

Cultural Ministers Council Communique

The 19th meeting of the Cultural Ministers Council (CMC) was held in Wellington, New Zealand today, Friday 22 September 2006. The meeting was chaired by Senator Rod Kemp, the Australian Government Minister for the Arts and Sport.

Hosting the meeting:

New Zealand - The Hon Judith Tizard, Associate Minister, Arts, Culture and Heritage
Australian governments were represented by:

Australian Government - The Hon Senator Rod Kemp, Minister for the Arts and Sport

New South Wales - The Hon Bob Debus MP, Attorney General, Minister for the Environment and Minister for the Arts

Victoria - The Hon Mary Delahunty MP, Minister for the Arts and Women's Affairs

Queensland - The Hon Rod Welford MP, Minister for Education and Training and Minister for the Arts

Western Australia - The Hon Sheila McHale MLA, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Tourism, Culture and the Arts

Tasmania - The Hon Paula Wriedt MHA, Minister for Tourism, Arts and the Environment
The following representatives of Australian Ministers attended:

Australian Capital Territory - Mr John Stanwell, Director artsACT, representing Mr Jon Stanhope MLA, Chief Minister, Minister for the Arts

Northern Territory - Ms Diana Leeder, Executive Director, Arts and Museums, representing Ms Marion Scrymgour MLA, the Minister for Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts

South Australia - Mr Greg Mackie OAM, Executive Director, Arts SA, representing The Hon Mike Rann MP, Premier and Minister for the Arts

Councillor Dick Gross, President of the Municipal Association of Victoria attended representing the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA).

Meeting Summary

The Ministers discussed a national cooperation framework for arts and culture, developments in support for Indigenous arts and culture and emerging opportunities for strengthening the digital content industry. Ministers also reaffirmed their commitment to support performing, touring and visual arts and craft initiatives.

Ministers recognised the need to work strategically together to advance the value and importance of the arts in our society. In this context they agreed to develop cultural indicators to assist future policy development, within the context of a frame work for national cooperation.

The outcomes of the Ministers' discussions are outlined below.

The Way Forward For the Cultural Ministers Council

In accordance with Council of Australian Governments (COAG) guidelines, Ministers were presented with a report reviewing the Cultural Ministers Council and agreed to implement a series of recommendations to improve the governance and efficiency of CMC and its working groups.

Ministers considered a report on major trends and challenges facing the cultural sector over the next decade. They also noted the role of culture in shaping and projecting national identity.

Ministers endorsed as a starting point the Framework for National Cooperation in the Arts and Culture put forward by Victoria and comprising four thematic areas:

- Indigenous arts and culture;
- Innovation and the arts in a changing world;
- Arts and culture in a changing and diverse society; and
- Growing a dynamic and sustainable arts industry that contributes to economic growth and community well-being.

Ministers agreed to prioritise a range of activities including the development of cultural indicators, the arts and education and contemporary music.

Ministers affirmed the importance of local government in supporting the cultural sector under the framework.

Ministers discussed opportunities for exchange between Australia and New Zealand on digital content and related issues, noting both countries are developing strong creative industries based on digital content strategies.

Ministers agreed to the continuation of the triennial funding arrangement for the CMC Statistics Working Group for 2006–07 to 2008–09, comprising \$240,000 per annum for the Australian Bureau of Statistics' cultural statistics program and up to \$100,000 per annum for priority projects.

Ministers also agreed to the Statistics Working Group's 2006–07 budget and program.

Indigenous Arts and Culture

Members were updated on the national Indigenous affairs context, specifically in relation to Indigenous arts and culture programs. Members noted the whole of government framework provides the Australian Government and the states and territories with an opportunity to work together to coordinate planning and delivery of Indigenous cultural and arts programs.

Members noted developments in the Australian Government's support for Indigenous arts and culture, including new funding in the 2006–07 Budget, and the establishment of a Parliamentary Inquiry into the Indigenous visual arts and craft sector.

Ministers formally conveyed their support for the Parliamentary Inquiry's Terms of Reference, that complement and reinforce a key priority area of the CMC Framework for National Cooperation in the Arts and Culture.

Orchestras Review Implementation

Ministers noted developments on the implementation of the government-agreed recommendations of the Orchestras Review 2005, including progress on the divestment of the symphony orchestras from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). The Ministers noted that the orchestras are working towards divestment from the ABC by the end of 2006.

Ministers noted the commitment of substantial resources to implement the review's key recommendations and the significant steps which have been taken towards divestment.

Ministers agreed to provide flexibility in the timing of funding payments to orchestras to assist them in managing the divestment process. Ministers noted that the Australian Government will conduct a detailed evaluation in 2008 of the effectiveness of funding provided to the orchestras through the Orchestras Review package.

Review and Evaluation

Ministers discussed the key findings of the second review of the funding model for major performing arts companies prepared by the Australia Council. The review examined the achievements of major performing arts companies against the key criteria of artistic vibrancy, sustainability and access. It also looked at recent changes in the domestic and international marketplace, and current pressures and future challenges for the companies.

Ministers noted that an evaluation of the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy confirmed the success of the Australian, state and territory governments' joint investment in the contemporary visual arts and craft sector.

Ministers also noted an evaluation of the Return of Indigenous Cultural Property Program and agreed that important progress has been made with the provenancing of Indigenous ancestral remains and secret and sacred objects, and in having them returned to their communities from major Australian museums.

Ministers noted that funding issues relating to these three reports will be considered by each jurisdiction in the context of Budget deliberations.

Ministers also noted that a review of the Collections Council of Australia is to take place in 2006–07 and confirmed the terms of reference and membership of the working group that will oversee the review.

National Review of Performing Arts Touring

Ministers were informed of the current outcomes of the National Review of Performing Arts Touring, which provides an overview of government funding support for performing arts touring, and discusses barriers to increasing the effectiveness of touring.

The review's findings confirm the significant funding available to support performing arts touring across Australia—over \$25m in 2004–05. Over the three years surveyed 479 tours were supported, visiting over 1,200 communities across Australia with 8,872 performances.

Arts and Education

Ministers were informed of outcomes of the National Music Workshop held on 27–28 August 2006.

Ministers considered and supported a joint National Education and the Arts Statement from the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) and CMC.

Ministers agreed that a cross-jurisdictional joint working group should be convened to progress and develop initiatives arising from the statement. Ministers noted that MCEETYA has yet to consider the joint statement and agreed to inform it of the outcome of their deliberations.

Strengthening the Creative Innovation Economy

Ministers discussed emerging opportunities for creative industries and the cultural sector in the digital environment.

They noted initiatives generating new growth opportunities for sustainable artistic, cultural and film related activity, such as the Australian Government's Digital Content Industry Action Agenda, the New Zealand Digital Strategy and Victoria's Cultural Broadband Network.

To boost the contribution of the creative innovative economy in the future, Ministers agreed to establish a 'round table' of officials bringing together industry development, ICT, broadband, film and cultural interests to map the priorities across jurisdictions and report back on opportunities.

The process will assist with developing linkages in areas of mutual interest between the Online and Communications Council (OCC) and the Cultural Ministers Council. Ministers agreed to advise the OCC of the outcomes of its deliberations.

Children's Television in the Digital Age

State and territory Ministers supported the Australian Children's Television Foundation's proposal for the creation of a dedicated digital children's channel with significant Australian and educational content and agreed that the CMC Chair advise the Australian Government's Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts of that support.

Ministers supported the objectives of the Australian Children's Television Foundation and state and territory Ministers agreed to consider their funding contributions in that context. State and territory Ministers would inform relevant portfolio Ministers of the resolution.

Next Meeting

Ministers expressed their appreciation to New Zealand for hosting the meeting, and to the Australian Government for chairing the meeting. Ministers agreed that the next meeting of CMC will be chaired and hosted by the Australian Capital Territory in 2007.

22 September 2006