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To Whom It May Concern
AUSTRALIA COUNCIL Assessment Panel

Dear Sir/ Madam

RE: Letter of Support for Regional Tour of "The House That Dan Built" to Gunnedah, NSW

I am writing with the privileged opportunity to offer a letter in support of a regional tour of workshops and performances from "The House that Dan Built" that would contribute to the enhancement of the musical, literacy, and emotional resilience skills and development for the female children, adolescents and young adults of Gunnedah, New South Wales.

I work as a doctor in a General Practice clinic in Gunnedah. My work has given me an insight into examples of some of the cosmopolitan troubles the young women of this town, and their elders face. Projects run by the company "The House that Dan Built" offers a structure and forum that target key areas of the development of young people to allow them to become empowered and contributing citizens of Australia, ultimately in preparation for education of the next generation. Workshops and performances provided by the Toy Choir, AKIN, and The long table target areas that include: literacy, numeracy (music is in part applied maths after all), communication (via group work and composition skills), emotional intelligence (the structure of the projects stem from key theories of music therapy and psychology, for example the girls are often asked to compose a novel text and music in response to a current social issue or theme usually with the goal of exploring and resolving internal or community struggle) and community strength through positive supported relationship development.

The Arts provide a medium that allows such education to be accessible in an age appropriate and culturally safe manner. All of the modern, and sometimes, age-old struggles faced by the community that enlist me as their doctor for advice, support often face heart sinking problems and cries for help of social inclusion and yearnings for supported development of the aforementioned skills. I see daily examples in my clinic of children and adolescents who's parents and grandparents have not had the privilege of completing their secondary education. Part of closing the gap in the sphere of health needs to be done outside of the clinic room. The forum provided by the well-researched platform within "The House that Dan Built" allows young women to explore some of these intergenerational experiences including development of language skills to express emotion. These young women will in turn help break the cycle of domestic violence by increasing their confidence in the experience of what their own emotion feels like, confidence in expressing this emotion, and confidence in advocating for their own advancement because they have a greater understanding of the role of their emotions to guide positive decisions.

My informal consultation with the community has received unanimous support for a venture as discussed. I have recently spoken with the Gunnedah Conservatorium, who reported they would support the program. Members of the community often talk about the reduced opportunity for cultural extracurricular activities that do not involve sport. I am also concerned that many of the rising young stars of Gunnedah of limited financial, geographical and social means are not aware of their tertiary education aptitude, suitability and available opportunities beyond Gunnedah. Health and council stakeholders continually encourage opportunities to promote development of our growing agricultural, industrial and mining community. Reduced educational and health resource availability within the region are a known barrier to its advancement. There are two high school options available within Gunnedah being one state and one catholic high school, which provide limited pastoral care, and in my experience is inadequate to respond to frequent issues of bullying and isolation. A recurring program facilitated by The House that Dan Built would provide an age appropriate public mental health promotion program.

I intend on being an active hand in the lead up and delivery of this program in Gunnedah having been very impressed with the work I have already witnessed. As an active member of the community and financial supporter of this project I hope that I can assist with giving this experience to my community and develop new leaders for this sacred land that has developed leaders of Australia's past.

Amanda Kelly