

Cultural Ministers Council Communique

A meeting of Arts and Cultural Ministers was held in Sydney today, Friday 12 August 2011.

New South Wales (chair): The Hon George Souris MP, Minister for the Arts

Australian Government: The Hon Simon Crean MP, Minister for the Arts

Queensland: The Hon Rachel Nolan MP, Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and the Arts

South Australia: The Hon Mike Rann MP, Premier and Minister for the Arts

Australian Capital Territory: Ms Joy Burch MLA, Minister for the Arts

Victoria: Mrs Heidi Victoria MP, Parliamentary Secretary Assisting the Premier with the Arts representing The Hon Ted Baillieu MP, Premier and Minister for the Arts

Apologies

Tasmania: The Hon Lara Giddings MP, Premier and Minister for the Arts

Northern Territory: The Hon Gerald McCarthy MLA, Minister for Arts and Museums

Western Australia: The Hon John Day MLA, Minister for Culture and the Arts

Observers

Apologies

The Hon Christopher Finlayson MP, New Zealand Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage

The Hon David Buffett AM, Chief Minister of Norfolk Island

The Hon Guma Wau MP, Papua New Guinea Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture

Cr Bruce Miller, Vice President of the Australian Local Government Association

Meeting summary

At this meeting, the Ministers:

- Discussed the development of the Australian Government's new **National Cultural Policy**.
- Agreed to a framework to support and fund Australia's **Major Performing Arts** sector.
- Reaffirmed their commitment to support the development of the **Australian arts curriculum** for schools.
- Considered initiatives to support **education, training and employment** outcomes in the arts and associated sectors.
- Endorsed the report outlining the actions of the Australian and state and territory governments to implement the **National Arts and Disability Strategy** which supports, encourages and promotes access and participation in the arts by people with disability.
- Agreed to implement a **future work plan** that sets out opportunities for collaboration between the Australian, state and territory governments over the next five to ten years.

Ministers discussed a range of other issues including a progress report on preparation of the Centenary of Canberra celebrations in 2013; and immunity from seizure of cultural objects on loan to Australian galleries, libraries, museums or institutions.

Further details of the Ministers' discussions are attached.

National Cultural Policy

Ministers welcomed the release of the National Cultural Policy discussion paper on 11 August and the Australian Government's commitment to delivering the first National Cultural Policy in two decades. The reaffirmed the significant role that arts and culture play in the daily lives of all Australian's, and acknowledged the need to develop a comprehensive policy framework for 21st century Australia.

Minister Crean indicated the new National Cultural Policy will show how the arts and culture can contribute to achieving Australia's goals by helping to build an inclusive society, delivering an arts education to young Australians, creating career pathways, providing avenues for expression for our citizens, driving innovation and contributing to productivity.

Ministers acknowledge the importance of integrating arts policy within the reform agenda of all jurisdictions, and the need for clearer avenues of cooperation and collaboration.

To this end, Ministers agreed to actively engage in the consultation process by identifying priority areas that should be addressed by the National Cultural Policy and considering how existing policies and programs that are related to the arts and culture in each jurisdiction could be better aligned to complement each other and capitalise on support for arts and culture across Australia.

Ministers also agreed that officials would work together to identify key areas for collaboration between governments to inform the development of the National Cultural Policy over the coming months.

National Arts and Disability Strategy

Ministers celebrated the range of achievements made under the strategy's banner since its release in October 2009 and the important and growing contribution being made by arts practitioners with disability. A stocktake of existing programs and policy initiatives across all states and territories has prioritised projects under the strategy, leading to targeted action and investment tailored to each jurisdiction's needs.

A comprehensive report of actions and positive outcomes under the strategy is at [the Meeting of Cultural Ministers website](#). Recent key achievements include Australian Government investment in Arts Access Australia designed to grow its national advocacy role and the Tasmanian and South Australian Governments' dedicated funding programs for artists with disability.

Ministers agreed that the National Arts and Disability Strategy will continue to be a priority for all states and territories into the future. Its continued implementation will be made in consultation with the sector.

Major Performing Arts Framework

Ministers committed to a framework that will shape cross-government support for the major performing arts sector, encouraging innovation and creativity in artistic expression, offering opportunities for increased financial support to those companies which take up the challenge of meeting and surpassing these expectations of world-class standards and securing a strong financial base from which these companies can grow.

From 2012, this new model will provide companies with increased autonomy and flexibility, with base operational funding continuing at current levels. The revised model - an update to the funding model set by the 1999 Major Performing Arts Inquiry - focuses on ensuring artistic vibrancy, rewarding success, achieving financial stability and maintaining good governance.

At the meeting, Ministers agreed to establish an 'excellence pool' that, subject to budget processes, could provide additional funds to those companies which attain new standards in world-class artistic excellence.

Ministers agreed the revised framework, which will both drive and reward dynamism and leadership in the major performing arts companies, will be publicly released.

The Arts in Education and Training

Ministers recognised that strategic workforce planning is particularly important to support skills development and job creation in the arts industries. To encourage strategic approaches to workforce planning, Ministers agreed to review existing measures and identify specialised vocational arts training providers in their jurisdictions to both target industry skills gaps and drive the take-up of existing arts vocational training courses.

Engagement in the arts assists young people to explore identity and develop confidence and on this basis Ministers reaffirmed their support for development of a national arts curriculum. Ministers agreed to work closely with Ministers for Education, and for senior Arts officials to work closely with their education counterparts, on the development of the Australian arts curriculum and its future work program.

Future Directions, Collaboration and Work Plan

On 13 February 2011, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to comprehensive reform and the Ministerial Council system. COAG agreed to create a number of councils and governance fora but the Cultural Ministers Council was not identified to transition to this new structure and its remit was withdrawn on 30 June 2011.

In this context, Ministers considered the work plan of the former Cultural Ministers Council and agreed that shared strategic priorities will require ongoing collaboration. Ministers agreed to adopt a collaborative, inclusive approach to future challenges and opportunities, and to meet informally as required to ensure that high priority matters are considered with appropriate recognition of the roles and responsibilities of individual jurisdictions. Ministers also committed to continue to provide joint funding to support agreed projects of national significance requiring cross-jurisdictional collaboration.

Ministers will continue to work together to support vibrant cultural communities; artistic excellence; dynamic cultural places; Indigenous culture; and other key initiatives that ensure the maintenance and growth of Australia's vital arts and cultural sector.

Ministers also noted that officials from each jurisdiction will continue to meet to oversee the implementation of the joint work program, seeking ministerial engagement where appropriate.