



DANCEHOUSE D/

Action Plan Summary

— Updated September 2025

Dancehouse is on Wurundjeri Country.

We offer our respects to the Wurundjeri woi-wurrung — and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait people — who continue to dance on Country, and have done, for thousands of generations.

Always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

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Introduction

This Dancehouse Action Plan is a living, publicly available document reviewed and revised annually. The Action Plan ensures that Dancehouse remains accountable, transparent, and equitable through proactive, continual, and constructive improvement.

This Action Plan steers Dancehouse internally, provoking action and consideration and inviting opportunities for feedback and evaluation. Dancehouse aims to inspire change and evolution within, and by, the organisation (the team and board) and with key stakeholders, and through this Action Plan, share our successes and challenges.

The Dancehouse Action Plan is informed by Dancehouse's Strategic Plan and policies, which are available publicly on the Dancehouse website.

Dancehouse is an audience and artist-centric organisation. Welcoming and advocating for creativity, equity, accessibility, engagement, and community are key commitments of Dancehouse to our employees, artists, audiences and the Australian dance sector.

Diversity of practice, taste, and lived-experience drives innovation and creativity. All dance is welcome at Dancehouse, all dance is "contemporary". Dancehouse knows that dance is a practice forged by ourselves and others, and is as diverse as the artists and audiences who create and engage with it.

Dancehouse embraces and actively creates a diverse dance scene, acknowledging that historically, many artists, forms, and practices have not been invited, recognised or seen as valid or "contemporary" by other parts of the sector.

Dancehouse continues to drive engagement with artists, audiences, and employees who reflect Australia's diversity. We want to see this in our dance cultures. Dancehouse aims to be a trustworthy small-to-medium organisation with consistent and sensible quantifiable deliverables and ambitions. And an organisation that actively attempts to disrupt systemic discrimination in contemporary dance.

Dancehouse believes that the public-funded arts sector is for the public good. As disparities in our community persist and have grown more expansive, Dancehouse is committed to advancing equity, starting with our institution and systems.

Dancehouse is committed to best practices in tandem with national and international experts. As language, direction, and action change, so can — and should — this Action Plan.

Finally, Dancehouse takes action and responsibility in the climate crisis. It is itself a product of global systemic problems and unfairly and unconscionably affects the most disadvantaged. Dancehouse will point to our tiny but no less important role in the global crises of the 20th and 21st Centuries.

— Dancehouse, September 2025

Principles

This Action Plan supports Dancehouse's overarching vision, mission, goals, and strategies (as per our Strategic Plan), with a particular focus on actions and priorities that advance the voices, rights, and representation of audiences, artists, and employees who are First Nations/Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, have a disability, are culturally and/or linguistically diverse/ BIPOC, and with a view to action in the climate crisis.

A fundamental principle of Dancehouse's Strategic and Action Plans is centring artist and community agency through self-organisation and self-determination. This document provides a frame for accountability and transparency to that agency.

Dancehouse acknowledges the high-level financial, artistic, and logistical risks artists and communities bear while contributing to and fueling Australia's creative economy and industry. In acknowledgement of this, Dancehouse operates under key principles:

- Wherever possible, Dancehouse wears the financial risk (not the artist);
- Transparent, clear, and best practice in independent dance;
- Systems and programs establish ethical and sound foundations and structures that build artistic agency and feedback, resilience and longevity, and that incorporate strong intersectional artistic governance;
- Embrace that stability is never static; change management is dynamic, and conscious actions centred on care.
- Lean into change: embrace uncertainty, tolerate ambiguity, accept, learn and share failure.

Purpose

This Action Plan articulates how Dancehouse, as a not-for-profit organisation, can help its artists, audiences, artform, sector, and employees move forward with purpose.

To achieve systemic change across the organisation and the sector, Dancehouse must embed transformational change within all areas of its work, including programming, governance, employment, policy, and engagement. This document maps where effort is being made and where there can be room for growth.

Process

This Action Plan consolidates rolling consultations with artists and communities since 2019 and is a 'Live' active document.

The research for this document has grown from decades of lived experience gained through the advocacy of artists, staff, board members, peers, and fellow organisations across Australasia, Asia, and North America.

Research

Based on our understanding of the current performing arts sector in Australia, this Action Plan will pay particular attention to access and inclusion across diversity and disabilities, both visible and invisible.

As a 'small to medium' organisation, Dancehouse works non-competitively with the performing arts sector and other dance organisations to achieve similar goals. In this Action Plan and Strategic Plan, Dancehouse takes both top-down and bottom-up approaches to addressing equity. Action in the climate crisis is recognised as a foundational ethical principle for our ambitions of equity and justice across the community.

Definitions

This Action Plan aims to support, empower and employ artists and arts workers regardless of their:

- First Nations culture or background
- Disability
- Cultural background (including Race and Religion)
- Linguistic background (including AUSLAN)
- Gender identity or diversity
- Sexuality
- Socioeconomic status
- Age
- Neurodiversity
- Geographic location
- Immunocompromised status

Status

In this Action Plan, Dancehouse outlines the timeframe applicable to each action as a “Status” to frame the timeliness or urgency of the action.

The status categories are defined as:

- Ongoing — currently tracking, meeting, or maintained
- Underway — not completed as yet but underway
- Short Term — within 6 months by March 2026
- Mid Term — within 18 months by March 2026
- Long Term — more than 18 months by June 2028

Action Types

Dancehouse acknowledges that action is required across the organisation across multiple areas simultaneously.

Dancehouse has defined several action types to articulate the broad actions available and required by the organisation. Areas include:

- Artists
- Audiences
- Employment (including Professional Development)
- Governance
- Financial
- Partners
- Program

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan

Action	Action status	Action Type:	Outcomes / Success Indicators
First Nations programming and partnerships are First Nations-led	Ongoing	Partners	Work with Blakdance, ADT, YIRRAMBOI, Joel Bray Dance Co and individual artists to create programming models and individual opportunities
First Nations board member enshrined in Dancehouse Board Charter	Ongoing	Governance	Identified role in Dancehouse Board Charter to be adopted by Board in 2025
Adoption and review Dancehouse First Nations Cultural Safety and Protocols	Ongoing	Governance	Policy on Dancehouse website and seeking feedback by 2025
Increase audience engagement through access to discounted tickets	Ongoing	Audiences	Mobtix has been implemented since 2021, providing the cheapest ticket price point available at Dancehouse
Maintain First House as Dancehouse's self-determined framework for independent First Nations artists to support practitioners' programs, ideas, careers, practice and leadership	Ongoing	Program Governance	First House directed Dancehouse to prioritise and support On Country residencies: in 2025, this has supported 4 residencies with one more schedule in 2026
Benchmark at least 5% of the annual programming budget allocated for First Nations artists and programs	Ongoing	Financial	Multiple entry points, and bespoke and identified opportunities: presentation, events, residencies, partnerships, producing and collaborations
Commitment to presenting, producing and prioritising First Nations dance projects	Ongoing	Program Governance Audiences	Present at least one First Nations In Season project per annum. All keynote programs always include self-determined First Nations identified work or opportunity Dancehouse provides extra-producing support and facilitation to independent First Nations dance projects, including touring, market development, research, advocacy, etc
Dancehouse prioritises the voices of First Nations artists, communities and curators	Ongoing	Program	First Nations artists, communities, curators, and partners have direct access and priority in Dancehouse programs and services at any time
Engagement with Wurundjeri	Ongoing	Partners Audiences	At least one paid public activity per year with Wurundjeri and Traditional Owners. This includes walks on country at the start of any professional development program, such as the Independent Choreographers Program (ICP), Djirri Djirri
Employment opportunities for First Nations staff with dedicated programming resources	Long-term	Employment	Continue to support or create opportunities for First Nations staff and/ or identified roles and programs at Dancehouse where resources permit

Disability Action Plan

Action	Action status	Action Type	Outcomes / Success Indicators
Support Deaf and Disabled dance artists through programming, producing, and professional development opportunities	Ongoing	Artists Audiences	Provide specific access needs and provisions for all residencies and performance opportunities. Improve legibility and accessibility of communications, reports and materials and online
Create hybrid digital/ physical events to bolster attendance for elderly and immunocompromised artists	Ongoing	Audiences	Implement and embed digital delivery in programs and touring. Examples include Dance (Lens)
Commitment to presenting, producing and prioritising artists with a disability	Ongoing	Audiences	Present at least one project per annum with a disability-identity focus
Support employees and board members to work in a self-determined, proficient environment	Ongoing	Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide neurodiverse affirming work practices to ensure a proficient employee experience. These include hybrid working, work-hour shifts, motorised standing desks, and mental health leave – Identified board member with a disability in 2025
Utilise digital engagement as a mechanism to empower Deaf, elderly, immunocompromised and Disabled artists	Ongoing	Program	At least 90% of digital products by Dancehouse are close-captioned
Support employees with flexible work and mental health leave provisions and policies	Mid-Term	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – By end 2026 Mental Health leave provision and policy adopted – By end 2026, establish an Employee Assistance Program (EAP), including five free employee psychology sessions
Lobby City of Yarra to create and continually develop a fully accessible Dancehouse	Long-term	Governance Infrastructure	<p>Dancehouse CoY have developed a 10-year Masterplan for a fully accessible venue</p> <p>Accessibility improvements: wheelchair ramp, foyer and BOH bathrooms 2024</p>
Establish long-term partnerships to ensure choices are disability-led	Long-term	Governance	Dancehouse consults with local artists and groups, and industry experts on identified program design and delivery by 2027
Include at least 4% of every project budget for access elements	Long-term	Financial	Dancehouse presentations will include access guides/ social stories by 2027

Diversity & Equity Action Plan

Action	Action status	Action type	Outcomes / Success Indicators
Dancehouse supports artists' and communities' fundamental right to express their artistic and political views at Dancehouse without fear of retribution	Ongoing	Artists Governance	Adopt a Freedom of Cultural Expression policy in 2024
Dancehouse actively engages with artists, producers, and curators from target groups with self-determination models: First Nations; Street Dance; South Asian artists and forms; Artists with a disability	Ongoing	Program Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Priority groups, artists and forms are seen in Dancehouse Seasons and artistic development programs annually – Maintain bespoke programs, self-determination models, and incorporate rolling evaluations with the view for long-term engagement and relationship building – Over 50 artistic meetings a year to openly discuss projects with key artists, producers, curators and groups
Champion for an expanded definition of contemporary dance, acknowledges multiple audiences, addresses institutional racism across the dance sector	Ongoing	Program Partners	Diverse dance programming, and dance-specific audience development strategy with engagement of multiple dance audiences, our neighbourhood, and in partnership with various dance communities
Advocates for systemic change and builds equity by prioritising target artists and forms	Ongoing	Audiences	Offer Dancehouse as a home for all dance artists, multiple forms, and choreographic exploration through identified invitations, programs that promote dance diversity
Improve dance sector leadership to reflect dance's true diversity	Ongoing	Employment Governance	Dancehouse employees come from and speak for different dance communities and forms. 50% of board members are people of colour by 2025
Ensure a culturally safe workplace and culture celebrating self-determined cultural and bodily autonomy	Short Term	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Action Plans, Cultural Safety and Protocols policies revised 2025 – From 2026: Cultural Safety Training for staff and board and participating in sector program with Gracieuse Amah, VicHealth, Ausdance Vic in 2026
Lifelong engagement with dance artists. Dancehouse programs across all phases of production and all career stages	Ongoing	Artists Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rolling self-determined programs for diverse dance artists and forms at Dancehouse – At least 15% in each age demographic decade of life (20s, 30s, 40s, 50s+) – Dancehouse employs or mentors emerging producers, artworkers or curators of colour

Climate Crisis Action Plan

Actions	Action Status	Action Type	Outcomes / Success Indicators
Dancehouse is carbon neutral by 2030	Long term	Program Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Dancehouse is on 100% renewable energy from 2022. – Carbon counting in annual reports from 2023
Annual carbon emissions accounting and review	Ongoing	Financial Governance Program	Dancehouse records and monitors carbon emissions and reports on this in Annual Reports
Dancehouse joins A Climate for Art (ACFA) is an active participant	Ongoing	Governance	Dancehouse a signatory and participant in ACFA and Creative Climate programs
Dancehouse divests moving all banking to non-fossil fuel investors	Underway	Financial	By end of 2025 Dancehouse divests from major fossil fuel investors and banks
Environmental, Social and Governance Policy articulates divestment strategies and advocacy away from major fossil fuel companies and investors	Short-Term	Financial Governance	<p>Develops and endorses an ESG policy which is available on the Dancehouse website by 2026</p> <p>Dancehouse advocates that anyone paid by Dancehouse considers the climate impact of their superannuation funds</p>
Dancehouse offers programs, workshops and professional development that fosters engagement with the climate crisis	Ongoing	Employment Program	Since 2021, Dancehouse had annual programs and offers with a climate crisis focus
Dancehouse works with artists and communities to create local platforms and artist-led programs to discuss how dance and sustainability can intersect and how to engage the community in climate action	Long-term	Artists Audiences	Re-establishment of The Green Bee activity from 2023, sustainability focussed choreographic community group
Audience transport schemes	Short-Term	Financial Governance	Dancehouse's largest carbon emissions are through audience transport. Dancehouse develops incentives to take-up low carbon emission transport
Advocate for arts organisations to meet Net Zero 2050 targets	Long-term	Governance Program	Dancehouse will hold or participate in at least six meetings annually to prioritise and reflect on carbon emission reductions, climate crisis engagement, and sustainability goals

Mediation, Dispute Resolution and Evaluation

This Action Plan supports future self-sustainability; it promotes the work of a generation of leaders celebrating their forms and communities. The Dancehouse Action Plan foregrounds safety and offers mediation. There is an evaluation process with qualitative and quantitative targets to analyse results as follows:

- Explicitly mentioning this Action Plan in all staff position descriptions
- Annual Agenda Item for Dancehouse Board Meetings for review and adoption
- Seeking out feedback from stakeholders, partners, and artists seasonally at town halls (i.e. Housekeeping) and online surveys
- Reporting on progress in our Annual Report and celebrating our achievements at the annual general meeting

Dancehouse will also conduct evaluations by speaking to participants about their:

- Autonomy as an independent dance artist
- Wellbeing
- Sense of belonging and community connection

In our sector, there is a tension between accountability, resourcing and program delivery. Dancehouse will work at the following levels to balance this tension:

- Staff level: Staff have weekly opportunities to discuss mental health and resourcing in alignment with Dancehouse's policies and procedures
- Board level: The skill-based board adjourns through sub-committee meetings to help Dancehouse strategise and implement the highest level of diversity, equity and inclusion possible with every action — including mediating in support of staff or artists where necessary
- Sovereign artistic governance: Programs that are self-determined (First House, Dancehousing) where the Dancehouse staff member serves as a mediator between the artists and community groups

As an artist-centred organisation, Dancehouse will centre evaluations that are:

- Not homogenous. Dancehouse celebrates a diversity of taste-making
- Peer appraised. Dancehouse programming and expressions of interest are peer appraised by diverse voices
- Self-determined. Dancehouse centre projects with the artist co-designing their benchmarks of success.