

## Cultural Development Network

### Response to National Cultural Policy Discussion Paper

Cultural Development Network submitted a detailed response to a call for submissions in 2010 and it provided a distinction between cultural policy and arts policy. That document stands as a current submission.

This document applies specific recommendations for developing a national cultural policy in the context of it being driven by the Office for the Arts.

Firstly, and consistent with the earlier submission, we reiterate that the most constructive use of the word 'cultural' is the concept that 'culture' is a lens that should be applied to the development and evaluation of all public policy, including arts policy. Inasmuch as social, economic or environmental 'impact statements' would be applied to a policy, a regulation or a legislative initiative, so too, would a cultural impact statement.

Arts policy is already framed within a set of social and economic impacts and the Commonwealth Government should apply a cultural impact statement to its arts policy as well.

How can the arts enhance culture in Australia?

One response is to increase the participation in the arts. That is, the doing and making of the arts.

One measure of the positive impact on culture by the arts would be an increase in the proportion of citizens being actively involved in arts activities over time.

Based on this preamble, the submission puts forward specific policy proposals under three headings; international leadership, cultural perspective and increasing arts participation.

#### Policy Proposals

Initiatives that put Australia in an **international leadership** position

1. Commit to the UCLG (United Cities and Local Government) Policy Statement on Culture, that calls on national governments to:
  - a. bring a cultural perspective to national development plans as a whole;
  - b. establish concrete objectives and actions concerning culture in areas such as education, the economy, science, communication, environment, social cohesion and international cooperation;
  - c. promote the idea of culture as the fourth pillar internationally, in particular in international policy making
2. Build a cultural perspective into Australia's engagement with the Asia Pacific through inclusion of bi-lateral and multilateral cultural development initiatives alongside economic, social and environmental cooperation agreements.

**Initiatives to build cultural perspective into policy development and evaluation**

1. Strengthen the National Cultural Policy Interdepartmental Committee (IDC) to include all government portfolios; charge it with responsibility to introduce 'cultural impact statements' in all areas where social, economic and environmental impact statements are used.
2. Support the IDC for three years with a skills-based advisory group to assist the development and use of cultural impact statements in government departments.
3. Recognise the role that local government plays in supporting diversity in the arts and broader cultural activities by including a representative of the Australian Local Government Association on the advisory group.
4. Encourage State Governments to see the value of adopting cultural impact statements for public policy.
5. Provide financial support to a nominated diverse group of local government councils to develop cultural impact statements on local public policy as case studies that would inform development of Commonwealth cultural impact statements.

**Initiatives that increase arts participation**

1. Support the ALGA (Australian Local Government Association) to develop resources and guidelines to Australian councils on supporting their local artists, arts groups and organisations to maximise growth of arts activities within their communities.
2. Co-fund exemplar arts development projects within communities, which can provide new and sustainable skills and knowledge for all councils to use and adapt.
3. Increase support to the Australia Council for the Arts to fund community partnerships in local government areas (with or without direct council engagement) where the base of arts activities and community engagement in the arts is increased. Each of the Australia Council art-form boards would have to articulate their strategies, funding programs and measures that will support the development of greater participation in their particular art forms in communities before accessing the additional funds.
4. Fund a partnership between the ALGA, its State local government bodies and the Australia Council for the Arts to establish a rolling series of annual **regions of arts development**. This nationally significant program, to be suitably named, would be based around clusters of regional councils that bid for increased investment in soft infrastructure and sustainable participatory arts activities leading to a 12-month national focus on that region.
5. Directly fund a bi-annual national conference over 6 years (3 conferences) that addresses the performance of the National Cultural Policy and the key objectives of increased participation and cultural impact of government policies.

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