

Submission – New National Cultural Policy

Introduction

Creative Economy is a strategic advisory practice that specialises in improving the sustainability of cultural and creative industries and their role in sustainable economic development.

Founded by Helene George in 1992, Creative Economy has been at the forefront of cultural policy and development in the sector for over three decades nationally and internationally. Beginning with delivery of *Creative Nation* industry programs in cultural tourism; strategic development of cultural infrastructure e.g. Kingston Foreshore, Walsh Bay and recently Godinymayin Yijard Rivers Arts and Culture Centre and Nyinkka Nyunyu Art and Culture Centre; delivering *Memento Australia* - a platform to promote authentic Australian art and design in tourism; authoring Australia's first Creative Industries Strategy in 2001 for Brisbane City Council; initiating Indigenous cultural business programs with ATSIC/ATSIS and creative entrepreneurial programs for AusIndustry, State Development agencies; and strategic business development especially for Indigenous cultural organisations including, Leah Purcell's Oombarra Productions, BlackCard, Tjanpi Desert Weavers, Mangkaja Arts, Waringarri Aboriginal Arts, Juluwarlu Group Aboriginal Corporation, Mowanjum Aboriginal Art and Culture Centre, and Desart. Policy advisory in forums as an Expert for the UNESCO 2005 Convention; Hangzhou Declaration Millennium Development Agenda in China; Review of Cultural Industries in Pacific Nations; and speaker and author of a chapter in *Creative Economy 2030* for the Asian Development Bank Institute as a publication for the G20 in Indonesia 2022.

Through participation in national and international policy forums, as well as experience drawn from working with thousands of cultural and creative enterprises over a 30-year period, Creative Economy shares our insights for the development of a National Cultural Policy with three key policy considerations.

1. Cultural Policy Priority #1 - First Nations Culture Fund

Our biggest learning from working in Aboriginal communities is that Aboriginal logic and cultural practice is the best proven model for sustainability. In a contemporary world, cultural practice and cultural expressions are intrinsically linked to social and economic wellbeing and prosperity. For First Nations people, Australia has no dedicated program or fund to enable Indigenous cultural practice or to revive cultural practice. First Nations people should be the priority of a National Cultural Policy. Therefore, a First Nations Culture Fund should be the #1 priority of a National Cultural Policy. A National First Nations Culture Fund has greater potential to improve the social and economic wellbeing and prosperity of First Nations people than any of the versions of the Governments "Closing the Gap" Policy.

2. Cultural Policy Enacted in an Arts Framework is Less Effective

Cultural policy enacted in an arts framework is a western construct with limited relevance in Indigenous and culturally diverse contexts. Enacting a Cultural Policy in an arts framework tends to embed elite western values of cultural practice and cultural expressions. An arts framework has failed to reflect or adapt to the evolution of the cultural ecosystem from cultural industries in the 90s, to creative industries in the 2000s, to the breadth of the ecosystem that exists today. The continued priority and dominance of major performing arts resourcing at the expense of the whole cultural ecosystem is a key indicator of this.

3. Creative Economy Framework for Policy Development

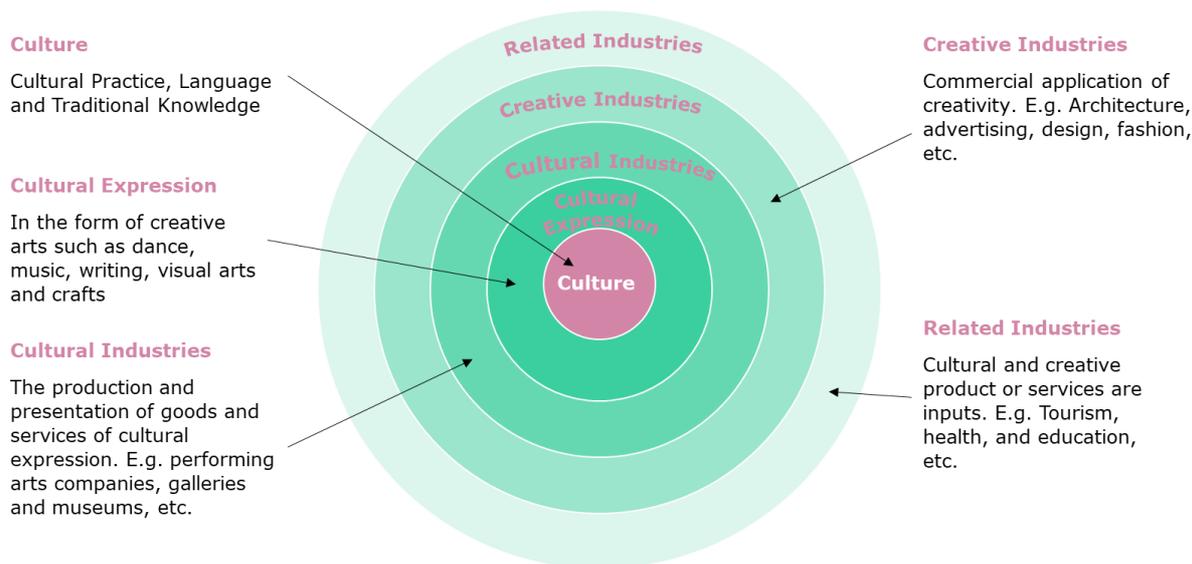
The development of a cultural policy framework capable of providing a "comprehensive roadmap that guides a sustainable sector" is unlikely to occur without a more sophisticated understanding of the ecosystem of cultural and creative industries and a new framework for understanding. According to Throsby (2008: 147), a "systematic understanding of the structure of the cultural economy and how its various parts fit together" is essential in formulating effective policies. Throsby himself endeavored to illustrate his take on the structure of the cultural industries in his concentric circles model. The Throsby

concentric circles model applies an economic approach to creative arts and the cultural industries and is based on the initial proposition that cultural goods and services produce both economic and cultural values (Throsby 2008). Proposing creative arts as the core of this model and the source of cultural and economic value tends to account for only a Western perspective of culture as creative arts. The Throsby model fails to illustrate cultural value in the context and understanding of cultural industries in Pacific nations and similarly Indigenous nations in Australia.

While undertaking a Situational Analysis of Cultural Industries in the Pacific (George and Mitchell 2012) in 2012, Helene George adapted David Throsby’s concentric circles model to make it more relevant to the developing Island nations of the Pacific for sustainable development.

The following Creative Economy Concentric Circles Model illustrates a way of thinking about the creative economy that expresses the structure and dynamics of the creative economy and remains the most relevant model today.

Creative Economy Concentric Circles Model



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George’s concentric circles model puts culture itself at the core, instead of the creative arts. What is considered “culture” here includes cultural practice, language, and traditional knowledge; radiating out to cultural expressions in the form of creative arts, and then expanding to cultural industries as the production and presentation of goods and services of culture and cultural expression. This then expands out to creative industries with the commercial application of creativity and then to related industries where culture and creative products become inputs to other sectors such as tourism, health, and education.

The model utilises culture itself as a source, driver, and enabler to generate economic value, which makes it different from Throsby’s arts-centric model. George’s model puts culture front and centre, making it locally applicable and internationally scalable in the context of both developed and developing countries as well as urban, rural, and regional areas.

The Creative Economy Concentric Circles Model is essentially a representation of the value chain in the creative economy. Importantly, at an enterprise level this model is an effective tool in illustrating sustainable business models for cultural enterprises. Culture and cultural expression form the driver and enabler as the central value proposition, the cultural value. When an enterprise is able to articulate its unique core cultural value and then apply it through layers and industry sectors of the model, they are able to drive diverse and multiple revenue streams and economic value that improves the enterprise’s sustainability. The model has been applied to repeated success. Waringarri Aboriginal Arts and Tjanpi Desert Weavers being just two examples.

Today, the important role of culture is being increasingly recognised around the world and the creative

Economy continues gaining momentum, especially in key growth areas such as Asia and the Pacific region. Countries such as the People's Republic of China, Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia are putting the creative economy at the forefront of their strategic development plans and are resolved on advancing that decision for the foreseeable future.

Even Australia's first cultural policy, Keating's *Creative Nation* asserted that "this cultural policy is also an economic policy" and emphasised culture's importance of identity, more specifically, "the identity of the nation, communities, and individuals".

The Creative Economy Concentric Circles Model is especially effective in sustainable economic development and in developing sustainable businesses as it reflects First Nations principles that culture and cultural expression are at their heart and interwoven with social and economic outcomes.

Recommendations for a Holistic Integrated Robust Cultural Policy Framework

An integrated, robust, and holistic policy framework should respond to all layers of cultural and creative industries, and the organisations and businesses working within those layers. Our submission shares an alternative conceptual model of the creative economy that puts culture front and center and introduces a strategic and sustainable framework for cultural policy development. The development of a creative economy framework requires new ways of thinking, especially in the context of Asia and the Pacific. Accordingly, our recommendations for a robust and holistic policy framework based on a creative economy framework includes the following:

- **The creative economy as a national development policy** - Domestically, the creative economy as a national development policy can create transformative change throughout the economy. Internationally, a strong creative economy can promote the unique cultural strengths of a nation, highlighting a nation's distinction in an increasingly competitive global economy
- **Recognise the creative economy as a vehicle for social and economic inclusion** - The source of the creative economy relies on culture, cultural knowledge, and creative expertise and talent. These abilities are equally found in people with less social and economic mobility. The creative economy provides an effective vehicle for social inclusion that can lead to economic participation. Increased inclusion leads to overall greater economic development.
- **Include cultural programs as a cross-sectoral strategy in government policy platforms** - Culture is a transformative force and is both an enabler and driver of the economy. Cultural programs add value to other sectors and are effective ways to engage and create more inclusive and holistic outcomes. This includes regional development, micro, small and medium-sized enterprise development, tourism, health, education, social inclusion, community development, etc.
- **Public sector procurement strategies, requirements to procure and commission cultural services and products** The public sector is a significant consumer in the economy. Public sector procurement strategies are an effective way to directly invest in the creative economy, especially in commissioning cultural expertise, services, and products. For example, a requirement for infrastructure development initiatives over a certain financial value to allocate a budget for public art procurement within design and development.
- **Invest in local artists, cultural practitioners, and cultural enterprises** - Cultural practitioners and artists are at the heart of the creative economy. Cultural enterprises have the capacity to be vital vehicles for these artists to earn revenue. Direct public investments of operational funds to provide cultural enterprises are important catalysts for leveraging further funds and generating entrepreneurial revenues.
- **Local content quotas** - In the creative economy, local content quotas are important policy interventions to support smaller economies. They are mostly associated with the requirement of local content to be included in broadcast audio visual sectors such as television, radio, and online media. This is an important enabler and driver of screen-based sectors that have inputs from other cultural industry sectors. This type of policy action could be applied to other areas of the creative economy at a national and/or regional level.
- **Provide enhanced access to digital infrastructures** - Access to high-speed digital platforms is an essential part of an enabling environment for the creative economy. Actors in the creative economy require access to affordable and reliable digital connectivity.

- **Professionalise management in the creative economy** - A manager in the creative economy today is required to be a cultural entrepreneur, equally adept at dealing with local artisans, and generating revenues while understanding increasingly complex regulations and compliance in global markets. The sector requires skills development in management that is not generic management theory based on industrial engineering and production lines, but specific to cultural management.

Endnotes

1. Helene George & Aushaf Widisto: Chapter 8 p117 - p131 "*Culture, Front and Center: Creative Economy Framework for a Robust, Inclusive and Sustainable Post-COVID-19 Recovery* ", in the Asian Development Bank Institute Book "*Creative Economy 2030: Imagining and Delivering a Robust, Creative, Inclusive, and Sustainable Recovery*", 2022.
2. Helene George: Chapter 6 p105 – p130 "*The Transformative Force of Culture in Sustainable Development: Innovative Approaches in Practice*", in the book "*New Humanism and Global Governance*", 2019.

Permission

This submission can be published on the Arts Department website with the name of the authors and our organisation name attributed.

Authors

Name: Helene George and Anthony Merrilees

Organisation: Creative Economy Pty Ltd

Email: [REDACTED]

Phone: [REDACTED]

Submission Type

On behalf of a for-profit arts business.