

ARTSPEAK and NATIONAL ADVOCATES FOR ARTS EDUCATION

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23 August 2011

The Hon. Simon Crean, MP
Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development & Local Government,
Minister for the Arts
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT2600

Dear Minister,

Members of ArtsPeak and the National Advocates for Arts Education (NAAE) are writing to thank you for meeting with us last Wednesday, and sharing ideas about the National Cultural Policy discussion paper.

As you know, the meeting addressed four major principles from the National Cultural Policy discussion paper that were agreed to by all arts sectors and that were inclusive of their views (see Appendix A). These were:

- 'Mainstreaming' the arts
- The impact of technology
- Artists' career pathways
- Australia's position in the world, including the promotion of our cultural diversity.

We noted the groups' strong support for the development of a National Cultural Policy and congratulated you and your team on its production. We reiterated our commitment to supporting your efforts, and to sharing ideas and some common concerns as the policy was further developed. We emphasised that the role of the organisations present was to provide leadership, advocacy, brokerage and representation for their constituents.

We were encouraged by your own opening remarks, including a commitment to finding additional resources to support the National Cultural Policy, seeing arts pathways strengthened in schools, the place of the arts in Indigenous communities, and the role the National Broadband Network might play in meeting these goals. You noted that the arts underpin social values and compassion, and strengthen citizenry, and that economic research showed that creative nations are more productive. You mentioned several reviews now underway that will inform the direction the National Cultural Policy might take.

The group noted several challenges ahead:

- The tyranny of divides, e.g. popular culture and entertainment versus high art, creative industries versus the arts, the digital divide.
- Negotiating the three tiers of government.
- Lack of longitudinal research in the arts.
- The ongoing difficulty of attracting philanthropy and sponsorship to most sectors of arts practice.

Issues of resourcing include:

- The ongoing negative impact of the efficiency dividend on cultural institutions.
- The need to look into current university cluster funding and its impact on arts training courses, i.e. the group supports the Bradley Review's proposal of a 10% increase in funding.
- Support for a proposal to introduce a 1% levy on the NBN to fund capacity development and content development (see Appendix B).

We suggest that this group offers a ready-made 'think tank' for new ideas and positive problem solving as the National Cultural Policy is developed. We look forward to meeting with you again, and to contributing further to the NCP discussion paper, both as a group and as individual organisations. We also seek your response to these thoughts and any information on next steps.

We thank you and the NCP team, and are pleased to have such a well-respected, experienced and effective Minister working with us.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Susan Street (Meeting facilitator and National President, Ausdance)
Julie Dyson and Tamara Winikoff (ArtsPeak and NAAE convenors) on behalf of:

Present

Ananguku Arts (Elizabeth Tregenza and Milyika Carroll)
Arts Industry Council SA (Alison Dunn)
Arts Industry Council Vic (Jacqueline Grenfell)
Arts Law Centre of Australia (Delwyn Everard)
Art Education Australia & NAAE (Amanda Poland)
Australian Dance Council – Ausdance (Julie Dyson AM)
Australian Major Performing Arts Group (Susan Donnelly)
Australian Music Centre (John Davis)
Australian Network for Arts & Technology (Gavin Artz)
Australian Performing Arts Centres Association (Bruce Carmichael)
Australian Publishers Association (José Borghino)
Australian Society of Authors (Angelo Loukakis)
Australian Teachers of Media & NAAE (Roger Dunscombe and Derek Weeks)
Copyright Agency Ltd (Zoë Rodriguez)
Craft Australia (Catrina Vignando)
Feral Arts (Norm Horton and Sarah Moynihan)
KULTOUR (Magdalena Moreno)
Museums Australia (Bernice Murphy)
Music Council of Australia & NAAE (Richard Letts AM)
National Association for the Visual Arts & NAAE (Tamara Winikoff)
Performing Arts Touring Alliance (Greg Randall)
Regional Arts Australia (Ruth Smiles)
Theatre Network Victoria (Nicole Beyer)
Young People and the Arts Australia (Jim Lawson)

Apologies

ANKAAA - Association of Northern Kimberley and Arnhem Aboriginal Artists (Djambawa Marawili AM and Christina Davidson)
Arts Access Australia (Kate Larsen)
Australian Writers Guild (Angela Keefe)
Ausdance & NAAE (Jeff Meiners)
Copyright Council (Mary-Anne Reid)
Drama Australia & NAAE (Sandra Gattenhoff and Mark Bailey)
Desart (Michelle Culpitt)
Live Performance Australia (Evelyn Richardson)

APPENDIX A

Several lead speakers elaborated on the four principles outlined in our letter (above), and provided the following consensus statements from ArtsPeak and the NAAE.

1. MAINSTREAMING THE ARTS – José Borghino, Australian Publishers Association

We were pleased to see the opening statements in the NCP discussion paper about the central and fundamental significance of the cultural and creative industries in Australia. However, we were also concerned by potentially contradictory calls, later in the document, for the need to ‘mainstream’ Australian arts and culture. We don’t want to over-read the discussion paper and we know that there are many ways of defining ‘mainstream’, but we encourage you (and those drafting the NCP) to develop and articulate a position that is confident and bold about the success of Australian culture, not one that is hesitant or defensive.

To that end, we recommend the broadest workable understanding of culture which encompasses what humans do every day to make meaning in the world through the telling and sharing of stories – with the arts as a crucial key to that understanding.

Such a definition immediately embraces the goal of social inclusion or strengthening citizenry, while at the same time allowing for constructive discussion around creating and supporting pathways to excellence in ways that avoid the debilitating and distracting catfights around notions of what it means to be ‘elite artists’.

At an industry forum recently, the well-respected Indigenous theatre director, Wesley Enoch, made the striking remark that ‘no-one ever asked Cathy Freeman to run slower.’ There have been many times over the past few decades where it would be difficult to imagine translating that non-controversial statement about how we celebrate a sportsperson’s achievement into the artistic or cultural domain. If the NCP can help defuse the toxic debates about ‘elite’ and ‘mainstream’ that erupted in the late 1990s, then it would have been worth the effort.

Indigenous culture: Milyika Carroll, Director of Ananguku Arts, made the point that Australia’s Indigenous culture is at once the oldest living culture in the world, as noted in the discussion paper, and the driver of a dynamic contemporary modern arts movement in urban, regional and remote Australia. Milyika noted that this needs to be stated more strongly, and at the beginning of the NCP, because much flows from this. Milyika said, “Already when Captain Cook came here, *Anangu tjuta* (all Aboriginal people) had a strong culture. There was painting in the caves and body art. Now we make strong new work. We ask [the Minister] to make a strong statement in the front of the Policy about this”.

Arts Education: While it was not possible to outline the issues of concern at the meeting around the delivery of the Australian Curriculum in the Arts, ArtsPeak and the NAAE endorse the views of the Music Council of Australia (Appendix C), because they apply equally to the art forms of Dance, Drama, Media Arts and Visual Arts. We would be pleased if you would pass on these concerns to the Ministers responsible for arts education and training, Mr Peter Garrett, AM MP, Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, and Senator Chris Evans, Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations.

2. TECHNOLOGY – Gavin Artz, Australian Network for Arts and Technology

While the linking of culture and technology is applicable across all four goals of the National Cultural Policy discussion paper, goal three and four stand out in their relevance. The use of the term ‘emerging technology’ in goal three is particularly important, as we live in a time of continually emerging technology. Artists working in this space are navigating a course for cultural and community creativity in a world dominated by technological change. The early work of artists with mobile phones and locative media

has shaped communications we now take for granted; what once was art is now how communities express themselves. The arts have been involved in an ongoing exploration that has led to the growth and evolution of a vibrant, living culture in digital realms. If our culture is to continue to flourish in these spaces then censorship

and classification cannot be allowed to diminish its expression. This is important because the open-ended exploration of culture mediated through technology is seeing new career paths for artists and us all.

Artists working in science and technology environments are delivering innovation through applying research to us, not just as humans, but as a culture. Through these cross-disciplinary relationships we are seeing that many technology roadblocks are not technical, but cultural. As technology becomes an extension of us, it requires a deeper cultural sympathy. Robotic research has been embracing artists because they understand that building a robot is a technical problem, but living with one is a cultural problem. These ideas are at the heart of the move from a process economy to a creative economy. With the rise of manufacturing on demand and 3D printing, the barriers to industrialisation will diminish and the expression of professional and community creativity will lead manufacturing and other industrial processes. Art is in a constant dialogue with our culture. The feeding back of ideas from arts to creative industries, from community creativity and culture to industrial process, will develop new art forms, and technology will be a tool, muse and medium into the future.

3. ARTISTS' CAREER PATHWAYS – Tamara Winikoff, National Association for the Visual Arts: The National Cultural Policy discussion paper recognises both the intrinsic value of artists' personal practice and the instrumental value of provision of their services to others, e.g. the creative industries. These two forms of practice are symbiotic.

Artists' careers embrace a variety of different types of works. They can encompass the telling of stories that make sense of human life, science and politics as well as critique which can challenge current orthodoxies. Artists can be the navigators of complexity, prescient communicators and agents of social cohesion and/or change.

Increasingly, artists' creative capability is also having effect in very broad areas of public and private sector enterprise: in health; the environment; manufacturing and industry; urban development; object, industrial, graphic and fashion design; media and advertising. Indeed, their capacity for innovation is influencing almost every area of endeavour.

However, this needs facilitation. The cultural policy should inject new support for both organisational and individual brokerage between artists and potential employers and commissioners. This would foster much greater provision of opportunities for these creative thinkers and makers to contribute to innovation and the evolution of the economy. Education and training is needed to enable them to fulfill this role, both pre and in-practice. An ideas-based economy will have greater durability and a longer future for Australia than minerals export.

It is not only financial investment and support structures that determine community attitudes and a conducive environment for artists to be able to make this contribution effectively. It also takes evident political conviction, and underlying legislation, policy and regulation. For example, currently in Australia there is no legislated freedom of expression; changes to sedition legislation and social security arrangements for artists are awaiting finalisation, the laws in relation to tax, classification, copyright and business investment need to change. The Arts Minister is in a position to broker across governments to achieve a policy and legislative environment which is much more fertile for artistic endeavour.

4. AUSTRALIA ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE – Susan Donnelly, Australian Major Performing Arts Group – We were all pleased to see the National Cultural Policy discussion paper recognise the importance of Australian performers and artists being engaged on the global stage and the value it can bring. Australia has world- renowned artists and companies because of government investment that has been provided over the years. However we now need to take this to the next step – we live in a much larger global world with increasing competitiveness.

We hope that the intent of the National Cultural Policy is not only about “telling Australian stories” but also about promoting and advocating our multiple identities, our contemporary art and creative digital work which we are exporting to the world, albeit in a limited way.

Australia has an enormous opportunity to take a strong arts leadership role given our position in the Asia Pacific region and our strong economy. Other cultural leaders, such as the USA and the UK, are cutting back on the arts, and this is a perfect opportunity for Australia to promote and exploit our arts export further – but it needs both Government financial investment and priority.

The arts have proven that they can be a distinct asset in assisting diplomacy and in developing key international markets in business, trade, education and tourism, but there needs to be early integration, not something left as an afterthought. We hope that through this cultural policy framework old habits will change.

Cultural diversity: Magdalena Moreno, KULTOUR – We highly commend the National Cultural Policy discussion paper, as it heralds a new era in recognising Australia's cultural diversity in the arts and the contribution they make in our country. Having Australia's multiple identities threaded throughout the policy rather than as a separate item, embedded in its construct and reflecting Australia's contemporary cultural makeup in the 21st century, is a significant step forward.

This not only recognises the contribution that migrants have made to the arts and creative industries in Australia, but also instills a sense of responsibility in them as being active participants in Australia's creative life, placing us in an ideal position for international promotion. It also acknowledges cultural diversity as underpinning creative expression in Australia, where Indigenous arts and culture should be inclusive – supported and protected as Australia's First Nation – but also inclusive of cultural diversity.

This recognition from government reaffirms that our community is diverse, able to fill a season at the Sydney Opera House with a non-English speaking theatre production, with first-time theatre goers of that heritage seeing themselves reflected on stage. We are encouraged and enthused by the NCP's commitment to an increase in support to sharing Australia's stories that reflect our multiple identities. Multicultural Australia will be actively participating in this process through direct input as well as through the Kultour National Network.

APPENDIX B

NBN and the Arts – a ‘percent for content and capacity’? – Feral Arts

At \$36 billion, the National Broadband Network (NBN) is the largest infrastructure project in Australia’s history. The NBN is a key element of the Government’s National Digital Economy Strategy and its goal to position Australia as one of the world’s leading digital economies by 2020¹.

Achieving this goal will require investing in people as well as infrastructure. In the US for example, 10% of the \$7billion dollar budget for an optic fibre roll-out in 2010 was allocated to community capacity building and digital literacy programs². The Federal Government has begun to address this challenge with a range of initiatives released under the National Digital Economy Strategy. The current outlay of \$63.4 million represents just one sixth of one percent of the total \$36 billion NBN budget³. Based on the US experience a much larger investment will be required if we are to maximise the potential benefits of the NBN roll-out across the community.

The arts and cultural sector has the potential to make significant contributions to transforming Australia into the world’s leading digital economies over the next decade. A ‘percent for content and capacity’ investment in the arts sector would provide the necessary resources to make this vision a reality. There are many national and international examples of successful ‘percent for public arts’ programs as part of major government infrastructure projects⁴. An NBN ‘percent for content and capacity’ in the arts and cultural sector builds on these established precedents. The program would generate a fund worth \$360 million dollars to invest in the arts and cultural sector nationally over the next decade.

Given that the NBN is also poised to play a central role in the new National Cultural Policy⁵ a ‘percent for content and capacity’ program would provide the sector with the necessary resources to properly implement the new policy.

¹ http://www.nbn.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/National_Digital_Economy_Strategy.pdf

² <http://www2.ntia.doc.gov/about>

³ http://www.nbn.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/National_Digital_Economy_Strategy.pdf

⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Percent_for_Art

⁵ <http://culture.arts.gov.au/>

APPENDIX C

ARTS EDUCATION – Richard Letts, Music Council of Australia

(This part of the submission was not delivered on the day.)

In its presentation to Arts Minister Crean, ArtsPeak spoke of ‘mainstreaming’ the arts. One important area in which the arts definitely are not mainstreamed is education.

The statistics given here apply to music. Statistics for school education for the other art forms are probably worse.

Preschool. During these years there is an unrepeatable opportunity for the development of neural pathways through art making. The average mandatory instruction in music in preservice degrees is 10 hours. No demonstration of arts competence is required for accreditation.

- A National Cultural Policy would use the influence of the Commonwealth on tertiary education provision to ensure that qualifying degrees for early childhood teachers and carers require graduates to be competent to deliver education in arts subjects. It is suggested that teachers would receive around 50 contact hours per subject.

Primary school teachers. The provision of National Curricula in the arts will be useful. However, it does not address the main problem: the delivery of effective school education in the arts. In primary schools in all but two states and territories, arts education is the responsibility of generalist classroom teachers.

The mandatory music education requirement in preservice undergraduate degrees for these teachers is 17 contact hours out of a total of 1250 hours. If the qualification is gained through a graduate degree, it is about 10 hours. This instruction is supposed to equip the teachers to deliver a music curriculum for 7 years, grades kindergarten to 6. No demonstration of music education or competence is required for accreditation. Except in Queensland and Tasmania, which utilise music specialists in primary school, the majority of the workforce will not be competent to deliver the National Curriculum.

- A National Cultural Policy would use the influence of the Commonwealth to address these problems. They are complex. In brief summary, the Commonwealth a) could use its influence on tertiary education to ensure that qualifying degrees for teachers provide them with the competence to deliver the National Curricula in the arts subjects and b) persuade or induce State governments to provide the resources to enable effective arts learning.

Gross inequity. Percentage of schools offering a continuous, sequential, developmental music education: public schools, 23%; independent schools, 88%. 87% of the population aged 12+ believes that ‘Music education should be mandated by the states to ensure every child has an opportunity to study music in school’. In many public schools, the opportunity for a music education is a consequence of private funding by parents or parents and citizens’ associations: consequently, the opportunities are much more plentiful in schools in more affluent areas.

- A National Cultural Policy would act to address this issue of inequity.

Tertiary arts institutions. Virtually every tertiary music institution in Australia operates at a loss. Various strategies are used to manage the loss. Generally, programs are cut back to the minimum level that is vaguely credible. Since the Dawkins ‘reforms’, it appears that the number of contact hours has approximately halved. Graduates must find a career in a market where international standards are expected but Australian institutions cannot afford to offer instruction to international standards. It might be thought that the funding problem could be ameliorated through earnings from full-fee students but note that universities ‘tax’ this income at a rate between 50% and 68%, leaving as little as 32% of the fee income to deliver the instruction. This of course applies also to funds provided by the Commonwealth.

- A National Cultural Policy would seek to ensure that professional arts education is offered at international standards and that graduates are capable of competing in the international market. The necessary prerequisite is that tertiary arts institutions are provided with the funds to cover the cost of delivery of these courses, after subtraction of university taxes. A part of the solution, in the context of the Higher Education Base Funding Review, is to move the arts disciplines to Funding Clusters high enough to support the costs of delivery of the instruction.

The statistics quoted here are drawn from Music Council research, available on its website, www.mca.org.au. The statistics concerning equity are drawn from a study published in 2003. There are reasons to believe that subsequent changes have been for the worse. The statistic about the attitude to music education is drawn from an Australian Music Association study, <http://www.mca.org.au/research/research-reports/other-research/107-australians-attitudes-to-music>