

Dance aids healthier ageing

5 April 2018, by Amanda Weaver



Credit: Queensland University of Technology

Queensland Ballet and QUT today released the results of a joint project examining the health and wellbeing benefits of ballet for older Australians.

The three-month project, incorporating 10 Ballet for Seniors classes, found participants experienced higher energy levels, greater flexibility, improved posture, and an enhanced sense of achievement. They also felt happier and enjoyed a sense of community and friendship.

Due to its strong commitment to arts and [health](#) practice, Queensland Ballet initiated the Ballet Moves for Adult Creative Health in 2017, a multi-stage project to investigate, develop, and disseminate evidence-based practice findings related to the delivery of [ballet](#) to active [older adults](#).

Queensland Ballet Director of Strategy and Global Engagement, Felicity Mandile said the project aimed to provide a detailed understanding of the motivations and experiences of ballet class participants and potential participants to inform how QB could best deliver programs that addressed their needs.

Queensland Ballet Artistic Director Li Cunxin leads a Ballet for Seniors class. Photo: Ali Cameron

"We're thrilled to have this research underpinning what we do as it enables us to offer meaningful engagement programs for our participants rather than just giving them what we think they want and need," Ms Mandile said.

Stage One involved a research project in partnership with QUT and supported by the Queensland Government's Advance Queensland initiative.



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"The project critically investigated older adults' motivations to participate in ballet, the health and wellbeing outcomes for active older adults, and the examination of the teaching practices involved in this delivery," Ms Mandile said.

"We weren't surprised by the research findings strongly indicating that ballet participation is considered to be a highly pleasurable activity for active older adults, we were pleasantly surprised by the flow on effects of that.

"It found that ballet participation may contribute to positive outcomes across various health and wellbeing categories and promotes a general feeling of wellbeing."

Performance psychologist and former professional ballet dancer Professor Gene Moyle from QUT's Creative Industries Faculty said movement, be it dance or other forms of exercise, was a critical factor in better ageing.

"The physical benefits of movement and dance on ageing bodies is well documented and our [project](#) really re-enforces these findings, however additionally highlights the joy and benefits social connections in dance can bring to people's lives," said Professor Moyle who is also a board member of Queensland Ballet.

"Some of the participants reported that they found the classes positively euphoric and transformational in the pleasure they felt at being part of such weekly social engagement."

Professor Moyle and Professor Graham Kerr from QUT's Institute of Health and Biomedical Innovation have previously partnered with Queensland Ballet on a Dance for Parkinson's program.

Ms Mandile said the Company hoped to continue partnering with QUT to explore more ways in which ballet could have positive outcomes across various community sectors.

More information: Ballet Moves for Adult Creative Health, Stage One—Research Report: www.queenslandballet.com.au/files/2018-04-aids-healthier-ageing-report-2018.pdf

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