



## SCOPE PASSIONATES – meeting SCOPE advisors

By Andrea Viney

They may reside in different states and bring expertise from different backgrounds, but Kay Helliwell, Andrea Farrow, Deidre Anderson and Gene Moyle have one thing in common; their passion for the Securing Career Opportunities and Professional Employment (SCOPE) program.

We caught up with a number of SCOPE advisors from around the country and learned that each feel privileged to be contributing to the career development of the 41 participants that have been part of the program since its conception in 2007.

In its short existence, SCOPE, has gained a sterling reputation within the dance sector, with the participants' success and admissions of gratitude to the program a testament to the leadership, knowledge and dedication of the advisors.

The participants cannot speak highly enough of SCOPE and how it has helped them in their lives, giving them the tools to discover who they are, where they're going and what they want from their career.

For professional dancers and choreographers, the next step beyond performing life is often a daunting one, and while we all want to imagine a future with financial security, it can be difficult for those in the dance industry to judge the next week, let alone the next decade. Hence, a program that assists dance artists to look at their whole career rather than just performing life was a welcome development for the Australian dance sector.

Conducted by the Australian Sports Commission and Australia Council for the Arts, with support from Ausdance, SCOPE is a personal and professional development program available to Australian Dancers and Choreographers. The program advisors work closely with artists to assist them in developing a sustainable career action plan and identifying new opportunities to diversify their career within dance and/or other sectors.

With their breadth of knowledge and contacts, the SCOPE advisors offer the artists encouragement and support to realise their career and life goals and create their own destiny.

Whether acting as a sounding board for new ideas and options, providing emotional support to help them through a difficult transition, or linking them with industry contacts, the SCOPE advisors are invaluable mentors for the artists.

Speaking to each of the advisors, it is clear the rewards aren't just one way. They use words like 'privilege', 'passion' and 'honour' to describe their instrumental role within the program.

Managing a portfolio of careers, the advisors live and breathe the philosophy of work and life that SCOPE promotes and feel fortunate to be part of such a valuable and forward-thinking career development program.



## KAY HELLIWELL – National SCOPE Consultant/Advisor

In the words of advisor Deidre Anderson, National SCOPE Consultant Kay Helliwell, is the most professional of leaders. She brings an incredible amount of knowledge, enthusiasm and passion to her role and has built an impressive team of people who share her values and commitment.

With a degree in Exercise Science and Psychology and a Post Graduate degree in Counselling, Kay's qualifications and career background are a perfect blend for her work with SCOPE.

Having worked in Community Health, where she assisted people with mental illness to return to work, Kay suggests that one part of counselling carries through to all situations; that is, 'believing in people's ability to work things out for themselves.' This is also the part of SCOPE that she enjoys the most; seeing the artists get comfortable with the fact that *they* are in control of their own future.

'When they realise it [SCOPE] is really about them and not us [the advisors] giving them the answers, it's really exciting to watch them become open to the possibilities and see they are endless,' she says.

Kay believes the strength of the program is the fact that it is tailored to the individual. It is about the artist and advisor developing a relationship, where the advisor understands the background, skills and values of the artist and can then assist in developing a career action plan that suits that person. She says 'it's a holistic approach to career development, looking at where the artist has come from, who they are and what else they want to achieve in their life.'

Kay says it can be really difficult for independent artists to look at themselves and ask where they want to be in five or ten years time, when often they don't know what the next week will bring. SCOPE is a way of building into their program things that can be relied upon.

It's important for artists to look at their whole skill-set and identify how they can be applied, as well as embracing new skills and professional development opportunities to make them more employable. 'It's about identifying and packaging those skills so they're meaningful against a number of industries,' Kay says.

Over the past two years working with SCOPE, Kay has witnessed many great moments for artists. Whether finishing a uni degree, securing employment, learning a new skill, or simply gaining clarity about direction, the artists' success through the program is just reward for Kay.

At the beginning of the year she was able to hear exactly what the program meant to the dancers, when some 2007 participants got up and spoke to the new recruits about their experiences. 'It was overwhelming to hear from the artists how much it had really helped them in their lives,' Kay says.

Kay's knowledge and passion has created an amazing culture within the program, which could be a reason behind its success, but for Kay it's all about the dancers. She is currently part of a SCOPE futures group that has been put in place to secure funding and look at a sustainable model moving forward, so that artists can continue to enjoy the benefits of this valuable program for years to come.



## **ANDREA FARROW** – VIC and SA Advisor

Involved in the program since its humble beginnings, Andrea Farrow is another SCOPE passionate. With a Bachelor of Applied Science and Human Movement, Andrea's background is in secondary school teaching, where she taught physical education, psychology and health, and later became a school counsellor. She soon found herself wanting to work with athletes and side-stepped into the industry when she took on a welfare role at the Institute of Sport. After a stint as a career advisor for athletes, Andrea then became Manager of Athlete Career and Education (ACE). Now with two young children, she works part-time for SCOPE, advising six artists from Melbourne and Adelaide.

Andrea loves the job and the program, seeing many benefits for the dance artists involved. Through conversations with the participants, Andrea has noticed that commonly, people don't put themselves first or make time for their personal development. SCOPE encourages artists to schedule in time for themselves and make their career development a priority which Andrea sees as a huge strength.

Another key to SCOPE's success and reputation is the fact that it recognises most artists do not want to leave the industry. 'For most artists, it's not about transitioning, but seeing a parallel career and building their skill-sets so they can give back to the industry and stay involved,' Andrea says. She lists a handful of characteristics that dancers possess; 'diligence, creativity, organisation, multi-tasking and resilience, just to name a few'. She says the program helps the artists see how these skills can be transferred into other industries. 'After they stop performing, it doesn't have to be teaching dance and then choreography ... there are so many other careers available to them.' Andrea loves that SCOPE opens up those possibilities for artists.

## **DEIDRE ANDERSON** – NSW and NT Advisor

With a remarkably broad background in Sport and the Arts, Deidre Anderson has been an advisor with SCOPE since May 2008, working with fifteen dance artists.

In an impressive career largely focused on elite athletes, this is Deidre's first time working with dancers, but she comments that SCOPE has really fast-tracked her knowledge of the industry. On the other side, the knowledge Deidre brings to the program, makes her an invaluable resource.

With qualifications in physical education, arts and psychology, Deidre has also completed a masters by research into 'Life-skill Intervention in Elite Performance' and wrote the Graduate Certificate in Athlete Training. Having held a variety of positions from cadet journalist to phys ed trainer at the Department of Defence, she has spent a large part of her career working with the Institute of Sport in Athlete Services. Through the Institute, Deidre founded the Athlete Career and Education (ACE) program which has become a blueprint for similar programs like SCOPE.

Currently the CEO of Macquarie University in NSW, Deidre sums up her vast experience with a philosophy she says has driven her career; 'It's all about helping people achieve the best in sport but also in their life'.

Although there are strong similarities between elite athletes and professional dancers, Deidre has also noticed fundamental differences between the two during her time with SCOPE. 'Dancers aren't used to having support around them like athletes, so they really embrace any



support that's offered. They choose to come into the program, rather than it just being something available to them.' Deidre says this creates a great culture in the program where 'you get out what you put in'.

It is this and the individualised design of the program that Deidre sees as the major strengths of SCOPE. Because it's about the individual working towards their action plan, it doesn't matter that they might work with several different advisors throughout their exploration. "It's great seeing a dancer secure what they want to do with their life with the help of many different people.' Deidre likens the journey with SCOPE to a baton relay, only 'you're passing on the passion of the program'.

### **DR. GENE MOYLE – QLD Advisor**

Queensland SCOPE Advisor, Gene Moyle knows what the grass is like on both sides of the fence. A sport and exercise psychologist and a dancer, she is able to offer advice and support with an understanding of what the artist is going through.

Gene's list of qualifications is long and distinguished; a Diploma at the Australian Ballet School, a Bachelor of Arts in Human Movement, Psychology and Dance, and a Masters Degree and Doctorate in Sport and Exercise Psychology.

When Kay Helliwell approached Gene to be an advisor with SCOPE, she says all the worlds aligned. She is grateful to be able to combine her skills and give back to dance, which is also a career goal of her own.

One of the things Gene has enjoyed most about SCOPE, is the ability to use her networks to link artists with contacts in other industries. 'I really love being able to bring knowledge from different areas ... and show dancers that there are opportunities in different or parallel careers and it doesn't have to be scary,' she says.

Gene loves being able to provide artists with the support, guidance and encouragement to step outside their comfort zone. 'It's that supported exploration ... the ability to provide advice for the avenues they want to explore.'

For Gene, the real reward is then 'seeing them go and do it'. The responsibility is on the artist himself or herself to make it happen, which Gene sees as the program's strength. 'It's not a blanket approach; the artists have control over their own destiny.'

Like all the advisors, Gene speaks passionately about SCOPE and says the most important thing for her is to ensure the program's longevity. 'There's not one person involved that hasn't benefited from the program – I think it's really making a difference and helping to educate a new mind-set.'

She talks about the days when it was seen as detrimental to a dancer's performing career to seek new skills or employment outside of the industry. Nowadays, Gene believes artists are starting to recognise the importance of having space away from dance so they can put more into their art form.

Ultimately, this is also the philosophy behind SCOPE that Kay, Andrea, Deidre and Gene are passionate about. By supporting our professional dance artists to diversify their skills and opportunities while staying linked to dance, SCOPE is also nurturing the Australian Dance Industry and keeping our rich arts culture alive.