



**Peer Assessment Panel
Community Arts and Cultural Development**

Australia Council for the Arts
PO Box 788
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

Monday February 3, 2020

To whom it may concern,

Re: The House that Dan Built

It gives me great pleasure to write in support of The House that Dan Built's application for Australia Council funding to upscale the production *Tender Young Creatures* from an intimate choral work to a major community event to be presented at Brisbane Festival 2020.

I was introduced to Danielle O'Keefe's work by colleagues familiar with her company, The House that Dan Built, recommending her as an artist to watch. I am interested and supportive of Danielle's process and aesthetic: engaging young women in choral-based devised performance that challenges traditional narratives, using 'youth theatre' processes to create highly disciplined, complex performances.

Brisbane Festival and Imagineers Festivals will partner with The House that Dan Built to co-present the performance installation *Tender Young Creatures*. Originally devised and staged with an ensemble of twelve performers aged between thirteen and eighteen years, the production will be expanded for the QLD presentation to incorporate 100 young women. Six of the original cast from Sydney will be engaged as workshop leaders to rehearse 94 young women from South East Queensland into the roles and vocal parts that make up this extraordinary work.

Funding from the Australia council will enable the creative development required to re-imagine *Tender Young Creatures* from an intimate work for an enclosed space to a major outdoor community event. Brisbane Festival's fees contribute to artists wages to deliver workshops, auditions, rehearsals required to market and stage this site-specific installation, as well as performances. We believe this will be a significant new Australian work with the potential to be exported to festivals nationally and internationally.

I sincerely encourage you to support this beautiful work that showcases the voices and inner monologues of your young women and girls.

Sincerely,

Louise Bezzina
Artistic Director
Major Brisbane Festivals

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Brisbane Festival's vision for reconciliation and healing is to meaningfully engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and communities in ways that acknowledge shared histories and look to the future, and embrace, grow respect for and celebrate the culture of our first nation's peoples.



Brisbane Festival is an initiative of the Queensland Government and Brisbane City Council



Imagine the possibilities...

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3 February 2020

Peer Assessment Panel - Community Arts and Cultural Development

Australia Council for the Arts
PO Box 788
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

Dear Peers

Re: The House that Dan Built - South East Queensland Tender Young Creatures Project.

The *Imagineers Festival* is proud to support *The House That Dan Built's* production and community engagement with *Tender Young Creatures*. We are proud to be hosting this work and process as part of the *Imagineers Festival* and *Brisbane Festival* in September 2020.

Imagineers is an innovative community engagement festival with creativity at its heart. It is a celebration of culture in the community. Leaving the here and now behind, prepare to be transported to various other worlds via the mediums of art, music, performance and sensory expression. We invite participants on this special day to experience, participate, adventure, celebrate and connect, to country, to story, to our children, to our community and to our imaginations.

The festival is a one day event transitioning from day into night and is held every two years in the stunning, enchanted forest of *Montessori International College* (MIC) on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland. For the community, the *Imagineers Festival* provides a safe space for children and adults to engage with art and creativity.

The House that Dan Built collaborates with community groups to create artistic outcomes that platform ideas and skills of community groups. *Tender Young Creatures* will provide an opportunity for local South East Queensland teenage girls to be able to work and learn from Danielle O'Keefe and her team.

January 10th, 2020.

To Whom It May Concern
Australia Council Arts Assessment Panel
Sydney, NSW

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 that would contribute to the enhancement of their 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, having moved with my young family from Brisbane in late 2017. One of my first impressions of this small town of approximately 10,000 was its interest in The Arts, where it is proud and thankful to its rich founding heritage in the written and spoken word thanks to Dorothea Mackellar, who spent time living in the region. The other impression is of its proud indigenous heritage, being the home to Gumbo Gunnerah, a legendary aboriginal elder and chief. We quickly felt welcomed in this town by comparison to many other rural, regional and metropolitan towns and cities in Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia that myself and my husband have lived in over the past (near) 20 years. Two legends and icons in Australia's culture that have stood the test of time to continue to provide insight and inspiration to the human condition.

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 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. As you know, it is the regimen of the practice of music and drama which allows a freedom of mind to allow fluidity of ideas and experimentation. That is, observers and participants have an expectation for these two pillars to co-exist and intertwine, allowing an evolution and resolution of ideas that are contained within the confines of a workshop or its performance.

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. For example, I imagine sometimes what it would be like to be a part of the stolen generation and receive my first wage at my current age and experience because of my cultural identity, despite working from the age of 16, would my children have the same skills if I was restricted from secondary, tertiary and post graduate education? 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.

I hope that I can give this experience to my community and develop new leaders for this sacred land that has developed leaders of Australia's past.

with kind regards
Amanda Kelly

To peer assessors of the Australia Council,

Hello, my name is Emily Pincock and I am 14 years old. Over the last few years that I've worked with The House and have been given so many opportunities, but unlike many other things in life they weren't handed to me. That is something I believe is a big part of being a cultural citizen as a young person. Through these opportunities I've expanded my knowledge and abilities as a performer and citizen. This has made me be able to hold a conversation with peers and adults and having their respect. If I do a performance, I get real feedback from respected performers and it won't be sugar coated, this makes us want to push towards excellence and get the best result of a performance we can.

As well as feedback and critiquing, the training we went through strengthened us as performers by giving us a chance to have power wherever we go and whatever we do. I am 14 and an artist and AKIN workshop facilitator with The House. I was 9 when I first started to create my own work, and at 12 I helped run a room with 20 girls in Berrigan showing them how to do it too. My artistic practice has given me this ability and I think that the arts has the ability to do this to any child, making us all participating social citizens. With our story telling and song writing we work on the principal "if she can, I can."

This is really helpful when making short songs. I have been able to write 2 compositions for long table videos and hope this year to be able to come and interview like the older girls. I have had the opportunity to travel to Japan as part of the Howling Girls ensemble and am really excited to be a team leader for Tender Young Creatures in 2020. After all the opportunities I have received from the House it feels so great to be able to pay it forward to a whole new group of girls.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily". The letters are cursive and connected, with a small flourish at the end.

Emily Pincock

LETTER OF SUPPORT – Long Table

To whom it may Concern,

I'm writing with regards to The House that Dan Built's application for project funding to support the development and presentation of 'the Long Table.' Penrith Performing & Visual Arts, through its theatre making program, Q Theatre, is proud to work alongside The House that Dan Built as a leading new arts company tackling innovative art form development as well as considered community engagement. Western Sydney has a rich diversity of contemporary theatre practice and a wealth of audiences that are currently under serviced. The House that Dan Built's project 'the Long Table' would expand our ability to work with our communities and deepen the trust we're actively building between audiences and artists. In order to deliver this project, Q Theatre can commit to the in-kind contributions of Venue Space across October 2020 at a value of \$12,000 and 25 hours of producing support at a value of \$1,250.

Q Theatre has evolved from the creative lineage of the Q Theatre Company and its more than fifty years of experience presenting and producing theatre. In its current form, Q Theatre seeks to bring leading theatre makers from across Australia to Western Sydney and facilitate collaborations with local, emerging and established talent. We champion processes that are centred and responsive to artistic leadership and the diverse tastes, imaginations and expectations of our audiences. The House that Dan Built and Q Theatre have already begun a dialogue between companies about how we can support one another to achieve shared objectives. I'm looking forward to continuing to strengthen this partnership and exploring how Q Theatre can continue to play a role in elevating the quality of work occurring in Western Sydney to work that is recognised as nationally and internationally significant. We see 'the Long Table' as a step in this direction.

If you have any questions regarding the details of the collaborations referenced here or this application, please feel free to give me a call or send me an email.

Yours sincerely,



Nick Atkins
Director, New Work
Penrith Performing & Visual Arts
Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre | Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest
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