



## Media Release

### Noosa's RIPE Dance wins 2 national ADE awards

Noosa based RIPE Dance has received national recognition for its work with local seniors by taking out two Australasian Dance Education Awards for 'Regional Dance Studio of the Year' and the 'Excellence in Community Impact' at a gala event on the Gold Coast last week.

RIPE Dance founder and director Gail Hewton attended the event and said she was thrilled and honoured to win these awards which have recognised the excellence and significance of her work.

"It's particularly a wonderful acknowledgement of dance for older people given all finalists, except for RIPE Dance, in all categories were young people focused. It was a great opportunity to profile and advocate this important field of work," Gail said.

"We're defying ageist attitudes and expectations in showing dance really is possible for everyone no matter their health status, ability or dance experience," Gail said.

Gail believes in the transformative power of dance across the lifespan, from the cradle to the grave. She has taught dance professionally for 45 years across diverse ages and contexts but the last 11.5 years working exclusively with over 55s has been her most rewarding by far.

"The health and wellbeing benefits of dance for participants are enormous - we can help our ageing community to move, feel and live better through dance." Gail said.

Gail has worked tirelessly to develop a successful evidence-based practice approach and methodology to optimise the physical, cognitive, emotional and social benefits of dance with a strong focus on falls prevention and social connection while ensuring her dance offerings are safe and effective for seniors in a fun and welcoming environment.

Over the past 11+ years, in addition to undertaking regular desktop research and professional development in dance and health related courses and events, Gail has travelled nationally and internationally to investigate and develop expertise in this field becoming a leader, particularly in health and wellbeing aspects of dance for older people.

These awards will add to accolades Gail has previously received which include the 2017 Ausdance Qld Osmotherly Award for contribution to dance education and the 2018 Australian Dance Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance for Film or New Media for her film *In a Different Space* which showcases Noosa seniors aged 60-101 years dancing their stories in places of significance to them. The film has had 25 festival and event screenings in 8 countries.

Due to the success of the RIPE Dance approach Gail established Gold Moves Australia in 2018 with colleague Julie Chenery to offer training, mentoring and advocacy to encourage and upskill other dance teachers to work safely with older adults with a health and wellbeing focus.

A presentation about the RIPE Dance program by Gold Moves Australia at the 2021 Australia and New Zealand Falls Prevention Society conference, which highlighted RIPE Dance's high retention rates, with participants aged 57-97 years attending week after week, year after year, several for over 10 years, attracted the interest of researchers from University of Sydney's Institute of Musculoskeletal Health to conduct an evaluation of the RIPE Dance program earlier this year, the findings of which support Gail's approach to engage seniors in regular physical activity long term.

The researchers are now planning a pilot trial in 2024 to test the 'acceptability and feasibility of the RIPE dance program for preventing falls in people aged 65+'.

With no retirement plans despite turning 65 next week Gail's on a quest to have more older adults across Queensland and Australia enjoying dance classes tailored to suit individual needs for health and wellbeing.

For more information about RIPE Dance, see [ripedance.com.au](http://ripedance.com.au) or about Gold Moves Australia [goldmovesaustralia.com.au](http://goldmovesaustralia.com.au). To view the award-winning film In a Different Space <https://vimeo.com/413882162?share=copy>

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**RIPE Dance**

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