

# 2020 Annual Report





Level 5 students performing in the 2020 Showcase film. Photo by Lynette Wills.  
**Cover:** Jessica Stratton-Smith with Level 7 and 8 students performing in the 2020 Showcase film. Photo by Lynette Wills.

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Our Purpose

The Australian Ballet School exists to provide young classical ballet dancers with exceptional training and education to prepare them for a professional career with leading dance companies in Australia and worldwide. The School nurtures a passion for dance participation in Australia. As the national centre for vocational classical dance, The Australian Ballet School plays a central role in the history and future of dance.

We realise our purpose by:

- Being a global leader in vocational dance training
- Providing world-class dance training aligned with extensive academic and wellbeing programs that enable students to flourish
- Balancing technique and artistry with educational needs and holistic care in a nurturing, inclusive, creative and stimulating environment underpinned by the principles of positive education
- Training our dancers in a distinctive Australian style that is internationally regarded as technically excellent, creative, adaptable, mindful, courageous, consistent and expressive
- Ensuring a balance between affordability and access through our boarding, scholarship and bursary programs
- Offering a variety of community programs and accessible training opportunities
- Employing highly experienced educators who are committed to empowering excellence in the dancers of tomorrow
- Training teachers and developing the artistic leaders of the future
- Providing a major source of talent for The Australian Ballet, and leading companies nationally and internationally.

Our Values

Excellence

We are Australia’s centre of excellence for creating the future of dance. We empower excellence through education and nurturing. Our teachers and students exemplify technical excellence, grace, resilience and strength. Our curriculum promotes excellence in ballet training, academic and professional preparation, personal growth and accomplishment.

Talent

Talent is the lifeblood of dance companies worldwide. We actively identify talent and potential, both essential for entry to the School. We are the major source of talent for The Australian Ballet and other leading companies nationally and internationally.

Creativity

Creativity is our means of self-expression. We foster imagination and nurture insightful, artistic and courageous communicators. We spark creativity and passion in our students, enabling them to flourish as artists and advance the art of ballet.

Resilience

We believe in our ability to make things happen and reach for the stars. We understand that success is fuelled by hard work and a personal commitment to achievement. We are disciplined and don’t give up.

A Balanced Education

The Australian Ballet School provides a positive and balanced education for students to cultivate healthy bodies, minds and souls. We value knowledge and experience and we are open-minded and ready to learn.

Respect

We respect and support each other. We are one team. We inherit and are proud of the unique values and traditions of our School.

Connection

Positive connections between students, teachers, The Australian Ballet and leading dance companies, nationally and internationally, are integral to our success. We maintain collegial connections to leading vocational dance schools and industry advocates globally. We nurture a passion for dance in the wider community. We understand our stakeholders and engage with them in meaningful ways.

Proudly Australian

We are proudly Australian. We respect and reflect Australia’s rich cultural diversity and First Nation heritage. We respect and build upon the history, training, environment and repertoire of ballet in Australia and how it shaped the identifiable Australian style of performance. We empower students to emerge as well-rounded artists who are technically excellent, creative, adaptable, mindful, courageous, consistent and expressive.



## Message from the Chair



Excellence, endurance, energy and empathy. While these qualities have always driven The Australian Ballet School's philosophy of holistic training, never were they more evident than in 2020. The resilience of our students and staff, and their collective resolve to make the most of the year, was nothing short of remarkable.

I take this opportunity to thank and congratulate The Director of The Australian Ballet School, Lisa Pavane, for her tireless leadership throughout this extraordinary year. Lisa navigated wave after wave of uncertainty with seemingly endless reserves of energy and optimism. On behalf of the Board, I also thank General Manager Sandra Ball, and Acting General Manager Helen Silk, for leading an exceptionally agile administration team in managing the resources of the School in the most unusual and challenging year in its history. The Board is very grateful to the staff for their commitment to delivering a program that rewrote the book on how to prepare the next generation of professional dancers. Disciplined and dauntless, our staff and students found new ways to train, and in partnership with Quest Southbank apartments, dedicated staff also delivered on the School's commitment to provide our boarders with a home away from home.

The School thrives on a number of essential partnerships, none more symbiotic than that with The Australian Ballet, and in particular I thank Chair, Craig Dunn, and Executive Director, Libby Christie. On behalf of the School, I also acknowledge with deep gratitude and admiration the outgoing Artistic Director David McAllister, and welcome with great excitement the relationship we are building with David Hallberg.

In a year when the performing arts sector was brought to its knees financially, we are indebted to the Commonwealth Government, as well as our generous sponsors, donors and other supporters. Thank you to our partners: Bloch Australia, The Australian Ballet Society, Friends of The Australian Ballet New South Wales, Friends of The Australian Ballet South Australia, Allens and Quest Southbank. We cannot exist without your support.

The year 2020 demanded extraordinary levels of Board commitment. I sincerely thank my Deputy Chair, Robin Campbell, and fellow Board members for their significant contribution to the governance of the School: Stephen Adrian, Adrian Burnett, Paul Cross, Geoff Guggenheimer, Ruth Picker and Zich Woinarski.

Congratulations to everyone at The Australian Ballet School for their individual contribution and their collective resilience which not only allowed us to progress throughout 2020, but to emerge even more focused on creating the future of dance.

Thank you.

**Sarah Matheson AM**  
Chair, The Australian Ballet School

Message from the Director



Reflecting on my sixth year as Director of The Australian Ballet School, I am tremendously proud of the School’s achievements in 2020. The School community drew upon incredible resilience. We needed to maintain confidence, perspective and to be flexible in our thinking and planning. We had to understand that carefully made plans would often need amending; 2020 was undoubtedly a year of amendments.

It was a most unexpected year that challenged us all to be patient, accepting and courageous. Despite the disruption caused by COVID-19 and the impact on our student access to onsite training for a significant portion of the year, we remained positive and adaptable.

The Australian Ballet School’s ability to provide a carefully designed training program—almost overnight—is a testament to the exceptional staff and teaching faculty heroes. The team were incredibly dedicated, supportive, and focused on maintaining the highest standards of student training and experiences. Paramount to all decision making was the health and wellbeing of our students and staff.

I was moved by the positivity of our students, their get-up-and-go spirit, and the unwavering support from their families. I know it was not easy, but their dedication and commitment truly inspired us an organisation to rise and meet their courage. Together, we made it through. Through the challenges, we achieved some beautiful learnings, incredible growth, maturity and silver linings. We witnessed a strength of character and positivity in our students that we believe will set them on a path with inspired insight and preparation for life ahead.

The year started and ended with significant and exciting highlights. In January, four of our senior students attended a three-week study exchange with Canada’s National Ballet School. In February, Level 8 student Sophie Beaty represented the School at the prestigious Prix de Lausanne competition in Montreux, Switzerland, making it to the final round with 19 other top students worldwide. In March, our cohort of Level 7 students undertook an intensive Spanish training programme; and for all students’ training and rehearsals were well underway for our upcoming performances. As the pandemic unfolded, theatres closed, and public gatherings were restricted, all of our 2020 performances were cancelled, including the planned premiere of our new two-act story ballet, *Butterfly*. It was uplifting to witness the creativity and collaboration of our students to create choreographic works in isolation, and the collaboration of company dancers with our students to create a work filmed at Princes Pier in Port Melbourne. In the absence of an opportunity to perform to a live audience, we were grateful to be able to create an opportunity for our students to perform and present a selection of works to camera, resulting in the School’s inaugural Showcase film, in December.

After a year of unimaginable challenges, we are delighted to witness our students moving forward and accomplishing great things. Certainly, the Class of 2020 Level 8 students showed exceptional resilience and determination. We are incredibly proud of all 2020 Graduate students, and so pleased that many received professional contracts.

I am honoured to have the opportunity to direct Australia’s national classical ballet school. I want to thank all the incredible Australian Ballet School staff for their dedicated passion and commitment to the education of our school students.

I thank and acknowledge our Board of Directors, Chaired by Sarah Matheson AM, General Manager Sandra Ball, our government and corporate partners, donors, staff, students and families, members of the Family Support Programme and The Australian Ballet. I express my sincere gratitude to David McAllister AC, outgoing Artistic Director of The Australian Ballet, for his unwavering support and encouragement of the School. I look forward with excitement to a new era with David Hallberg at the helm of our great national company.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank every member of our community for your support and encouragement.

After a year of transformation, we look forward to the future and the emergence of *Butterfly*.

Lisa Pavane  
The Director of The Australian Ballet School



## Our People

### 2020 Board of Directors

#### Chair, Ms Sarah Matheson AM

Sarah Matheson AM joined the Board of Directors (formerly Council of Management) in March 2005 after acting for The Australian Ballet School in a pro-bono legal capacity. The members of The Australian Ballet School have re-elected Sarah to the Board multiple times. Sarah has been the Chair of the Board since May 2019. In 2020, Sarah was a partner of the law firm Allens and practised in intellectual property. Sarah joined the Intellectual Property group of the law firm Allens in 1995, and became a partner in 2001, at which time she also became a member of the firm's national pro bono committee, regularly acting for not for profit organisations in the arts, health, social investment and social justice sectors. Sarah has also held various staff roles at Allens with responsibilities including recruitment, training, performance assessment and pastoral care. Sarah holds a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) from the University of Melbourne, and is a registered Trade Marks Attorney.

#### Deputy Chair, Ms Robin Campbell

Robin Campbell joined the Board in January 2015, appointed as Deputy Chair in March 2017 and was re-elected to the Board by members of The Australian Ballet School in 2018. Robin is a Founder and Chair of the Robin Campbell Family Foundation and was a Trustee of the Parncutt Family Foundation (2001-2017), both of which support a large number of arts and education organisations nationally. Robin has been a member of The Australian Ballet Foundation Board since its inception in 2011 and is currently Chair of the Southern Chapter of the Foundation. She served as a member of the Foundation Council, State Library of Victoria from 2014 to 2020 and as a member of the Executive Committee of the Foundation, Trinity College, University of Melbourne, from 2008 to 2014. Robin is a Life Member of The Australian Ballet and the National Gallery of Victoria. She has held senior management roles in investment banking and information technology and has provided consulting services in the business technology sector. More recently Robin has been the lead producer of the award-winning show "Songs for Nobodies" in London's West End. Robin has a Bachelor of Science (Honours) from the University of Cape Town and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

### Members of the Board of Directors

#### Mr Stephen Adrian

Stephen Adrian joined the Board of Directors in June 2019 and is a member of the Audit Risk and Compliance Committee. He is a Consultant Director at ShineWing Australia and has been with ShineWing for more than four decades. Stephen's skill areas include finance, tax and business structures focusing mainly on private groups. He has also acted for many not-for-profit organisations and is the responsible person of a number of private ancillary foundations. He is a director for a number of private companies, and a past director of listed public companies. In addition to being a director of The Australian Ballet School, he is a director of Food and Wine Victoria Ltd and Waterski and Wakeboard Australia Ltd. He is the chair of the Corporate Governance Committee of Food and Wine Victoria and a member of the MLC Foundation. Stephen authors the Company Directors Manual, recommended by the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Stephen holds a Bachelor of Economics, a Bachelor of Laws and a Master of Taxation Law from Monash University. He is a Chartered Accountant, a Fellow of the Taxation Institute of Australia and a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

## Our People

#### Mr Adrian Burnett

Adrian is an Arts Leader with extensive national and international experience, an award-winning choreographer, and a leading Dance Artist. He joined the Australia Council for the Arts in 2011 and was appointed Director of Dance in 2015. Adrian's art-form expertise and national overview has informed grant programs, strategic initiatives, and policy outcomes at the Council for the past decade. After graduating from The Australian Ballet School, Adrian joined the Australian Ballet where he held prominent artistic roles including; Senior Artist, Resident Choreographer, Guest Teacher and Executive Producer. During this time, Adrian was also Guest Artist with Basel Ballet in Switzerland, The National Ballet of Canada and Scottish Ballet. As a choreographer he has been commissioned to create over 20 new ballets including for; Dutch National Ballet, Houston Ballet, Singapore Dance Theatre, New York City Ballet's Choreographic Institute, The Australian Ballet, West Australian Ballet and Royal New Zealand Ballet. Adrian has worked extensively as a guest ballet master with international companies including staging seminal works by Glen Tetley and Twyla Tharp for the Scottish Ballet's season at the Edinburgh International Arts Festival. In 2019 he joined the Australian Ballet School Board and is Chair of SAMAG (Sydney Arts Management Advisory Group).

#### Mr Paul Cross

Paul Cross joined the Board of Directors in June 2008. In 2011 and 2012 Paul was elected as a Director to the Board, he was re-elected to the Board by the members of The Australian Ballet School in 2009, 2010, 2014 and 2017. Paul holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Melbourne an MBA from the Melbourne Business School and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He is an experienced software entrepreneur, investor and executive and has launched a number of successful start-ups and held senior positions in global software and marketing services companies including Responsys and Oracle Inc. He is currently Vice President (APJ) of Customer Success at DocuSign Inc and a Board Director of Stackla Inc and the St Kevins College Foundation.

#### Mr Geoff Guggenheimer

Geoff Guggenheimer joined the Board of Directors in August 2016. In 2017 Geoff was elected as a Director to the Board by the members of The Australian Ballet School. Geoff is the Director of Student Development and Head of Boarding at Melbourne Grammar School. In these roles he oversees the pastoral and well-being programmes, leading a team of people responsible for the academic, social, spiritual and physical development of students in the senior school. Prior to this he had been the Director of Boarding at Christ Church Grammar in Perth. Geoff has a Bachelor of Applied Science from RMIT and a Graduate Certificate in Sport management from Deakin University.

#### Ms Ruth Picker

Ruth Picker joined the Board of Directors in June 2019. She has 37 years' experience with Ernst & Young (EY) and her current position is Asia-Pacific Risk Management Leader, based in Melbourne, responsible for enterprise-wide risk management for EY in the Asia-Pacific Area. In this capacity she is a member of the Asia-Pacific Area Executive Leadership team. She is also a member of EY's Global Risk Management Executive based in London. Ruth is also a member of EY's Global Practice Group which comprises partners in leadership positions from around the world and is a member of EY's Asia-Pacific Diversity and Inclusiveness Committee and chairs the Asia-Pacific Ethics Oversight Group. Prior to this Ruth was Global Leader - Global International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) Services, based in London, for four years. Ruth was a member of Ernst & Young's Global IFRS Policy Committee for nine years. Prior to this she was the Managing Partner of Ernst & Young Melbourne, Oceania Leader in Climate Change and Sustainability Services while

also holding a senior IFRS partner role in the Australian firm. Ruth is a Fellow member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia & New Zealand and a Fellow member of CPA Australia. She is also a Fellow member of FINSIA and a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. In 2020 Ruth was inducted into the Australian Accounting Hall of Fame in recognition of her services to the profession internationally and in Australia

**Mr W. Brind (Zich) Zichy-Woinarski Q.C.**

Zich joined the Board of Directors on 25 May 2017, he was re-elected to the Board by the members of The Australian Ballet School in 2018. He has been a member of the Philanthropy Committee of The Australian Ballet School since 2012. Zich holds a Bachelor of Laws with Honours from the University of Melbourne and has practised as a barrister at the Victorian Bar since April 1970, practising in a wide variety of law including white collar and commercially related criminal matters, professional disciplinary matters, equal opportunity and discrimination law. He was appointed Queen's Counsel in November 1987. Zich was a founder of the Criminal Bar Association, a former Chairman and is an Honorary Life member. He served on the Victorian Bar Council between 1990-1994, was a member of its Executive, Junior Vice-Chairman in 1994 and was Chairman of the Ethics Committee from 1993-1999. He has been a member of the Advisory Board for the Sir Zelman Cowan Centre at Victoria University since its inception. Zich has been a director of the Newsboys Foundation since December 1991 and its Chairman since December 2009. He was a member of the Board of Try Youth and Community Services from 1972 to 1995 and 1999 to 2008, was junior Vice-President between 1989 and 1995 and was appointed a Life Governor in 1989. He is a past Vice-President of the International Commission of Jurists in Australia, Victorian Branch and was also a member of the Board of Westside Circus.

**Board Committee Members**

**Nominations and Remuneration Committee**

Robin Campbell (Chair), Sarah Matheson AM

**Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee**

Ruth Picker (Chair), Stephen Adrian, Zich Zichy-Woinarski QC, Finance Manager by invitation

**Finance and Investment Committee**

Paul Cross (Chair), Robin Campbell, Finance Manager by invitation

**Health and Wellbeing Committee**

Adrian Burnett (Chair), Geoff Guggenheimer, Lisa Pavane, Philippa Ziegenhardt

**Development Committee**

Zich Zichy-Woinarski QC (Chair), Paul Cross and external members (including Director of Development)



Our People	Patron	Lady Southey AC
	Board of Directors	
	Chair	Sarah Matheson AM
	Deputy Chair	Robin Campbell
	Members of the Board	Stephen Adrian Adrian Burnett Paul Cross Geoffrey Guggenheimer Ruth Picker W. Brind Zichy-Woinarski Q.C.
	Life Members	
	Honorary Life Members	Julie da Costa OAM Leigh Johns OAM Jenny Kaye Gordon Tasker AM Josie Woodgate OAM
	Staff	
	Director of The Australian Ballet School	Lisa Pavane
	General Manager	Sandra Ball
	Student Training Programme	
	Ballet Mistress, Level 8 Teacher	Joanne Michel
	Ballet Master, Level 8 Teacher	Andrew Murphy
	Levels 5-7 Coordinators & Level 7 Classical Teachers	Lynette Wills Simon Dow
	Classical Teachers	Megan Connelly Jiayin Du Michela Kirkaldie Irina Konstantinova Sergey Konstantinov Sabrina Lenzi Kirsty Martin Christine Vavladellis
	Contemporary Teacher	Margaret Wilson
	Character/Folkloric Teacher	Christine Howard
	Resident Choreographers	Margaret Wilson Simon Dow
	Spanish Guest Teacher	Areti Boyaci

Our People	Student Development Coordinator & Conditioning Specialist	Katrina Edwards
	Strength & Conditioning Coach	Sakis Michelis Katrina Edwards
	Guest & Melbourne Community Access Teacher	Christine Vavladellis Natalie Clarke Rachel Rawlins
	Music	
	Head of Music/Audio Visual Co-ordinator	Paul Brickhill
	Pianists	Tatiana Levitskaia Waldemar Lis Neil McNeill Izabella Mouguerman Larissa Oberfeld Diane Palmer Keith Ng Oliver Northam (Melbourne Community Access classes)
	Vocational Graduate Teacher Training Programme	
	Executive Head of Teacher Training & Digital Resources Curator	Sheryl Bates
	Pedagogic Instructor & Specialist Ballet Coach	Michela Kirkaldie
	Online Educator and Facilitator	Huda Ali
	Digital Content Producer	Nicholas Forster
	Student Health & Well-Being	
	School Counsellor	Philippa Ziegenhardt
	Physiotherapist	Gabrielle Davidson
	Rehabilitation Coaching, Classical	Michela Kirkaldie Megan Connelly Kirsty Martin Margaret Wilson
	Rehabilitation Coaching, Contemporary	
	Strength & Conditioning	Katrina Edwards Sakis Michelis
	Dietician	Fiona Sutherland
	Sports Physician	Dr. Andrew Garnham

Our People

General Practitioner	Dr. Sonya Morrisey
Myotherapist	Leigh Holliday
Connecting to School Community Programme	Debra Ferguson
<b>Boarding Programme</b>	
Head of Boarding	Benita Bowles
Senior Boarding Assistant	Rachel Cotra
Boarding Assistants	Joanna Holland Chelsea Maron Reshma Raju Stuart Tyson Ella Westblade
<b>Academic Staff</b>	
English	Sarah Colman (VCASS Level 7) Eden Greskie (VCASS Level 6) Maree Strachan (Level 8 IELTS Overseas Students)
Anatomy	Gabrielle Davidson
Career Management	Pauline Ryan (Levels 7 & 8)
Cultural Studies	Pauline Ryan
Dance Perspectives/VCE Dance	Pauline Ryan (Levels 5, 6 & 7)
Drama	VCASS Steven Thorne** (Levels 6 & 7)
Music	Penne Webster (Levels 4 & 5 & VCASS Levels 6 & 7)
Nutrition Performance Psychology	Katherine Shone Philippa Ziegenhardt VCASS Elizabeth Townshend/Theo Buskes (VCE Levels 6 & 7)
<b>Academic Provider</b>	<b>Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School</b>
VCASS Principal	Hilary Bland
VCASS Deputy Principals	Donatella Mannollini Michael Sargeant

Our People

<b>Administration</b>	
EA to the Director	Marijke Franken
EA to the GM & Operations Coordinator	Maree Strachan
International Student Coordinator	Maree Strachan
<b>Finance</b>	
Finance Manager (from 02/03/2020)	Olivera Krstevski
Accountant (from 17/01/2020)	Ferdinando Cossalter
Accountant (07/02/2020)	Davone Pope
<b>Development</b>	
Director of Development	Amanda Bailey
Engagement & Strategic Communications Manager	Dana Moran
Marketing & Communications Coordinator	Lisa Miller
Development Coordinator	Alicia Rozenblum
<b>Front Office</b>	
Student & School Administration Coordinator	Christine Howard
Registrar & Student Administration Coordinator	Amanda Georgiou
Administration Assistant & Digital Producer	Nicholas Forster
Administration Assistant	Tiffany Liew
After Hours Student Coordinators	Norma Drew Ian Drew Reshma Raju Siobhan Robb

## Thank You, Marvellous Maggie



Margaret 'Maggie' Wilson, Contemporary Dance Teacher & Choreographer

Margaret 'Maggie' Wilson has been an integral member of The Australian Ballet School for 30 years. At the curtain fall of 2020, we sadly said goodbye to a woman who has been at the heart of The Australian Ballet School's artistry for years. As our cherished Contemporary Dance teacher & Choreographer, Maggie was instrumental in nurturing the talents of our students while wowing audiences with her imaginative works that delight with creativity and passion.

Maggie's career is as successful as it is enduring; she traversed the globe in pursuit of developing her distinguished career, which is reflected in her dynamic choreographic portfolio. Having worked with famous choreographers from every corner of the world including Jiří Kylián, Charles Czany and Jaap Flier, Maggie brings an undeniably experienced perspective to her teachings, which has benefited our students immeasurably.

In 1971 Maggie made her professional debut and received the opportunity to dance with Victorian Ballet. She performed significant roles including the portrayal of Clara in *The Nutcracker* and *The Glade* by Rex Reid. However, it was when Ms Wilson moved to the Netherlands that her career really took flight, first dancing with Nederlands Dans Theatre and later Scapino Ballet in Amsterdam. As a principal dancer with Australian Dance Theatre, Ms Wilson gained recognition for her performances in works created by Christopher Bruce, Glen Tetley, Jonathan Taylor and Norman Morris. Maggie also received a study grant from the South Australian Ministry of Arts to study Contemporary Dance in New York.

Before joining The Australian Ballet School in 1990, Maggie taught Classical Ballet and Contemporary Dance at the Centre for the Performing Arts in Adelaide and Contemporary Dance at Victorian College of the Arts.

Throughout her expansive career at The Australian Ballet School, some of Maggie's most memorable choreographic works have included *Nuance* (2009), *Quintet* (2012), *Continuum* (2013), *Invisible Icon* (2015), *Journey* (2016 & 2019), *Vitae* (2017), *Heart Strings* (2018) and *After Escher* (2019).

For students, Ms Wilson will be remembered for her nurturing spirit, creativity and positive energy. For staff, Maggie will be remembered for her humour and endearing kindness. We wish Maggie a wonderful retirement, and know that she will remain connected to the School.

*"Maggie has such a zest for life, when I think of her I see passion, commitment, boundless energy, no fuss attitude, generous heart and a whole lot of laughs. Her many wonderful creations over the years have provided endless growth opportunities for our students and moving, passionate experiences for all who see them. A wonderful artist."*

Lynette Wills, Classical Teacher

*"Maggie has my greatest admiration for her creativity, passion, spirit, strength, persistence and dedication to this art form. It is truly amazing that Maggie has nurtured generations of students. Thank you, Maggie, for your immense contribution to The Australian Ballet School and the dance community."*

Lisa Pavane, Director of The Australian Ballet School



*"She is an inspiration as a teacher in her genre. Her choreography is a beautiful thread that she has woven for so many young dancers. I love her enthusiasm and vision, her humour and her friendship."*

Joanne Michel, Ballet Mistress & Classical Teacher

# Our Students

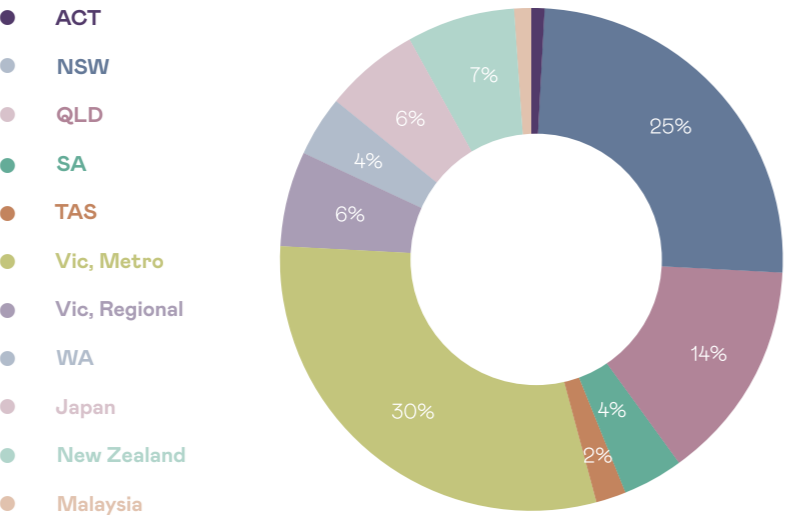
## Student Numbers

In 2020 The Australian Ballet School trained and nurtured 107 young dancers through our eight-level training program. Due to COVID-19, the School’s core training program was severely impacted, with most of our students training at home virtually for most of the year. Many of our public programmes which have a strong following within the Ballet Community could not be delivered, including our masterclasses, early learning programme, auditions and Winter School.

## Student Origin

Students of The Australian Ballet School come from all over Australia and neighbouring countries.

### Full Time Student Origin



## Student Leaders 2020

As part of the holistic philosophy in vocational training, student leadership builds on the positive and healthy culture that the School has carefully developed and continues to nurture. Students present their written applications to the Director to be considered for a leadership role within the School.

**School Captains:** Izaak Westhead and Annabelle Watt

**Vice Captains:** George Thomson and Emily McCracken

**Level 7 Class Leaders:** Benjamin Anderson and Anna Stewart

**Level 6 Class Leaders:** Charles Dashwood and Allegra Keneally

**Level 5 Class Leaders:** Corey Gavan and Tina Xu

**Level 4 Class Leaders:** Padraic Lum and Grace Campbell



Lisa Pavane with 2020 student leaders George Thomson, Izaak Westhead, Emily McCracken and Annabelle Watt



Level 1-3



Level 4



Level 5



Level 6



Level 7



Level 8

Photos by Arthur Reed Photos.

Marilyn Rowe House

Student Residence & Boarding Programme

The Boarding Programme reflects the vision, culture and character of The Australian Ballet School. Unique programmes and exciting approaches to pastoral and residential care devoted to nurturing the whole person — mind, body, and spirit — foster distinctive experiences that support the growth of young dancers into mature, professional performers, as well as individuals who are capable of making valuable contributions to broader society.

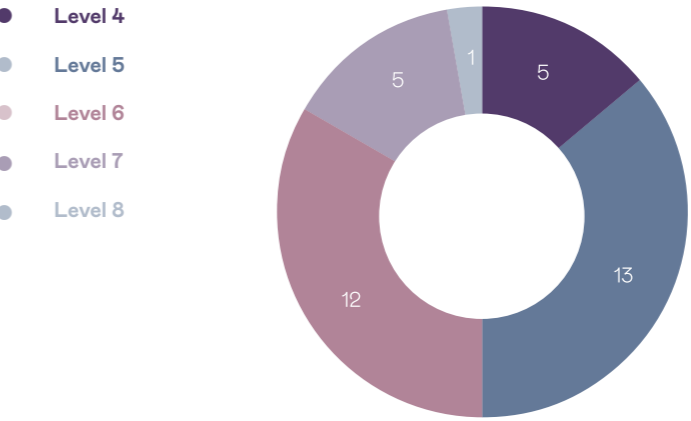
Marilyn Rowe House (MRH) is the purpose-built boarding facility of The Australian Ballet School, named after former Director Marilyn Rowe AM OBE. This premier facility at any one time is capable of housing approximately 40 students and associated support staff. Led by the Head of Boarding, MRH enables our students to experience the highest levels of pastoral care, whilst living in a community based on the needs of dancers. The students who live in MRH range from Level 4 to Level 8.

Students come together in the Marigold Southey Study, the Bowness Foundation Dining Room, and the Robin Campbell Recreation Room, fulfilling the School’s mission to create a home-away-from-home where students are cared for and nurtured in a positive environment.

2020 Boarders: The Australian Ballet School training level and origin

2020	VIC Reg	TAS	ACT	NSW Reg	NSW Syd.	QLD Reg	QLD Bris.	SA Reg	SA Adel.	WA Perth	Japan	NZ	Other	Total
L4	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
L5	0	1	0	0	5	1	3	0	1	2	0	0	1	13
L6	2	1	0	0	3	0	5	0	1	0	4	1	0	17
L7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
L8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total	2	2	0	0	10	1	10	0	2	2	7	1	1	35

Total Number of Boarding students at Marilyn Rowe House



Boarders supported by Corporate Partner Quest Southbank

In our first year of partnership with Quest Southbank, we demonstrated how positive partnerships can be leveraged for mutual benefit and excellent outcomes.

At the beginning of Term Three, as a new stage of government restrictions was announced to reduce the spread of COVID-19, we reviewed the impact on the boarders and boarding staff, as a worst case scenario would see the temporary closure of Marilyn Rowe House. We found the solution in a temporary alternative residence at Quest Southbank.

Conveniently, Quest Southbank is a minute’s walk from the School, removing the need to use public transport. The independent living spaces meant that the impact on our boarders would be minimal in the event that a student or staff member needed to quarantine, and Quest Southbank’s stringent COVID-19 hygiene and cleaning, and security provided peace of mind for our interstate boarding families and boarding staff.

The entire School community is grateful to Quest Southbank for its support in 2020, and particularly thanks its Director, Dave Walton.



Our Activities

The Australian Ballet School's eight-level program combines studio dance training and academic classroom studies, led by expert teachers and supported by health and wellbeing professionals. In 2020, our education delivery was severely disrupted by COVID-19, with reduced student access to onsite training and classes modified for remote learning for most of the year.

After School Programme (Levels 1-3)

The School conducts after-school-hours vocational training for students studying Levels 1, 2 and 3, at approximately 10-13 years of age. Access to the After School Programme is by audition. Teachers give individual attention and nurture students to establish strong foundations of technique upon which the following years of training develop. The School's facilities are located in the Primrose Potter Australian Ballet Centre in Southbank, Melbourne, in the same building as The Australian Ballet. Classes are conducted in the late afternoon to early evening on weekdays and during the day on Saturdays. Class sizes are small, and the number of classes per week varies for each level.

Interstate, Intrastate and International Training Programme (Levels 1-3)

Entry is by audition. All ITP students continue to attend ballet classes with their regular dance teachers, studying their syllabus of choice. In addition to these local ballet arrangements, they have to access The Australian Ballet School's training through the following opportunities:

1. Personal Visits/Participation in the Melbourne-based Programme. ITP students can access the Melbourne-based programme as often as personal circumstances allow. Some students may attend for three consecutive days; others may visit once per month or for two consecutive weeks. Classes are usually held after academic hours, for 2-3 hours.
2. Specialised Coaching Classes, conducted in most Australian capital cities once a year delivered exclusively for ITP students.
3. Intensive Training Sessions, delivered annually over four days at The Australian Ballet School in Melbourne during a Victorian school holiday break.

Full Time Programme (Levels 4-8)

Level 4 is the first year of full-time training at The Australian Ballet School. Training is offered alongside Academic Year 8 or 9 at the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School (VCASS). Students in Level 4 are expected to achieve well in their academic studies as well as consolidate and expand their technical and artistic dance skills.

The School is a NVR Registered Training Organisation (provider code 3132, CRICOS code 00253A) offering the following accredited courses:

Diploma of Dance (Elite Performance) CUA50113

**Duration:** 2 years (Levels 5 and 6)  
**Aims:** To encourage the special qualities of Australian dancers including youthful freshness, expressiveness, athleticism, musicality and strong technique.

Our Activities

Advanced Diploma of Dance (Elite Performance) CUA60113

**Duration:** 1 year (Level 7)  
**Aims:** To produce graduates of the highest calibre who are capable of integrating effortlessly into The Australian Ballet and top professional dance companies in Australia and around the world.

Graduate Diploma of Classical Ballet 10296NAT

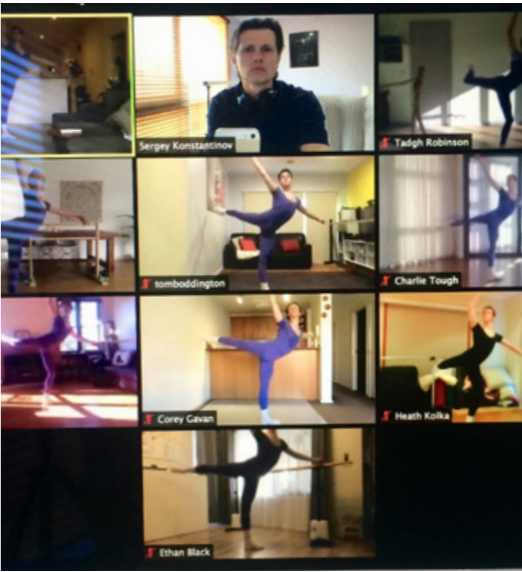
**Duration:** 1 year (Level 8)  
**Aims:** To prepare students for the dance profession at a virtuoso level by refining their dance technique and developing their professional skills through career development activities and performances.

Relationship between ABS training level, programme, academic year and student age

ABS Level	ABS Training Programme	Victorian Academic Year	Approximate Age
Level 1	After School Programme/ITP	Years 5-6	10-11
Level 2	After School Programme/ITP	Year 7	11-12
Level 3	After School Programme/ITP	Year 8	12-13
Level 4	Full Time	Year 9	13-14
Level 5	Full Time	Year 10	14-15
Level 6	Full Time	Year 11	15-16
Level 7	Full Time	Year 12	16-17
Level 8	Full Time	Year N/A	17-19



Classical Teacher Sergey Konstantinov teaching from home.



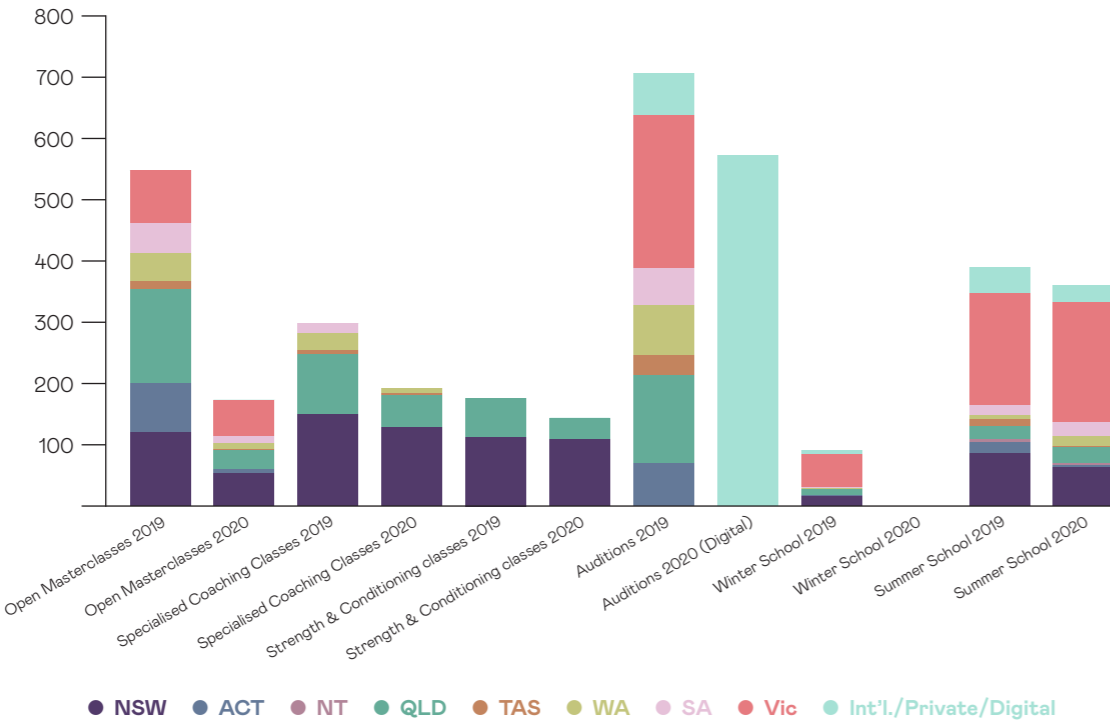
National Audition Tour

The School's annual National Audition Tour was unable to proceed in our capital cities and major regional areas due to COVID-19 travel and border restrictions. We bolstered our digital audition process to enable young aspiring dancers to compete for an invitation to join the School's world-class programmes. Subsequently, 563 young dancers auditioned for a place in the School's 2021 programmes.

Community Access

For almost 40 years, the School's Community Access programme has offered short training opportunities for the wider dance community. These sessions are accessible and there is no audition to participate. Open Masterclasses (including audition classes), Summer School and Winter School offer workshops with specialist teachers. Summer School was successfully delivered, however Winter School, our biannual Scholarship Awards and the majority of scheduled Open Masterclasses were unable to be offered in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

2019/ 2020 Community Access Short Courses and Audition Participants



Summer School 2020. Photo by Lynette Wills.

Teacher Training

The Australian Ballet School delivers world class accredited teacher training: the Graduate Diploma of Elite Dance Instruction.

The Graduate Diploma provides a training pathway for elite professional dancers who may wish to move into a vocational teaching role, in particular dancers from The Australian Ballet. Other leading training organisations and vocational dance schools have expressed strong interest in employing teachers who have been trained in the highly-regarded teaching methodology created on the curriculum delivered by The Australian Ballet School.

The training course is delivered over two years of full-time study, however in most cases is taken in part-time mode. The customised course structure includes a strong focus on the methodology of vocational dance training based on The Australian Ballet School System of Training with written support materials, on-the-job observation and supervised teaching practice, delivered by specialist staff. This is enhanced through the study of pedagogy, music, anatomy, nutrition and psychology. The majority of the course is delivered face-to-face, on a one-to-one mentoring basis and is self-paced with flexible entry points. The approach to teaching and learning of the theoretical components is informed by constructivist and adult theories of learning and incorporates a range of customised learning opportunities to take individual needs, strengths and interests into account. Assessment is continuously integrated with learning to support participants' capacity to self-monitor, think critically and develop independent, lifelong learning skills.



Students of the School and artists of The Australian Ballet perform *Murmuring*. Photo by Lynette Wills.

## Our Achievements

### Guest Artists

As part of its commitment to providing the best possible training in a stimulating educational environment, The Australian Ballet School seeks to expose its students to a broad range of teachers and teaching expertise. The School's programme is enhanced by welcoming guest teachers from other renowned institutions, both in Australia and overseas. Performances delight audiences whilst providing students with invaluable experience.

Choreographers/repetiteurs who worked with the School in 2020 included:

- Areti Boyaci, Spanish Program
- Stephen Baynes, *White Nights*, End of Year (filmed) Performance
- Christine Howard, *Character Excerpts*, End of Year (filmed) Performance
- Stephen Baynes, *White Nights*, End of Year (filmed) Performance\*\* this is noted above
- Simon Dow, *A Little Chaos*, End of Year (filmed) Performance
- Margaret Wilson, *Untitled (the art of possible)*, End of Year (filmed) Performance
- Irina Konstantinova and Christine Vavladellis, *Pas de Trois*, End of Year (filmed) Performance

### Events and Performances

#### Prix de Lausanne

Created in 1973, the famous Prix de Lausanne is an international ballet competition for young dancers aged 15-18 years old. Its goal is to discover, promote and support the finest talents around the world. In 2020, 377 candidates applied for the competition across 44 countries and only 84 young ballet dancers were selected to participate.

Our Level 8 student Sophie Beaty was one of the few selected. Sophie's hard work and dedication saw her advance to the Finals of this competition that famously attracts some of the most outstanding young ballet dancers worldwide.

In February, Sophie travelled to Montreaux in Switzerland, accompanied by her mother, Director of The Australian Ballet School Lisa Pavane and Artistic Teacher Lynette Wills. Performing a Classical variation titled The Awakening of Flora, Sophie was the only Australian female to make it to the Finals stage in 2020—an incredible achievement. The Australian Ballet School was thrilled to prepare and support Sophie throughout her amazing journey. It was a chance to learn, perform on stage and gain critical feedback from leaders in the international ballet community. More than that, Sophie was able to demonstrate her artistry and technique in front of an international audience, and a jury of world-renowned dance personalities.

We congratulate Sophie on her Prix de Lausanne journey and thank all staff from The Australian Ballet School who supported her in the process. We also thank Bloch and Leigh Johns OAM for their contribution.



Sophie Beaty at the Prix de Lausanne.

### Spanish Presentation

In March, Areti Boyaci delivered Spanish technique classes in an intensive two-week study block, culminating in a Spanish examination in February. Students presented a passionate studio performance for staff of the School and The Australian Ballet.

### COVID-19

From late March, COVID-19 and associated government restrictions disrupted student access to onsite training and resulted in the venue closures and cancellation of all events and performance opportunities in the School's 2020 calendar. Despite this, two creative innovations provided exciting opportunities for students to perform to camera at the end of the year.

### Murmuring

During Melbourne's lengthy lockdown, Level 8 students of The Australian Ballet School collaborated with artists of The Australian Ballet on a unique choreographic piece called *Murmuring* which was produced by Project Starling and choreographed by Mason Lovegrove and Serena Graham, both artists of The Australian Ballet and esteemed alumni of the School.

Dancers learned and rehearsed *Murmuring* at home, in isolation and via Zoom. When lockdown restrictions lifted, 30 dancers from the company and The Australian Ballet School brought this new choreography to life on Princes Pier in Port Melbourne. The project premiered in a free public screening at Federation Square in Melbourne in January 2021.

The project facilitated the unification of dancers throughout Melbourne's COVID-19 lockdown and created a strong mentorship opportunity through virtual rehearsals.

### End of Year Filmed Performance – 2020 Showcase

The School was delighted to be able to provide students the opportunity to perform in December 2020, in the studios of The Australian Ballet, in costume and under lights. A professional film crew captured the performances and an exciting, short trailer was shared with students and their families before Christmas.



2020 Showcase was mostly devised and rehearsed and remotely before it was filmed in December. Photo by Lynette Wills.

### Collaborations and Opportunities

#### Student Exchange Programme

The Australian Ballet School has developed cultural exchange programmes for students with several overseas schools. In January 2020, four of our Level 8 students participated in a three-week exchange with Canada's National Ballet School, experiencing training in Toronto, meeting new friends, enjoying the freezing temperatures, as well as living at the student residence of Canada's National Ballet School.



George Thomson, Rab Flanigan, Emma Dowling and Pamela Barnes in Canada.



Lilla Harvey with Level 7 and 8 students in the 2020 Showcase film. Photo by Lynette Wills.

## Our Achievements

### World Ballet School Day

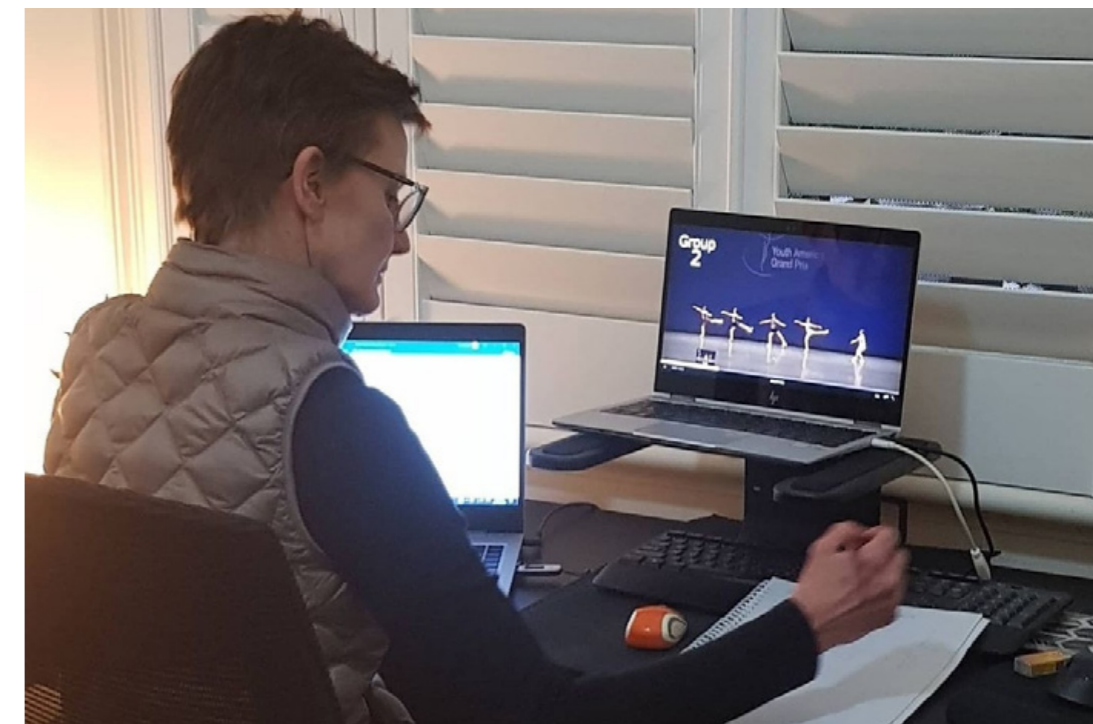
As a contributing member to the inaugural World Ballet School Day on 7 July, The Australian Ballet School collaborated with other leading ballet schools worldwide: The Royal Ballet School, Royal Danish Ballet School, Dutch National Ballet Academy, English National Ballet School, San Francisco Ballet School, Boston Ballet School, New Zealand School of Dance, Palucca University of Dance Dresden and Canada's National Ballet School.

World Ballet School Day connects the next generation of young professional dance artists with young people from around the world. Created by students for students, this inaugural event provided a platform for young artists in training to share a message of solidarity through the language of dance and ballet. It also highlights the resilience, strength, dedication, talent, intellect and passion of students training at professional ballet and dance schools, showcasing how their journeys as professional artists begin and why—now more than ever—ballet, dance and art matter so much. Through a digital stream, viewers looked behind the scenes at some of the world's leading schools to find out what it means to train at a professional level with talks, rehearsal and performance footage filmed both before and during lockdown. Vice Captain, Emily McCracken, presented The Australian Ballet School's segment.

In a year that was so isolating, World Ballet School Day was an innovative way to collaborate with other dance schools internationally, and virtually connect with audiences in the global dance community.

### Youth America Grand Prix (YAGP)

Dancers in YAGP scholarship events compete for scholarship and placement opportunities in leading dance schools worldwide, including The Australian Ballet School. Unlike previous years, when Lisa Pavane would travel overseas to adjudicate, Lisa completed all viewing and scoring from her home in Melbourne in 2020.



Lisa Pavane working from home.

Graduation 2020

The 2020 Graduation Ceremony was postponed until May 2021, once it was possible for all necessary training and assessments to be completed. These achievements are a testament to the commitment of both our students and staff during an unprecedented year of interruptions.

Graduate Diploma of Elite Dance Instruction (10689NAT)

Awarded on successful completion of all units of competency and is generally completed part-time over a period of 2 to 3 years.

2020 Graduate:

Robert Mills

Diploma of Dance Elite Performance (CUA50113)

Awarded on successful completion of all units of competency delivered across Level 5 and 6.

2020 Recipients:

Amber Alston	Annabelle McCoy
Sophie Burke	Cormac McDonald
Bella Collishaw	James McDonell
Charles Dashwood	Scarlet O’Rielley
Emilie Duff	Eugene Pang
Emmanuelle Fairweather	Amy Ronnfeldt
William Humphries	Indiana Scott
Allegra Keneally	Matthew Solovieff
Agnes Mayrani	Sophie Wormald

Advanced Diploma of Dance Elite Performance (CUA60113)

Awarded on successful completion of units of competencies studied in Level 7.

2020 Recipients:

Mio Bayly	My Le
Harrison Bradley	Emily Masters
Nathan Claridge	Samara Merrick
Philippa Crawley	Anna Stewart
Oliver Evans	Jessica Stratton-Smith
Abbey Hansen	Flynn Stelfox
Oliver Hoddinott	Rhiannon Tringas
Nicholas Johnson	Georgia Waite
Layla Kluss	Helena Williams
Bryce Latham	

Graduate Diploma of Classical Ballet (10296NAT)

Awarded on successful completion of units of competencies studied in Level 8.

Luca Armstrong	Matthew Maxwell
Pamela Barnes	Emily McCracken
Sophie Beaty	Sophie McDonald
Stephanie Blann	Luke Tabbernal
Jemma Braun	George Thomson
Emma Dowling	Hannah Sergi
Hugo Dumapit	Ella Vivian-Kay
Rab Flanigan	Annabelle Watt
Bonnie Grice	Maidie Widmer
Lilla Harvey	Izaak Westhead
Saya Ikeda	



Photo caption: Graduation Ceremony, Level 8 Class of 2020.

Awards 2020

Special Awards kindly supported by **BLOCH**

Berezowsky-Howard Award For Excellence in Character Dance, awarded to:

Sophie Burke	William Humphries
Annabelle McCoy	Matthew Solovieff
Amy Ronnfeldt	

Graeme Murphy AO Award For Excellence in Contemporary Dance:

Flynn Stelfox	Samara Merrick
Bryce Latham	Anna Stewart
Mio Bayley	Charlotte Stratton-Smith
My Le	

Areti Boyaci Award For Excellence in Spanish Dance:

Flynn Stelfox	Charlotte Stratton-Smith
Mio Bayly	

Sandra Ball Award for Excellence in Anatomy Studies (a new Award established in recognition of the School’s outgoing General Manager’s long service to the organisation):

Annabelle McCoy

Graduate Appointments

The Class of 2020 Level 8 students showed exceptional resilience, commitment, and determination to overcome isolation and manage remote learning due to the pandemic. After a year of unimaginable challenges, we are incredibly proud that the following 2020 Graduate students were offered professional contracts:

- Annabelle Watt: The Australian Ballet
- Lilla Harvey: The Australian Ballet
- Maidie Widmer: The Australian Ballet
- George Thomson: The Royal New Zealand Ballet
- Jemma Braun: Victorian State Ballet
- Izaak Westhead: West Australian Ballet
- Rab Flanigan: West Australian Ballet
- Saya Ikeda: National Ballet of Japan

Secondments to cover ‘The Kingdom of the Shades’ from *La Bayadere* for The Australian Ballet’s Summertime at the Ballet season (March 2021) were offered to Pamela Barnes, Sophie Beaty, Stephanie Blann, Hannah Sergi, and Maidie Widmer.

Post Graduate Year student Luke Tabbernal also completed a secondment with the Sydney Dance Company.



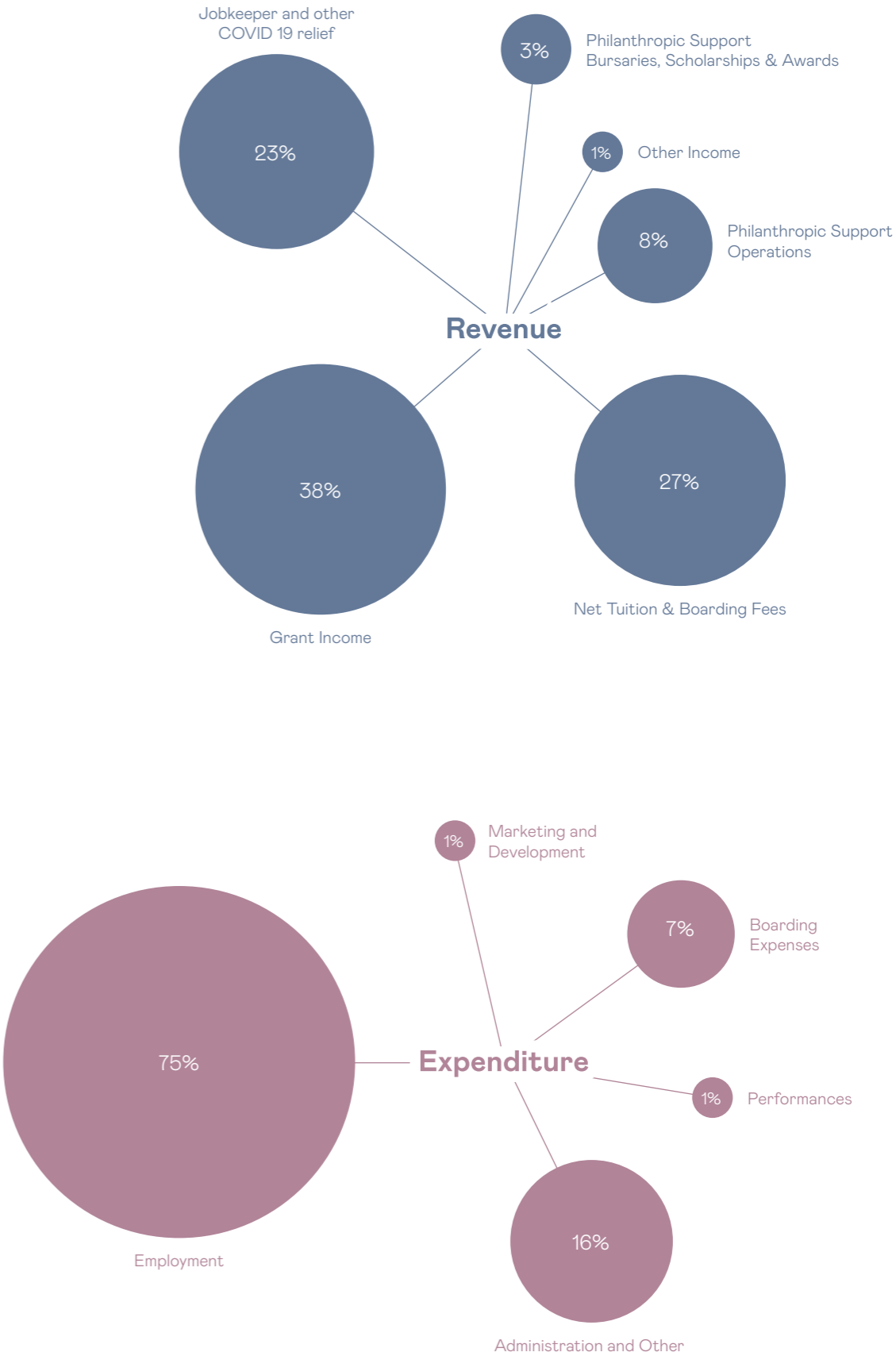
Financial Report Summary

School Income Statement  
For the year ended 31 December 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
<b>Revenue</b>		
Grant Income	1,995,287	1,990,782
Tuition & Boarding Fees	1,584,069	2,686,884
Less Bursaries and Scholarships awarded	(161,088)	(250,121)
Student performances	-	186,191
Philanthropic Support Bursaries & Scholarships & Awards	171,371	327,130
Philanthropic Support Operations	429,327	438,764
Jobkeeper and other COVID relief	1,246,850	-
Other Income	49,583	71,581
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>5,315,399</b>	<b>5,451,211</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Employment Costs	3,754,162	3,809,104
Boarding Expenses	337,870	438,295
Performances	42,521	421,155
Awards and other student support	10,283	77,009
Marketing and Development	37,432	104,834
Administration and Other	797,757	931,766
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>4,980,025</b>	<b>5,782,162</b>
<b>Surplus/(deficit) on School operating activities</b>	<b>335,374</b>	<b>(330,951)</b>

[Click here to view a full version of The Australian Ballet School's 2020 Financials.](#)

Financial Report  
Summary



**Statements of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income**  
For the year ended 31 December 2020

	Consolidated Group	
	2020	2019
	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>		
Grant Income	1,995,287	1,990,782
Fee Income	1,219,047	1,875,008
Student performances	-	186,191
Philanthropic Support - Operational	600,698	765,894
Interest & Investment Income	9,940	37,178
Boarding Income	203,935	561,755
Other Income including JobKeeper & other COVID relief	1,286,492	34,403
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>5,315,399</b>	<b>5,451,211</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Employment & personal service providers	3,754,162	3,809,104
Student performances	42,521	421,155
General Marketing & Development	37,432	104,834
Other specific support & Awards	10,283	77,009
Administration	385,020	313,806
Boarding Expenses	337,870	438,295
Depreciation	238,762	306,136
Other	173,975	311,824
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>4,980,025</b>	<b>5,782,162</b>
<b>Surplus/(deficit) on School operating activities</b>	<b>335,374</b>	<b>(330,951)</b>
Restricted support and earnings transferred to Scholarship/specific reserves		
Philanthropic Support Scholarship	2,457,800	5,000
Philanthropic Support Capital	25	14,475
Net Interest & Investment Income on restricted funds	14,183	61,962
Net Gains on financial investments held at FVTPL	10,187	-
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>	<b>2,817,569</b>	<b>(249,514)</b>

**Statements of Financial Position**  
For the year ended 31 December 2020

	Consolidated Group	
	2020	2019
	\$	\$
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash & cash equivalents	8,883,245	7,769,393
Trade & other receivables	484,507	342,636
Other financial assets	293,494	250,000
Prepayments	107,549	106,829
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>9,768,795</b>	<b>8,468,858</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>		
Other financial assets	1,742,317	-
Land, buildings, property, plant & equipment	7,507,484	7,545,468
Right of use asset	136,399	211,335
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	<b>9,386,200</b>	<b>7,756,804</b>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>19,154,994</b>	<b>16,225,662</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	522,264	484,630
Contract liabilities/Deferred income	505,788	340,854
Lease Liability	79,630	75,744
Provisions	588,631	680,974
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>1,696,313</b>	<b>1,582,203</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>		
Contract liabilities/Deferred income	75,000	-
Lease liability	61,546	139,271
Provisions	47,627	47,248
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>184,173</b>	<b>186,519</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>1,880,485</b>	<b>1,768,722</b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b>17,274,509</b>	<b>14,456,940</b>
<b>Equity</b>		
Retained Earnings	9,782,309	9,091,095
Scholarship/specific reserve	7,492,200	5,365,845
<b>Total equity</b>	<b>17,274,509</b>	<b>14,456,940</b>

Our Supporters & Partners

We sincerely thank every individual who has provided financial and in-kind support to The Australian Ballet School. All philanthropic support, at every level, is valued.

The School also gratefully acknowledges our government and corporate partners for their commitment in 2020:

Government Partner



Major Partners



Friends



Corporate Partners



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NATIONALLY RECOGNISED  
TRAINING

The Australian Ballet School is a registered provider of vocational education training for Levels 5–8  
NVR RTO No: 3132 CRICOS Code: 00253A