



Creative Generation Excellence in the Arts Awards

Opening students' eyes to the possibilities of passion

In a state already recognised as a leading educator in the arts, Queensland is making the dreams of its young dancers, singers, animators and actors come true through a new Creative Generation Excellence Awards in the Arts program.

Following on from the Creative Generation State Schools on Stage program started in 2005, this latest offering from the Sunshine State is evidence that banding arts and education together in the one portfolio is paying dividends.

Executive Director of Corporate Communications and Marketing for Queensland's Department of Education and the Arts, Tracey Walker, said Creative Generation was about providing an extension opportunity for students who excelled in the arts.

The awards bring students from across Queensland to Brisbane where they join in workshops led by master performers and industry greats like Troy Casser-Daley and international choreographer William Forsythe.

Following the success of the singing, dancing and music awards, it was decided to let students of film, television, drama and new media in on the act.

"Education and the arts have been together in the same portfolio since 2004 and there have been a lot of links between the two," Tracey said. "One of the first things we developed was Creative Generation State Schools on Stage which was designed to maximise the opportunities available by combining education with the arts."

Next year State Schools on Stage celebrates

its sixth year, coinciding with 150th celebrations on Queensland Day. What involved 550 students from 80 schools last year will explode onto the stage at Brisbane's Entertainment Centre involving 3500 young performers playing to an audience capacity of 10,000.

"State Schools on Stage was all about the singing, dancing and music students getting out there," Tracey said. "Then we thought we wanted the program to cover more genres – film, television, new media, drama and contemporary music."

Selection to the Creative Generation Excellence Awards in the Arts program is via a panel of experts in each genre, teachers and industry leaders with students submitting a DVD of their work for selection.

"One of the criteria was that students were chosen from each region in Queensland," Tracey says. "In that way we could ensure that each region of the state would be represented."

She said many of the participants had never visited the city before attending workshops.

"We have kids from Weipa and Thursday Island taking part," she said. "Some had never been to Brisbane, some have never seen an escalator."

"The Creative Generation Excellence in the Arts Awards is about opening their eyes to something they may never have been exposed to before. It's about getting these kids that are passionate about what they do and getting them involved in the industry in a professional way."

Students taking part in the awards pay a \$295 contribution towards transport and accommodation with the Government picking

up the tab for the rest. As with all State School programs no student is ever excluded because of financial hardship.

"We are always looking for sponsorship for the program to help us cover accommodation and transport, especially as the program continues to grow bigger," Tracey said.

Although the Creative Generation Excellence Awards in the Arts is a program in its infancy, the spin-offs are already evident.

"Something we never expected to happen was that some of the students are going through the workshops and the performances and winding up getting professional gigs with performing artists," Tracey said.

A group of students who worked with Troy Casser-Daley on State Schools on Stage ended up working with him in a recent film clip.

"Another one of our students has made the top 100 in the current series of Australian Idol," Tracey said. "This is a young girl who is blowing them away in the competition and it's the confidence she gained by participating in the awards that gave her the step up to audition."

Tracey said through mentoring and being shown the pathways available, students were seeing the arts as a viable career choice.

"Even if it doesn't translate into a career, there is plenty of evidence that simply being involved in the arts increases a student's self esteem and builds confidence."

"The links this program is creating between the students and the industry are growing all the time. All of these links are good for the arts."

She said teachers involved in the awards were also benefiting from the professional

development gained through working with industry leaders.

"The arts sector has thrown its arms wide open and embraced this program wholeheartedly," Tracey said. "We had the country's leading lighting designer thrilled to add her touches to State Schools on Stage. This is the best designer in Australia and people just couldn't believe that the students would be performing on a stage lit by her."

Tracey said many artists gave their time for free to host workshops for students.

"These awards have such a passionate team behind them and a big backing from the industry," she said.

During August students in film, television and new media will join together for a week of workshops in Brisbane. At the end of the five days parents and the public will be invited to attend a performance/exhibition of their work.

"It is amazing to see what the kids put together in just five days when you consider that at the start of the week they don't even know each other. But the awards are a celebration of the arts, not a competition so the students are all banding together and helping each other out."

And it seems students recognise the



experience for what it is.

"The letters we receive are full of gratitude," Tracey said. "The kids and their parents are saying it's the best thing that has happened to them and they are just so excited to be involved."

She said it was hoped the Creative Generation awards would come to be recognised by universities and industry leaders as credit for those

seeking a career or further study from their art form.

"The visual arts awards have been going for 20 years now and we have rebranded them to fit with the Creative Generation suite," she said.

"Universities already recognise them as a significant achievement and that's the point really, to give students a footing into the arts."

Voice in Schools is tutoring young Tasmanian singers

Two Central Queensland Conservatorium of Music graduates have become the driving force behind an innovative vocal program in Tasmania.

Juliane Di Sisto and Sara-Jane Neep, both graduates of the Bachelor of Jazz Studies program, have coordinated an exciting music course titled Voice in Schools through Newstead College in Launceston.

Juliane and Sara said the Voice in Schools program offered tutoring for young vocalists in schools around the northern part of Tasmania. The program aims to encourage students from primary through to high school, giving them the opportunity to experience being in a large ensemble and in a performance situation.

"The program is designed to enhance and provide extra assistance to music departments within schools, focusing on vocal ensembles



and vocal techniques, while building students' confidence and having fun," Juliane said.

Voice in Schools was initiated through Newstead College's music department, which found there was a need for a program within schools that established a new and contemporary style of vocal performance, building on group unison singing as well as harmony.

Now both back in their home town of Launceston, Juliane and Sara both hope to be able to pass on some of the skills and inspiration they received during their time at the Conservatorium.

"Our degrees have equipped us with different skills and knowledge of various genres, techniques and performance styles to help us tutor these students and create a fun learning environment," Sara explained.

"Not only has our degree enhanced our ability in voice and performance, it also has given us the opportunity to work with various national and international mentors within the music industry," added Juliane.

Sara and Juliane are both working musicians in various outfits around Launceston and are both working on gaining recognition as solo artists.



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