

Cultural Ministers Council Communique

The 17th meeting of the Cultural Ministers Council (CMC) was held in Perth today, Thursday 19 February, in conjunction with the Perth International Arts Festival.

The meeting was chaired by the Hon. Sheila McHale MLA, Minister for Community Development, Disability Services, and Culture and the Arts. Other Ministers attending included:

- Senator the Hon Rod Kemp, Minister for the Arts and Sport (Australian Government);
- The Hon Mike Rann MP, Premier and Minister for the Arts (South Australia);
- The Hon Anna Bligh MP, Minister for the Arts and Minister for Education (Queensland);
- Mr Bill Wood MLA, Minister for Arts and Heritage (Australian Capital Territory).
- The Hon Judith Tizard MP, Associate Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage, representing the Right Hon Helen Clark MP, Prime Minister and Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage (New Zealand); and
- The Hon Nick Kuman MP, Minister of Culture and Tourism (Papua New Guinea).

Councillor Mike Montgomery attended representing the Australian Local Government Association.

Meeting Summary

Ministers discussed a range of cultural issues, recognising the importance of performing arts touring in providing increased access to cultural activity in regional areas, and reaffirming the significant role of arts and education.

Ministers have also long recognised the need to assist collecting institutions in caring for our history and agreed to establish the Collections Council of Australia.

The establishment of the Collections Council is a significant step forward for the sector, in recognition that all collecting institutions have a common goal in caring for our past. The outcomes of Ministers' discussions are outlined below.

Performing Arts Touring

Ministers acknowledged the importance of performing arts touring in ensuring widespread access to the performing arts, and increased opportunities for audiences to see high quality performing arts within their local communities, particularly in regional Australia.

Ministers noted that other benefits of the funding programs include assistance for performing arts venues across the country to present a range of work by large and small companies, and also opportunities for performing arts companies to expand their activities through touring and to present their work to new audiences.

Ministers noted the paper provided by the CMC Performing Arts Touring Working Group, and agreed to fund jointly a two-staged consultancy, which will examine a range of issues relating to current government support for performing arts touring across all jurisdictions, and develop a consistent framework for governments to consider in their future support of performing arts touring.

Review of Orchestras

Ministers supported a review of Australia's symphony and pit orchestras to commence as soon as possible. Senator Rod Kemp advised that he will consider the views of his State and Territory colleagues in finalising the terms of reference and membership of the review.

Collections Council of Australia

Ministers have endorsed the recommendations of the National Collections Advisory Forum, chaired by Professor Margaret Seares AO, and agreed to the establishment of a new national industry body to represent the shared interests of galleries, libraries archives and museums.

This is an historic moment for the collections sector and is the culmination of more than ten years of collaboration on the part of CMC.

The Collections Council will play a critical role in:

- developing long term strategies to address issues facing our collections;
- undertaking industry support, particularly through the development of a profile for the sector at a national and international level; and
- implementing initiatives to address cross sectoral issues.

The membership of the body will be announced shortly.

Arts Education and Training in Schools

At the August 2000 CMC meeting, Ministers unanimously agreed that all Governments should promote the value of the arts to Australians, particularly in the area of education and the arts.

In recognition of the importance of arts and education, Ministers welcomed the initiatives being undertaken and agreed to pursue a joint Ministerial statement with the Ministerial Council for Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs.

Promoting the Value of the Arts

Ministers noted a presentation by the Australia Council on the development of a framework for a national Branding the Arts communications strategy. The Strategy is designed to encourage

more Australians to appreciate creativity, and to increase engagement with and participation in the arts.

Ministers endorsed the implementation of the strategy and agreed that individual CMC members have an important role to play in supporting its objectives through partnerships and initiatives which are appropriate to their respective jurisdictions.

Implementation of the Contemporary Visual Arts and Crafts Inquiry

On 9 December 2003 CMC announced the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy—a ground breaking package of funding totalling \$39 million over four years for the visual arts and craft sector—representing governments' response to the recommendations of the Contemporary Visual Arts and Craft Inquiry Report.

Ministers noted progress in developing funding agreements with organisations to be supported under the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy. Ministers also agreed to establish an Implementation Review Committee with all jurisdictions invited to participate. It will monitor funding agreements, and report on progress and achievements under the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy.

Cultural Role of Public Broadcasters

Ministers noted the information paper on arts programming prepared by the ABC and the cultural role of the public broadcasters, in particular the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). Ministers agreed that the CMC Standing Committee would request a meeting with the ABC and SBS to discuss arts programming and report back out-of-session.

Creative Cities

Ministers noted that the Victorian Government proposes to host a Creative Cities Conference in 2006, attracting Australian and international participants, to re-examine the implications of far-reaching changes in the landscape of our cities.

The Conference may form part of the Cultural Program associated with the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne.

Other Business

Eureka 150 Celebrations

Ministers noted that the 150th anniversary of the Eureka Stockade will take place in late 2004, and that the Victorian Government has established a Reference Group to assist with planning the anniversary celebrations.

Melbourne 2006 Cultural Program

The Melbourne 2006 Cultural Program will showcase contemporary Australian and Commonwealth cultures through the *Cultures of the Commonwealth Festival* to be held during the Games, and a diverse range of cultural events in the months leading to the Opening Ceremony.

Ministers noted that the Cultural Program will be coordinated by the Victorian Government, and that the Australian Government has expressed interest in contributing to a number of program components of the 2006 Commonwealth Games, including the Cultural Program.

Next Meeting

Ministers expressed their appreciation to the Chair for Western Australia's hospitality in hosting the meeting. Ministers agreed that the next meeting of CMC will be hosted by Queensland in 2005.

19 February 2004