

Cultural Ministers Council Communique

The 15th meeting of the Cultural Ministers Council (CMC) was held in Melbourne today, Wednesday 1 May 2002.

The meeting was chaired by The Hon Mary Delahunty MLA, Minister for Planning, Arts and Women's Affairs. Other Ministers attending included:

- Senator the Hon Rod Kemp, Minister for the Arts and Sport (Commonwealth);
- The Hon Jim Bacon MHA, Premier and Minister for State Development (Tasmania);
- The Hon R J Carr, MP, Premier and Minister for the Arts (New South Wales) was represented by Mr Roger Wilkins, Director General, NSW Ministry for the Arts;
- The Hon Mike Rann MP, Premier and Minister for the Arts (South Australia);
- The Hon Matt Foley MP, Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts (Queensland);
- The Hon Clare Martin MLA, Chief Minister and Minister for Arts and Museums (Northern Territory);
- The Hon Sheila McHale MLA, Minister for Community Development, Disability Services, and Culture and the Arts (Western Australia);
- Mr Bill Wood MLA, Minister for Urban Services and the Arts (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);

Councillor Peter Watts, Vice President, represented the Australian Local Government Association.

Meeting Summary

Ministers were pleased to have the opportunity to exchange views on a range of key arts and heritage collections issues, and acknowledged the importance of these issues to Australia's creative and cultural life. Importantly, Ministers have made decisions which will see progress being made in a number of significant areas and strategic directions have been set for the future. The agreements reached by Ministers are detailed below.

Heritage collections

Key needs study and evaluation of Australian museums and galleries online (AMOL). For almost a decade Ministers have worked with the Heritage Collections Council and its predecessors to coordinate national strategies and initiatives for improving the preservation and accessibility of heritage collections.

Ministers acknowledged the valuable work of the Heritage Collections Council and are committed to build upon this work. Ministers are also committed to a continuing partnership with the museums and galleries sectors and to the development of new partnerships with libraries and archives.

A study of the Key Needs of Australia's Heritage Collections was undertaken by Deakin University and Ministers have agreed to release this significant piece of primary research.

Having considered the study the Ministers agreed to establish a National Collections Advisory Forum to provide strategic advice on collections, and to identify priorities for government in addressing the ongoing needs of the sector. A key focus for the Forum will be to advise Ministers within 12 months on the feasibility of establishing an industry body to represent the collections sector. The Forum will be chaired by an eminent Australian, and include both collections industry and community members. Membership will be announced in the near future.

The Ministers agreed to allocate \$160,000 in 2002--03 to enable the Forum to address its Terms of Reference, which are to:

- prioritise the current and future needs of Australia's collections, including benchmarks and standards, and recommend strategies and programs to address these needs;
- develop strategies to identify the community value of collections and support their potential as instruments of social, cultural and economic development;
- advise on means of enhancing the coordination of programs of support offered by the three tiers of Government and industry; and
- provide a report to CMC, within 12 months, upon the feasibility or otherwise of establishing a national industry body to represent the library, archives, museum and gallery sectors.

Ministers agreed to allocate \$100,000 per annum to the CMC Standing Committee to fund programs of support for the sector following advice from the Forum.

Ministers also recognised the value of AMOL to the collections sector, and its potential to provide access to our heritage collection for Australians. Ministers agreed to a significant redevelopment of the website, to enable AMOL to fulfil this potential.

Ministers allocated \$70,000 to fund the first stage of the AMOL redevelopment-the preparation of a Business Analysis Report. The report will include a detailed specification, costing and implementation program for the redevelopment. The scale and scope of the redevelopment will be decided having regard to the outcomes of the Business Analysis Report.

Minister agreed, pending the outcomes of the redevelopment, to maintain the current funding for AMOL of \$400,000 per year, as well as the existing governance and management arrangements.

Report to Ministers on the Examination of the Small-to-Medium Performing Arts Sector

At the meeting in August 2000, Ministers agreed to an examination of the factors influencing the artistic and financial viability of Australia's small-to-medium sized arts organisations. Ministers considered a report on the outcomes of this examination at today's meeting.

Ministers reaffirmed the pivotal contribution made by the Sector to Australia's cultural life and acknowledged that:

- the sector is characterised by great diversity, a focus on new creative endeavour, slim administrative structure, a large volunteer workforce and a commitment to artistic production;
- the sector focuses on research and development; creatively the high risk end of the performing art and the strong commitment to the Sector's production and service organisations is underlined by the provision by Governments of more than \$30 million a year at the present time;
- the Sector makes a significant contribution to promoting Australia's international cultural profile;
- the Sector involves a large number of young people and communities across Australia;
- while the Sector as a whole is in surplus its financial stability is finely balanced, with some areas under financial stress; and
- as organisations grow, their operations become more complex and additional business skills are required to strengthen the Sector's ability to operate with greater certainty in a challenging environment.

Ministers recognised that Governments' expectations for the Sector require clarification to achieve a better understanding between the Sector and funding agencies regarding creative risk taking and sustainability.

Ministers agreed on the elements of a strategy to enhance overall Sector sustainability in creative and financial terms, as follows:

- the effectiveness and efficiency of funding for the Sector will be improved through enhanced co-operation between the Australia Council, DCITA and State/Territory funding agencies. Specifically the funding agencies will address: - the establishment of funding protocols and agreements for:- (a) organisations in receipt of multi-year funding from both the State/Territory and the Commonwealth and (b) a limited number of other agreed companies; - clarification of the respective expectations of the Commonwealth and the States/Territories regarding these organisations. - improved coordination of State, Territory and Commonwealth application and reporting material and cycles; and - better co-ordination and communication by funding agencies of the opportunities to support national and international touring. - the provision of targeted advice and expertise to address companies encountering financial stress.
- a joint program for medium-size companies (annual turnover of \$0.5 million to \$1.0 million) and a limited number of other agreed companies will be developed and

implemented as a high priority to support them to enhance skills in board governance, financial management, business development, marketing, use of IT and sponsorship/fundraising.

- Ministers agreed to encourage the Australia Business Arts Foundation, the Australia Council and State and Territory departments to offer strategic assistance for small to medium companies as a matter of priority.
- Ministers also agreed that Standing Committee will report on the outcome of these strategic interventions at their next meeting.
- Ministers agreed to the release of the Report on an examination of the small to medium performing arts sector.

Public Broadcasting in Australia-The Cultural Benefits and Value

Ministers noted the discussion paper on Public Broadcasting in Australia-the Cultural Benefits and Value and acknowledged the vital cultural benefit contributed by public broadcasters in the creation and presentation of local content - Australian stories and Australian voices.

Ministers agreed to provide a copy of the discussion paper to the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), Special Broadcasting Service and to the peak community broadcasting organisations (the Community Broadcasting Foundation and the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia) requesting their comments on the paper with particular comments on the issues of:

- Australian content, and
- regional coverage.

The Ministers agreed to provide a copy of the discussion paper to the ABC Arts Development Advisory Group seeking their views on strengthening the links between the ABC and the arts.

Reconciliation

As part of the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) Framework on Reconciliation, Ministers considered progress within the cultural sector against COAG's three priority areas:

- investing in community leadership;
- reviewing and re-engineering programs and services to ensure they deliver practical measures that support families, children and young people;
- greater links between the business sector and Indigenous communities to help promote economic independence.

In addition, Ministers discussed the areas where CMC can further advance reconciliation within the cultural sector.

Ministers agreed to give priority to Indigenous intellectual property issues and quality assurances mechanisms and an examination of the best practice of involving different levels of government.

Ministers also agreed to the establishment of a committee (with representation from New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and the Commonwealth, including the Australia Council) to examine the best ways to proceed in these areas for the desired outcomes and report back to Ministers at the next CMC meeting.

Inquiry into the Contemporary Visual Arts and Craft Sector

Ministers noted that the Inquiry's report on the contemporary visual arts and craft sector has yet to be presented to the Commonwealth Minister. In discussion, Ministers expressed their support for this sector, noting the contribution of individual artists and crafts people to Australia's creative and cultural life.

Implementation of Recommendations of the Major Performing Arts Inquiry

Ministers received a report from officials on the progress made in implementing the decisions taken by Ministers on Securing the Future-the report of the Major Performing Arts Inquiry at the August 2000 CMC meeting.

Specifically, Ministers noted the successful implementation of the agreed recommendations of the Inquiry, and the joint arrangements entered into by State and Commonwealth funding agencies for the major performing arts companies.

It was agreed that the Implementation Reference Committee (with membership drawn from State funding agencies, the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, the major performing arts companies and the Australia Council) should continue its role for a further 12 months-providing a valuable vehicle for communication between the major performing arts sector, State and Commonwealth funding agencies.

Motion to amend the *Australia Council Act 1975*

The Cultural Ministers Council affirmed its support for the Australia Council.

The Cultural Ministers Council requests the Federal Government to consider the amendment of the *Australia Council Act 1975* to confirm access and diversity in the arts and to affirm respect for Indigenous culture.

Cultural Statistics

Ministers approved the CMC Statistics Working Group's continuing role as a national advisory group on cultural statistics matters for the Cultural Ministers and a provider of a cost-effective program of national cultural statistics.

Ministers approved the CMC Statistics Working Group's proposed program of activities, including:

- measuring the Social Impacts of Creative Participation in Arts and Cultural Activity;
- estimating the Value of Indigenous Cultural Product; and
- measuring the Impact of Cultural Tourism in Regions.

Ministers also released *The Strategic Direction in Corporate Sponsorships: Practical Implications for the Arts* -a publication developed by the Australia Business Arts Foundation providing a number of important messages for the arts sector as follows:

- sponsorship arrangements are no longer determined by personal interest. Accountability to shareholders requires a 'hard-nosed business case'.
- business looks for 'focus and fit', where values and identity match their own.

- business seeks Cultural Partners who can demonstrate a valued contribution to community life.
- the outcome from sponsorship should be measurable. Sponsored organisations should take equal responsibility for the ongoing relationship and outcomes.

Arts and Education

Ministers received a report from the Commonwealth on key achievements in the area of the arts and education—a priority which Ministers had taken up at their last meeting.

Ministers noted initiatives resulting from the National Seminar on Education and the Arts held at Sydney Opera House on 14 February 2002, which engaged the attention of senior arts and education officials as well as key academics.

Ministers expressed their continued support for the strengthening of links between education and the arts.

Next meeting

Ministers agreed that the next meeting of CMC will be hosted by Tasmania, in Hobart, in March/April 2003.