



WHY DANCE?

Some facts and figures showing the popularity of dance in New Zealand

DANZ estimates that more than 630,000 New Zealanders of all backgrounds, abilities and ages dance regularly, which is far more than play rugby and netball combined.¹

Four in every five or 79% of New Zealanders agree that the arts 'help define who we are'. 70% of the population agree that the arts should receive public funding, that local councils should support the arts and that the arts contribute to the economy.²

Dance has enormous potential to give to recreation and education programmes. By working across the diversity of dance in New Zealand we can achieve some of our health, community and audience development targets.

ADULTS

2008 SPARC research³ showed 549,112 or 16.8% of New Zealand adults (aged 16 years and over) regularly participate in dance. Dance is the 8th most popular physical activity for New Zealanders. For women, dance ranks fifth, which is higher than cycling, jogging/running and pilates/yoga, with 22.6% of New Zealand women dancing.

Dance is a key component of Māori, Pacific Island and migrant cultures, where it expresses core cultural values and identity. In the SPARC research dance is ranked the 6th most popular activity with Māori and Asian, 5th with Pacific Island, 8th with NZ European and 7th with Others, who are largely Middle-Eastern, Latin American and African ethnicities.

There are over 14 Tertiary Institutions in New Zealand offering 27 dance courses including four dance degrees.⁴ These degrees have different foci and so offer variety in dance career opportunity – teaching in all sectors (professional, education, recreation), diverse genre from cultural to international dance and performance styles, performing, community dance, dance research, dance health, choreography and production.

Local dance events in a particular genre attract good attendance; in Auckland 300 women attended a Middle Eastern dancing event held by one belly dance school and 400 went to a Tango competition and workshop weekend. There are currently over 500 dance groups in Christchurch. Since *Dancing with the Stars* on TV, some beginner adult classes have reached as high as 70 participants on the first night with a much closer ratio of male and female (5:3 where it was 7:2).

CHILDREN

Dance is also highly popular with children. There are in excess of 80,000 young people learning dance in dance studios across the country.⁵ Dance is the fastest growing subject in senior secondary schools and NZQA talks about there having been an 'explosion' of dance at NCEA level.

¹ 209,769 adults play netball (SPARC research), Netball NZ have 138,510 registered players at all levels (Netball NZ Annual Report 2008). NZ Rugby had 140,279 registered amateur and professional players in 2008.

² New Zealanders and the Arts: Attitudes, Attendance and participation in 2008 (Published by Creative New Zealand April 2009). <http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/Portals/0/publications/NZers-and-the-arts-2008.pdf>

³ SPARC 2007/08 Active New Zealand Survey. DANZ worked with SPARC to include dance in the research and also advised in the questions in relation to dance.

⁴ DANZ website http://www.danz.org.nz/tertiary_courses.php and the National Qualifications Register.

⁵ Research by *New Zealand Dancer* 2005

Dance is a culturally embedded learning means for Māori and Pacific Island cultures. Māori cultural groups are found in each school and community in New Zealand. Dance clubs have been set up by students in 80% of New Zealand schools, in particular for Hip Hop and cultural dance. It is proving an excellent motivator for boys who respond well to physical activity. These youth initiatives show that dance is a popular physical activity for young New Zealanders.

Statistics released in 2009 by Creative New Zealand⁶ show 37% of 10-14 year olds have participated in a dance performance at least once in the past 12 months; 35% of 10-14 year olds said they like to participate in their own time in dancing, singing or performing; 13% of 10 – 14 year olds have entered a dance performance into a competition and another 11% have competed in Kapa Haka.

Dance was introduced to the school arts curriculum in 2001 and in 2007 dance was accepted as an NCEA University Entrance Subject. In 2008, 121 schools submitted materials for moderation and 1000 students were doing NCEA Level 1 externals. This is a 20% increase on 2007 figures. There were approximately 2,263 entries for external dance standards in 2008. 9,376 entries were submitted internally with a high achievement rate. Dance is also in demand in the PE Curriculum.

Kinaesthetic learning, which dance strongly develops, is proving very effective with attention deficit syndrome students and low achievers. It provides motivation and appropriate challenge and enjoyment.

DANCE EVENTS

Te Matatini National Kapa Haka Competition has seen steady growth in participants & audience since it began in 1972. In 2009 this four day event had 1440 performers watched by an audience of 51,000.

Pacific dance events and cultural groups have huge participation and audience following. The Pasifika Festival in Auckland began in 1993 and initially was attended by 30,000 people. Now over 210,000 New Zealanders and hundreds of performers from all over the Pacific attend this one day festival. In 2009 the Polyfest Secondary Schools Māori and Pacific Islands Cultural Festival had 9,000 performers and 90,000+ in the audience. It involved 59 schools and 200 groups. This is the largest dance festival in the world.

Dance festivals in New Zealand have gained in popularity & awareness. In 2008 *The Body* festival (of dance and physical theatre) in Christchurch opened with 2,000 people dancing in Cathedral Square as part of a world record attempt at the largest synchronised dance routine. The 2008 festival totalled 8,702 audience, 9,578 public participants, 678 performers plus other crew and volunteers, bringing the total to 19,093 involved.

Tempo, Auckland's festival of dance, had 500 dancers and an audience of 9,500 in 2008. The *Dance your Socks Off* festival in Wellington in 2008 had 20,000 participants and audience. The festival's Feet with Heat *DANCExtravaganza* set a new record with a total audience of 1,163 at The Michael Fowler Centre in Wellington.

In 2007 *Maui The Show* had over 20 performances including schools shows for 14,500 school students. The Royal New Zealand Ballet's *Tutus on Tour 2007* went to 48 centres in New Zealand, performed for an audience of 28,300 and had 24 sold out shows.

Dancing with the Stars on television has been extremely popular with the New Zealand public. The 2005 season, which was the highest rated timeslot programme, averaged 730,000 people per episode, while season two had an average of 804,000 and 1.2 million tuned into the season finale. The fifth season in 2009 started with 800,000 viewers, the highest of all previous season debuts.⁷

⁶ New Zealanders and the Arts: Attitudes, Attendance and participation in 2008
<http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/Portals/0/publications/NZers-and-the-arts-2008.pdf>

⁷ Wikipedia, Dancing with the Stars NZ

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Dance has positive influences on the wellbeing of individuals, as shown in international research. After eight weeks of regular dancing, improvements are seen in cardiovascular function and improved body composition.⁸ Dancing at a moderate intensity can reduce blood pressure among women.⁹

The UK and Holland include dance in their programmes to combat physical inactivity. Pilot projects demonstrated that these interventions were cost effective.

Dance is a very satisfying way of working for people with disabilities. Everyone can work to their own capabilities in dance. The work of *Touch Compass Dance Company* in Auckland and *Jolt* in Christchurch exemplifies this in New Zealand.

Dance is a great activity for older adults as it enables social and physical contact as well as activity and fun, and works against loneliness and depression.

Compared to other activities dance is relatively low cost to undertake, with many styles requiring no special equipment or clothing.

When people dance they often forget that they are exercising because they are caught up in other things like music, concentrating and having fun. Time passes and they find they have been active for an hour. They also learn skills they can take elsewhere e.g. dance at home or socially. They are encouraged to express themselves through dance.

ADVOCATE FOR DANCE – MANY VOICES MAKE CHANGE

It is important for those involved in dance to interact widely in their local communities. Councils across New Zealand ask for submissions towards their long term plans (LTCCP). Some run public forums for people to have their say. This is the ideal time to explain local dance needs e.g. rehearsal or workshop space in local community centres, that dance should be included within local council recreation opportunities, that dance in festivals should be supported. This will help achieve the developments outlined in the New Zealand Dance Industry Strategy.¹⁰

The New Zealand Recreation Association (NZRA) have created a position document on the role and benefits of recreation

<http://nzra.engage.co.nz/Organizations/NZRA/NZRAAssets/PDFs/PositionDoc.pdf>

Many voices make for a strong and visible dance community.

⁸ The improvement effect of Modern Balinese Baris Dancing Exercise on body composition, blood and heart rate. Adiputra IN, 1994.

⁹ Lipid and lipoprotein changes in premenstrual women following step aerobic dance training. Mosher PE, Ferguson MA, Arnold RO, 2005.

¹⁰ <http://www.danz.org.nz/strategy.php>