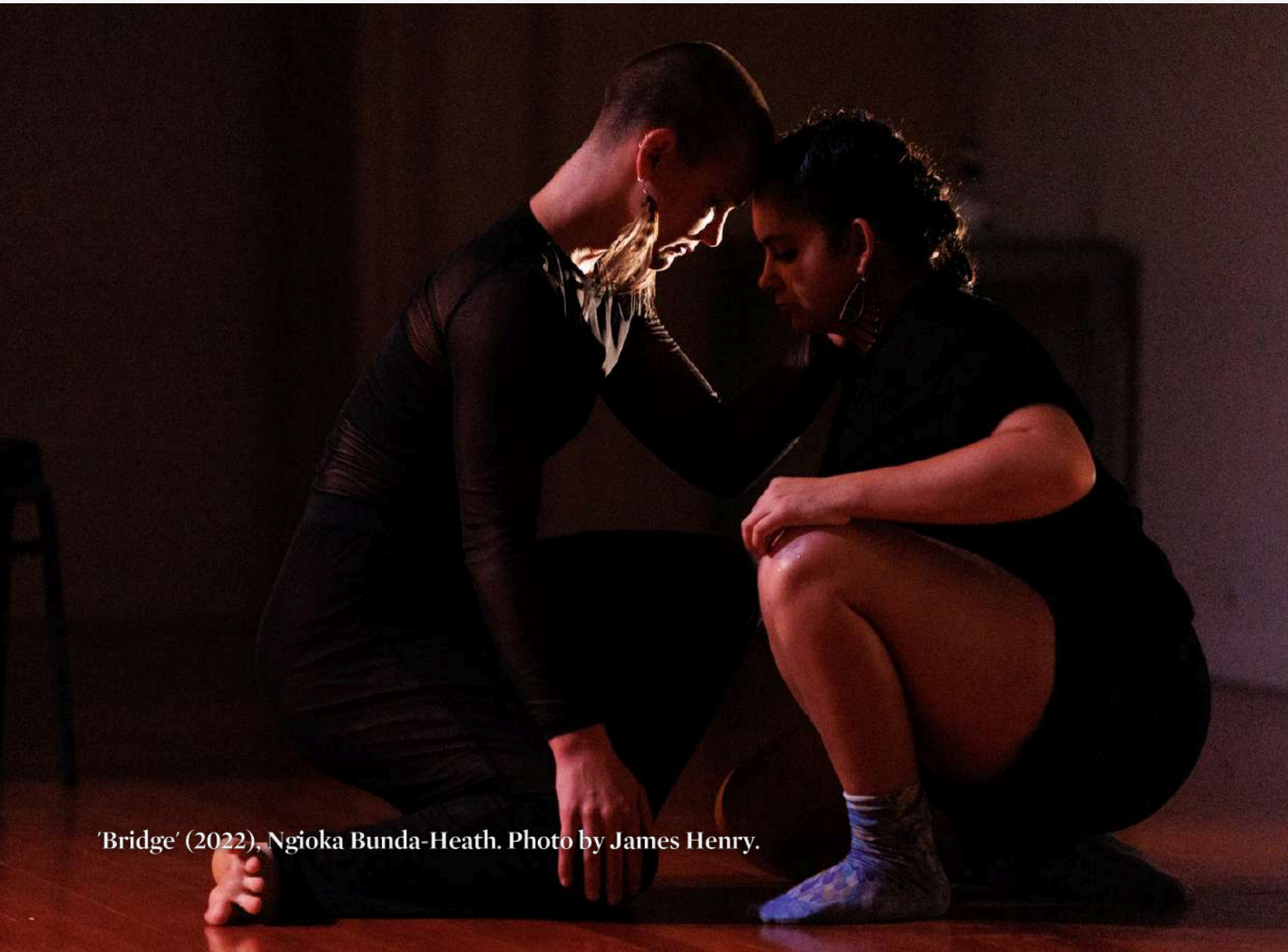
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# Advocacy

## Supporting Independent Artists on the World Stage

Ausdance VIC was proud to support emerging choreographer and member Callum Mooney, who was selected to take part in the prestigious International Young Choreographers Project in Taiwan. With support from Ausdance VIC and the Chin Lin Foundation, Callum presented his new work 'equilibrium' and made lasting international connections.

We also supported First Nations artist Ngioka Bunda-Heath in her bid to present her work "Bridge" at the Indigenous World Dance Residency – Summer 2024 in Canada. These opportunities reflect our ongoing commitment to enabling Victorian dance artists to thrive globally.



'Bridge' (2022), Ngioka Bunda-Heath. Photo by James Henry.

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# Advocacy

## Creative State Consultation

To support our submission to the Creative State 2025 consultation, we conducted an extensive engagement process, including surveys, focus groups, interviews with independent artists and organisations, and collaboration with our Board. Our submission addressed urgent sector challenges such as limited access to space, evolving audience behaviours, cost-of-living pressures, and insecure employment. We advocated for a whole-of-government approach to creative sector investment, focusing on five key priorities:

- Supporting Independent Dance Artists
- Strengthening Dance Education and Training
- Investing in First Nations Dance
- Fostering Innovation and Creativity
- Diversifying Funding Sources

Ausdance VIC will continue to engage with the Creative State process in 2025 to ensure the dance sector's voice is heard.

## Advisory Services

As the funded service organisation for dance in Victoria, providing sector support is at the heart of what we do. In 2024, we delivered more than 40 tailored advisory sessions to independent artists, students, and organisations. Topics ranged from insurance and child safety compliance to workforce development, funding opportunities, and accredited training updates. Support was available via phone, email, and in person.

# Membership

## 546

Members

## Evolving Our Membership Model for a Diverse Dance Community

In 2024, we undertook a major review of the Ausdance VIC membership model to better reflect the evolving needs of our community. After a year of planning, listening, and consulting, we launched a new membership program with flexible levels and refreshed benefits tailored to a diverse sector.

## New Membership Levels

### COMMUNITY

A free membership for dance lovers, supporters, and advocates.

### STUDENT

For students in secondary or tertiary dance education.

### INDEPENDENT

For freelance dancers, choreographers, and teachers.

### EDUCATOR

For dance educators in studio or formal educational settings.

### SMALL ORGANISATION

For studios, community groups, and schools.

### MED-LRG ORGANISATION

For institutions or organisations with a turnover over \$250,000.

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Dancers performing Callum Mooney's 'equilibrium', at the International Young Choreographer's Project. Photo by Tsun-Yang Tsui.

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# Membership

## Digital Transformation for Better Service

Our membership management portal received a major upgrade as part of our broader digital transformation strategy. The new system includes improved functionality such as easier password resets, billing updates, membership switching, and enhanced privacy controls.

To ensure a smooth transition, all members received a complimentary six-week extension on their membership.

## Adjusting Fees to Sustain Our Work

We understand that affordability matters. That's why we froze membership fees during the COVID-19 period and kept them low over the past four years. However, with rising costs and a growing demand for services, we've made the considered decision to return fees to pre-pandemic levels in early 2025.

While we anticipate a short-term dip in membership as our community adjusts, we're confident that the improved program will demonstrate its value. We have strong retention strategies in place to support members through the transition.

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# Membership

## Showcasing Membership Impact

Ausdance VIC member Jennifer Fleenor-O'Brien, founder of UNLID Dance Theatre, was the only Australian artist featured at the prestigious Singapore International Dance Festival and Conference (SIDFC), presented by World Dance Alliance. This opportunity was made possible through affiliate access granted to Ausdance VIC members.

*“It was an incredible honour. The festival’s focus on both academia and performance made it a brilliant opportunity for meaningful discussions about the future of dance research. SIDFC allowed us to engage in insightful discussions within the World Dance Alliance’s vibrant community.”*

Her experience underscores the unique value of membership and our role in championing artists on the world stage.



'F5' performance at Singapore International Dance Festival and Conference.  
Photo by Gnaneshmas Singapore.

# RTO

## Reaffirming Our Leadership in Dance Education

In 2024, Ausdance VIC reaffirmed its position as a leader in dance education and training, accounting for nearly half of all VET Dance enrolments in Victoria. This milestone underscores our ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality vocational education pathways for emerging dancers and teachers across the state.

## Launch of a New Learning Management System

A key highlight of the year was the successful launch of our new Learning Management System (LMS), developed to enhance the learning experience for both students and trainers. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive: students praised the platform's user-friendly interface, while trainers welcomed its streamlined course delivery and assessment tools. We remain dedicated to refining and improving the LMS to meet the evolving needs of our learners.

# 303

VET Dance students

# 24

Trainer PD participants

# 18

Mock exam participants

# 23

Education & training partners

# 12

Diploma enrolments

# 5

PD sessions

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Lift Dance Industry Day Workshop with Siobhan Power  
Photo by Dominic Steele Photography



## Expanding Pathways for Tertiary and Creative Industry Students

Another significant development in 2024 was the expansion of our accredited course offerings. We added the Certificate IV in Dance and the Certificate IV in Musical Theatre to our scope, offering tertiary students more options for advanced performance training.

In addition, the introduction of the Certificate II in Creative Industries—set to launch in July 2025—will provide students with essential skills for behind-the-scenes roles in the performing arts. This broadening of scope reflects our active role in addressing Australia’s creative industry skills shortage, both on and off the stage.

## Extending Our Reach to Regional Victoria

To increase access and equity, we delivered a regional VET Dance intake in Cann River, a remote community located five hours from Melbourne. This initiative demonstrates our ongoing commitment to making high-quality dance education accessible to students across Victoria, regardless of geography.

# RTO

## Looking Ahead

As we move into 2025, we remain focused on innovation, accessibility, and excellence in vocational education—ensuring that both performers and creative professionals are well-equipped for sustainable, long-term careers in the arts.



Industry Day Teaching Artists Kahlia Davis, Adrian Ricks, Bridget Fiske, Ngioka Bunda-Heath  
Photo by Dominic Steele Photography

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# Programming

## Creating Impact Through Pathways to Dance

2024 was a standout year for Ausdance VIC's programs, with thousands of students and educators engaging in high-quality, curriculum-aligned dance education across Victoria. With momentum on our side, we're excited to build on this success in 2025.

## Blue Sky Dance

Blue Sky Dance continued to bring inspiring, high-quality dance experiences to regional and rural communities, reaching 15 schools and 550 students. By blending live-streamed and in-person workshops, we ensured accessibility while delivering content aligned with the Victorian Curriculum.

Teachers also participated in tailored professional development, helping to embed dance more deeply in local school communities. Valuable feedback gathered in Term 4 is already guiding improvements for the 2025 program rollout.

# 1,846

Industry Day participants

# 61

Inspire participants

# 148

Supercharged participants

# 550

Blue Sky Dance participants

# 39

Primary schools engaged

# 62

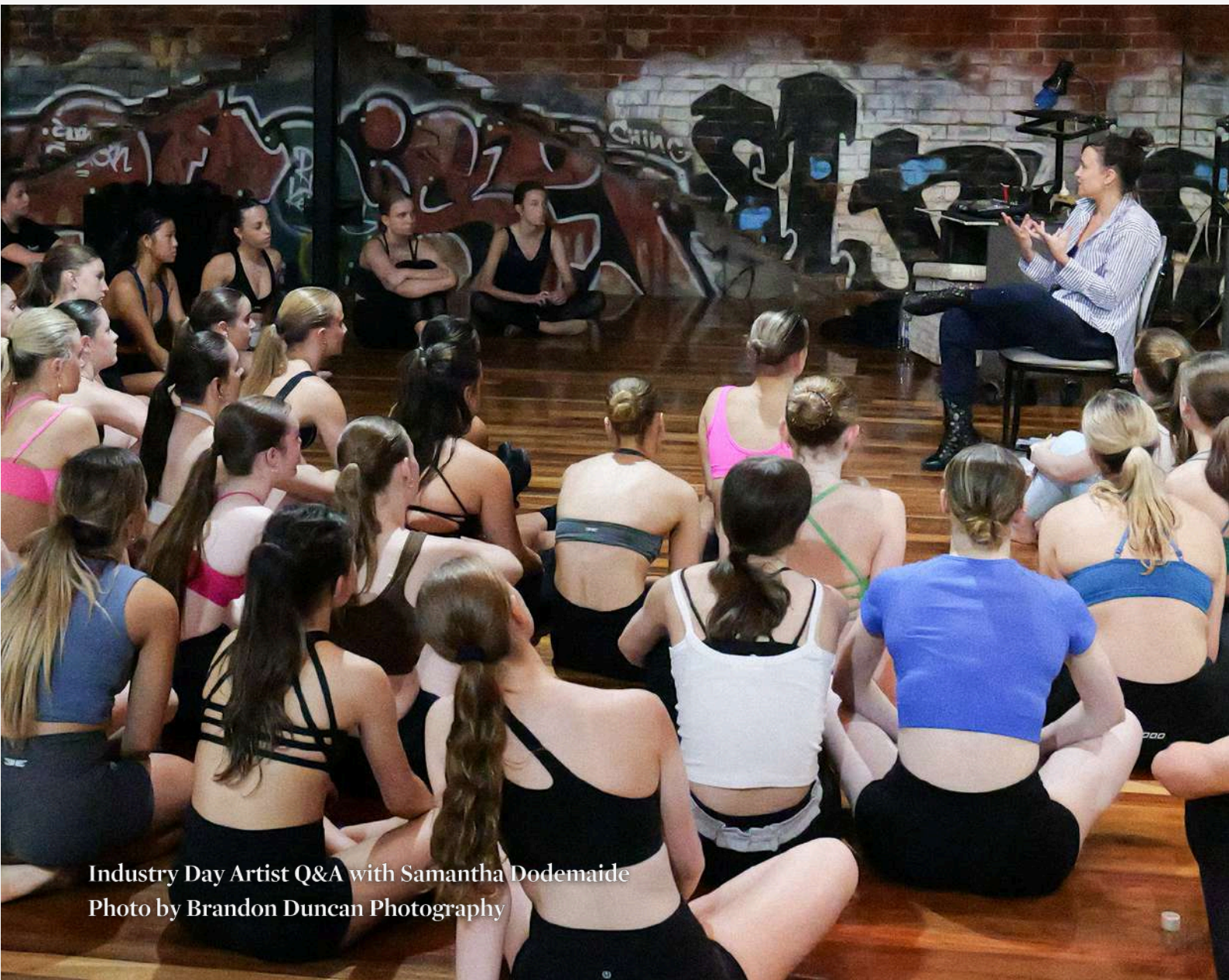
Secondary schools engaged

# Programming

## LIFT: Elite Dancer Enrichment & Industry Days

Now in its third year, the LIFT program provided close to 2,000 students with real-world, industry-connected experiences in 2024. Students participated in workshops, mock auditions, and exam preparation led by professional artists and educators.

Funded by the Department of Education, this program continues to support the next generation of dancers by building their confidence, skills, and industry connections.



Industry Day Artist Q&A with Samantha Dodemaide  
Photo by Brandon Duncan Photography

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# Programming

## Inspire: Professional Development for Educators

The Inspire program brought together 61 teachers from 40 schools to participate in workshops led by First Nations dance artists. Funded by the Department of Education and delivered in partnership with Dancehouse, the program invited educators to explore their own movement practice while learning to introduce contemporary First Nations dance into the classroom.

Participants received access to two curriculum-aligned resources and could choose between in-person, online, or on-demand video delivery, ensuring the program remained accessible regardless of school location or budget.

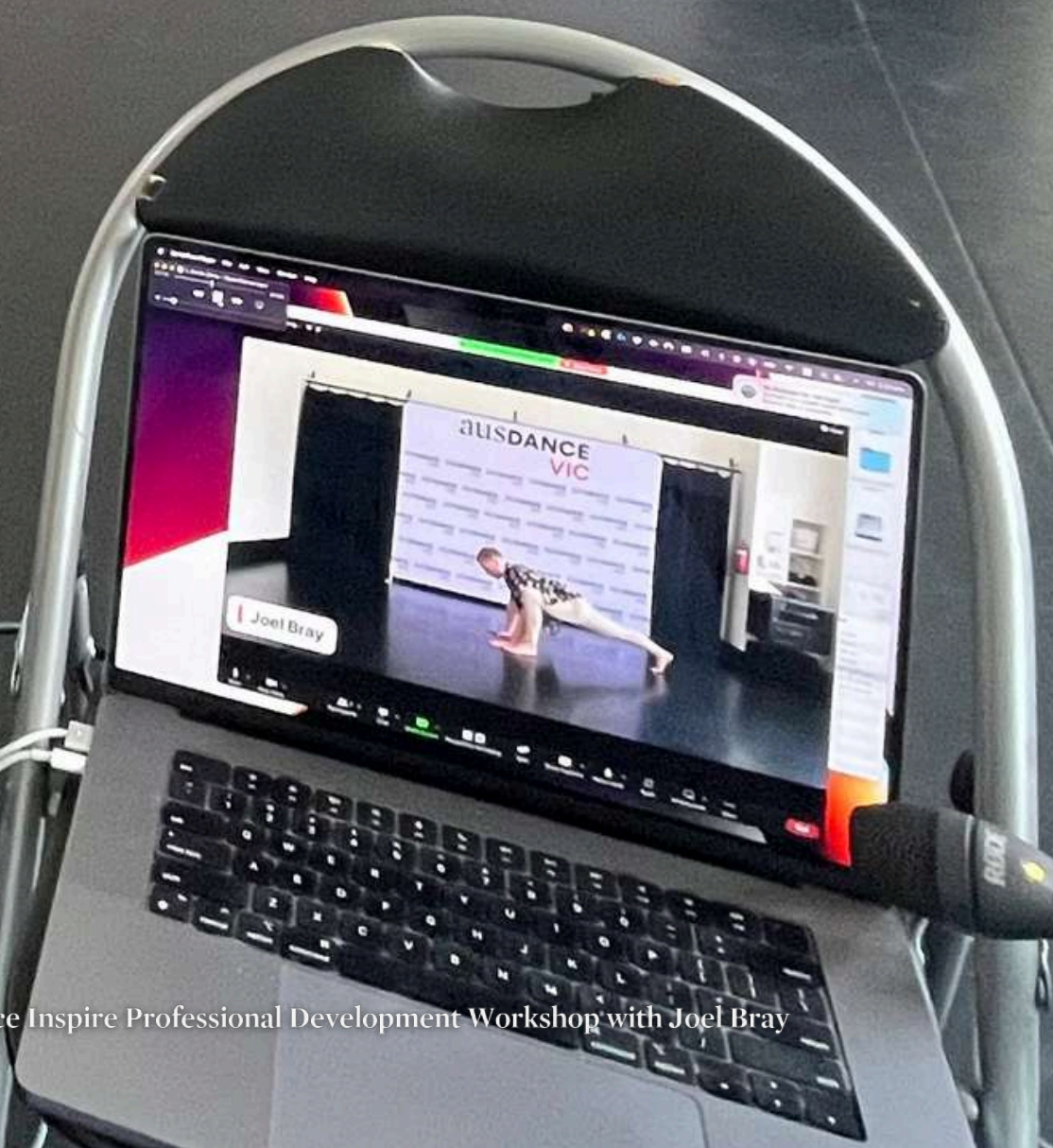
We're thrilled to announce that Inspire will return in 2025 with two new First Nations choreographers joining the program to share their unique perspectives and knowledge.

## Teacher Connection Event

In October 2024, we hosted our inaugural Teacher Connection Event in partnership with Dancehouse—a relaxed and inspiring evening that brought together school teachers and professional dance companies.

The event created space for educators to network, share ideas, and strengthen relationships across the sector, ultimately benefiting both students and teachers. Following its success, we're planning to return with this initiative in 2025.

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Streaming the VCE Dance Inspire Professional Development Workshop with Joel Bray  
Photo by Elise Brennan

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# Programming

## Activate! Education Resource

Our popular Activate! resource underwent a major transformation in 2024, thanks to direct feedback from teachers across the state. This included:

- Redesigning the flash card series
- Creating a full video library of activity demonstrations
- Aligning all content to the updated Victorian Curriculum 2.0
- Launching a new user-friendly home for the resource on our website

Funded by the Department of Education, the resource is set to reach over 1,400 Victorian state schools in Term 2, 2025—supporting more than 330,000 students and 49,000 teachers to incorporate dance into their classrooms.

In addition to the resource itself, we collaborated with the Department to develop a ‘Guide to Dance in the Curriculum’, helping teachers create curriculum-aligned lesson plans using Activate!. We’ve also secured an agreement to make the resource publicly available via our website—ensuring equitable access for all Victorian schools.

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Elise Brennan filming Activate!  
Photo by Brandon Duncann



# Marketing

## Refining for Real Engagement

In 2024, we sharpened our focus on quality over quantity by prioritising meaningful engagement with our audiences. While we've built a large audience over the years, our analysis revealed that many were passive or no longer engaged—negatively impacting reach and performance. Over the past two years, we've worked strategically to better understand our audience across each channel, identify what resonates with them, and refine our content accordingly.

Our approach centred on three key actions:

- Removing disengaged subscribers and followers to improve deliverability and relevance
- Trialing and prioritising high-performing content tailored to each platform
- Refining our reporting methods to better understand and measure effectiveness

**7,299**

Social followers

**87, 393**

Social reach

**7%**

Average engagement rate

**943**

Subscribers

**64.2%**

Open rate

**10.5%**

Click through rate

**12,271**

Website users

**43,511**

Page views

**1m21s**

Average time on site

# Marketing

## Content Pillars

We now develop content around six pillars which allow us to highlight both Ausdance VIC initiatives and sector-wide opportunities, keeping our content relevant, actionable, and engaging.

- Advocacy in Action
- Opportunities
- Sector Happenings
- Community & Connection
- Inspiration
- Promotion of Ausdance VIC programs and offering

With a more clearly defined and responsive audience, we are now well-positioned to focus on strategic growth in 2025, using our insights to guide campaigns and expand our reach to the right people.



Blue Sky Dance Teaching Artists Gülsen Ozer, Chimene Steele-Prior and Leah Hamlet  
Photo by Elise Brennan

# Marketing

## Digital Transformation

Our most significant marketing initiative in 2024 was the redevelopment of the Ausdance VIC website—a project aimed at transforming how we connect with members, stakeholders, and new audiences. Key features of the redevelopment include:

- A refreshed site structure and navigation to improve user experience
- Updated design and content, meeting higher accessibility standards
- e-Commerce functionality to better support revenue-generating activities
- A new membership portal designed to improve member services
- Integration of a CRM and marketing automation tool to streamline communication with members, partners, and prospective supporters

Initially scoped as a six-month project, we extended the timeline after trialling and assessing an initial CRM option. This allowed us to pivot and select a more suitable, long-term solution that better aligned with our goals.

The new website is on track to launch in February 2025, and we're proud of the cost-effective approach we've taken. By negotiating a low-cost development arrangement and selecting affordable, well-supported applications that natively integrate with our systems, we've created a sustainable platform for the future.

Crucially, we've diverted funds previously used to maintain an outdated and high-maintenance system into this new infrastructure. The result is a user-friendly, integrated digital ecosystem that we believe will serve the organisation's needs over the next four years—supporting growth, communication, and impact at every level.

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Elise Brennan and Ava Kahveci at The Big Dance, Geelong  
Photo courtesy of The Big Dance

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# Looking Ahead

## A Bold Vision for Impact

As we step into 2025, Ausdance VIC is building on a renewed foundation with clarity of purpose and an eye to the future. This is a year of strategic evolution—where the work of 2024 begins to bear fruit.

We are deep into the development of our 2026–2029 Strategic Plan, a blueprint that will align our values with a bold vision for impact. With a new fundraising subcommittee in place, we are diversifying revenue streams to strengthen long-term sustainability. Our digital transformation continues to deliver results, from a new website to improved member engagement and streamlined operations.

In education, we're expanding nationally with the Safe Dance Practice course and launching new accredited offerings to support a broader range of creative careers. Our programming continues to centre access, equity, and excellence—reaching more students and teachers across the state than ever before. With Inspire, Activate!, and LIFT all set to return in 2025, our commitment to curriculum-aligned, inclusive dance education is stronger than ever.

Through partnerships and advocacy, we'll continue to support artists, amplify voices, and ensure that dance remains a vital, visible part of Victorian life.

Thank you for dancing alongside us.

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Students performing a warm up at Lift Dance Industry Day  
Photo by Dominic Steele Photography

# Acknowledgements

Ausdance VIC would like to acknowledge the organisations who generously supported us throughout 2024.



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Lift Dance Industry Day  
Photo by Dominic Steele Photography