



## **SUPPORTING KIDS IN PERFORMANCE**

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### **About Project SKIP**

Project SKIP (Supporting Kids in Performance) is a registered not-for-profit organisation that strengthens the wellbeing, resilience and life skills of young people by developing the trusted adults who influence them every day.

Founded in regional Australia, Project SKIP was created in response to the growing wellbeing challenges facing young people following the COVID-19 pandemic. We recognised that while many programs focus on supporting young people directly, one of the greatest opportunities for lasting impact lies in equipping the adults who mentor, guide and shape them every day.

Project SKIP is an evidence-informed program developed in consultation with a registered psychologist, combining contemporary psychological principles with practical, engaging and age-appropriate activities that can be embedded into existing learning environments. Rather than adding another wellbeing initiative to already busy programs, Project SKIP provides trusted adults with structured, practical tools they can confidently use every week to intentionally develop resilience, emotional regulation, confidence, communication, social connection and belonging in the young people they teach.

While the model is now expanding into education, Project SKIP's primary focus is the Australian dance industry, a community uniquely positioned to influence young people over many years.

### **The Challenge**

Young people today are navigating increasing levels of anxiety, social isolation, perfectionism and declining confidence. At the same time, many adults working alongside young people recognise these challenges but often feel they lack practical, evidence-informed strategies to respond.

Project SKIP believes that sustainable change happens through trusted relationships.

Rather than relying on one-off wellbeing interventions, we invest in the adults who already have trusted relationships with young people. By strengthening their capability, we create environments where wellbeing is intentionally modelled, practised and reinforced every week.

This creates lasting impact that extends well beyond a single program or workshop.

## **Why the Dance Industry?**

Australia has approximately 4,000 private dance studios. These studios serve an estimated 800,000 students under age 18. This is an immense level of participation in an extracurricular activity.

Additionally, dance teachers occupy one of the most unique positions in a young person's life. Unlike many extracurricular activities, dance often begins in early childhood and continues throughout adolescence. Teachers spend hundreds of hours each year with their students, celebrating achievements, supporting challenges, witnessing friendships develop and helping young people navigate some of the most formative years of their lives.

For many children, particularly in regional communities, a dance teacher becomes far more than an instructor. They become a trusted mentor, role model and consistent adult influence outside the family unit.

Project SKIP recognises this unique opportunity.

Rather than expecting dance teachers to become psychologists, Project SKIP equips them with practical, evidence-informed tools and structured, age-appropriate activities that can be naturally integrated into weekly dance classes. Teachers first develop these skills themselves before intentionally transferring them to their students through everyday interactions, meaningful conversations and engaging activities.

The result is studio environments where young people not only learn to dance, but also develop the skills that help them thrive throughout life.

Our long term vision is to partner with sporting and cultural organisations, applying the same model as we have done in the Dance Industry.

## **Our Theory of Change**

Project SKIP is built on the belief that by developing the adults who shape young people, we strengthen the next generation.

Our approach is intentionally intergenerational. We train trusted adults first.

Dance teachers and educators learn practical wellbeing strategies, strengthen their own self-awareness, communication and emotional skills, and build confidence in supporting young people through everyday interactions.

They then intentionally model these behaviours while using Project SKIP's structured activities to develop the same skills in their students.

Young people don't simply learn about resilience, empathy or emotional regulation, they experience these behaviours consistently through trusted relationships with adults they know and respect.

This creates a powerful cycle of learning. Adults become stronger mentors. Young people become more confident, connected and resilient. Those young people are then better equipped to become the next generation of leaders, teachers, coaches, mentors and positive role models within their own communities.

Project SKIP is therefore not simply a youth wellbeing program. It is a capability-building model that intentionally transfers life skills from one generation to the next.

## **Regional Impact**

Project SKIP was founded in regional New South Wales and continues to prioritise regional communities, recognising that preventative wellbeing initiatives are often more difficult to access outside metropolitan centres.

Our model builds capability within communities rather than relying on external experts, ensuring knowledge remains embedded long after training has concluded.

Today Project SKIP partners with:

- 28 dance studios nationally.
- 24 regional studios across New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Tasmania.
- More than 110 studio owners and teachers trained.
- More than 6,000 dancers reached so far during 2026.

To further extend our reach, Project SKIP has partnered with a national dance competition delivering wellbeing experiences at approximately 30 regional competitions across Australia each year. Competition faculty complete Project SKIP training before facilitating practical wellbeing activities with students throughout competition weekends.

Project SKIP has also presented to more than 300 studio owners at the READY SET DANCE Conference, with approximately 75% of attendees representing regional communities, helping strengthen the capability of dance educators across Australia.

In 2023, Project SKIP was awarded the Medical, Allied Health and Fitness Business of the Year in the Snowy Monaro Business Awards.

## **Schools – An Emerging Stream**

Recognising the broader application of the model, Project SKIP has begun expanding into regional schools.

The program is currently operating in three schools across the Snowy Monaro region, where it has been mapped to the NSW PDHPE curriculum. More than 60 teachers have been trained, with approximately 1,700 students participating to date.

By mid-2027, Project SKIP intends to expand into 15 regional schools, establishing education as a complementary stream while maintaining dance as the organisation's primary focus.

## **Evidence, Reach and Credibility**

Project SKIP has been intentionally designed to combine evidence-informed practice with practical implementation.

The program is:

- A registered Australian not-for-profit organisation.
- Developed in consultation with a registered psychologist.
- Grounded in contemporary psychological principles.
- Delivered through structured facilitator training and practical resource kits.
- Built around evidence-informed, age-appropriate activities.
- Mapped to the NSW PDHPE curriculum for school delivery.
- Supported through ongoing implementation resources and professional development.

Rather than delivering isolated wellbeing workshops, Project SKIP equips adults with practical tools they can confidently embed into existing environments, creating sustainable change through consistent relationships and everyday practice.

## **Looking Ahead**

Project SKIP's vision is to become Australia's leading capability-building organisation for trusted adults working with young people in performance and community settings.

Over the next two years we will continue to strengthen our regional-first approach by:

- Expanding our network of regional dance studios across Australia.
- Growing from three to 15 regional schools by mid-2027.
- Partnering with an additional 4–6 national dance competitions, significantly increasing access to young people in regional communities.
- Developing nationally accredited youth wellbeing training for dance teachers, educators and youth leaders.
- Continuing to build the capability of the adults who have the greatest influence on young people, ensuring stronger relationships, healthier communities and more connected future generations.

## Why Project SKIP Matters

Project SKIP demonstrates that intergenerational connection is about more than bringing different age groups together. It is about intentionally transferring knowledge, skills and values from one generation to the next through trusted relationships.

Every dance teacher we train strengthens not only their own capability, but also the lives of the hundreds of young people they will mentor throughout their career. Every student who learns resilience, empathy, confidence and connection through Project SKIP carries those skills into their family, school, workplace and community. By investing in the adults who shape young people today, Project SKIP is helping build a more connected, resilient and compassionate generation for tomorrow.

## Participating Studios Locations - Example Locations

|     |                                                                                                            |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NSW | Cooma<br>Queanbeyan<br>Dubbo<br>Nelson Bay<br>Cowra<br>Griffith<br>Batemans Bay<br>Coffs Harbour<br>Albury |
| QLD | Redcliffe<br>Gatton<br>Berrinba<br>Millmerran<br>Molendinar                                                |
| VIC | Echuca                                                                                                     |
| TAS | Hobart                                                                                                     |