HAVE YOUR SAY

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# NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY

## DISCUSSION PAPER

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

The Australian Government committed to the development of a new National Cultural Policy in the 2010 election Arts Policy document *Investing in a Creative Australia*. This will be the first comprehensive cultural policy since the Keating Government’s *Creative Nation*.

The National Cultural Policy will reflect the important role that arts and creativity play in the daily lives of all Australians, and will help to integrate arts and cultural policy within our broader social and economic goals.

It 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.

In 2009 consultation began on a National Cultural Policy with the arts and culture sector, creative industries, the public at large and across government, which helped inform this discussion paper on key issues.

This discussion paper signals the next phase of consultation, in which we seek feedback on proposed goals and priorities. It is an opportunity for you to contribute to the development of a new National Cultural Policy, which will set out a strategic vision for arts, culture and the established and emerging creative industries in Australia.

All Australians are invited to consider the ideas and aspirations in the discussion paper and provide input. In particular your views are sought on:

- the role the arts and culture can play in meeting Australian aspirations, as outlined in the goals;
- what success for each goal might look like; and
- ideas you have to get there.

Your comments on this paper will assist in shaping a 10-year vision, underpinned by tangible action, to ensure our arts, cultural and creative endeavours resonate most soundly with a 21st century Australia, and in doing so strengthen the nation’s pursuit of its economic and social policy agenda.

I encourage you to make your contribution at www.culture.arts.gov.au.

THE HON SIMON CREAN MP
The arts and creative industries are fundamental to Australia’s identity as a society and nation, and increasingly to our success as a national economy.

Australia’s Indigenous traditions of creative expression stretch back millennia before European settlement, and the arts have been an integral part of Australia’s cultural life since colonial painters depicted the Australian landscape and the bush poets articulated their experiences of life on this continent.

It is only four decades since Australia made arts policy a national priority, by establishing the Australia Council and the Australian Film Commission as core institutions for investment in the arts and committing to a national gallery alongside the National Library in Canberra.

Almost 20 years ago, the Australian Government built on this with a comprehensive cultural policy statement, Creative Nation, which recognised the contribution of the arts and culture to the broader economy through the creative industries.

With government support, Australia’s arts and creative industries have built global reputations for innovation, talent and energy, while achieving participation rates of 90 per cent of the population. Artists in film, television, theatre, music, literature, dance, painting and craft have inspired discussion about Australia’s national identity, and arts and cultural activity have provided crucial pathways for self-expression, community engagement and celebration.

Now in the 21st century, it is time for a new phase of policy development designed to bring the arts and creative industries into the mainstream of Australian life. A new National Cultural Policy will set out a framework that recognises and builds on the successes of the past 40 years to ensure that Australia embeds its creative skills and talent, not just at the heart of our cultural life, but at the heart of our technological development and national economic growth.

The new National Cultural Policy will also rest on a clear understanding that the structures and funding programs of the past need review and upgrading to meet today’s challenges and opportunities. Creative content and creative skills are vitally important in meeting the challenges before us.

As Australia’s first cultural policy in almost two decades the policy should position the arts to play an important role in driving innovation across the nation and contributing to productivity. A creative nation is a more productive nation.

The National Broadband Network, with its high-speed broadband, will enable new opportunities for developing and delivering Australian content and applications reflecting our diverse culture and interests. It will also give business and community organisations in regional areas a historic opportunity to connect with national and international audiences and markets.

The policy will be based on an understanding that a creative nation produces a more inclusive society and a more expressive and confident citizenry by encouraging our ability to express, describe and share our diverse experiences — with each other and with the world.

The new national curriculum will ensure that young Australians have access to learning in the creative arts. Research shows that arts education encourages academic achievement and improves students’ self-esteem, leading to more positive engagement with school and the broader community and higher school retention rates. This highlights the need to focus on building skills for careers in the arts sector, to develop
new career pathways and new opportunities to study the arts and develop students’ potential. Our design, media, entertainment and other creative industries have been growing strongly – but we need to maintain and grow Australian talent in order to develop these industries further.

In the Australian Government’s commitment to Closing the Gap, the celebration of our Indigenous culture and heritage has extended to building businesses based on the arts, and using cultural support to strengthen Indigenous communities, including through maintaining and reviving Indigenous languages.

The National Cultural Policy will provide a comprehensive framework which connects these national policies and priorities, bringing the arts and creative industries truly into the mainstream of Australia’s economic and social life. Whether it is by providing an empty building for young artists to revive a regional CBD, or by linking designers to high-value manufacturers, the policy will recognise that the arts and creative industries are key elements in driving productivity growth and skills development.

Without a renewed National Cultural Policy to guide and inspire us, we are missing important opportunities when it comes to telling our stories, educating and skilling our workforce, and enabling our culture to connect with the rest of the world.

Now is the time to articulate a 10-year vision, to take stock and celebrate our achievements, to identify the massive changes affecting the arts and creativity in Australia, review our existing industry structures and spending programs, and rise to meet new challenges.

We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver a new cultural policy which will shape the Australia of the future and this discussion paper enables you to be involved and have your say.
BACKGROUND

WHAT WILL THE NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY ENCOMPASS?

The National Cultural Policy will relate to:

**Core arts:** Music, performing arts, literature and visual arts which are practised by professional practitioners, students and hobbyists. In addition to the individual and collective activities of professional practitioners and hobbyists, the core arts form the basis for arts education, collections and performances which may be made available to the public in galleries, libraries, theatres, cultural venues and training institutions and increasingly on-line and broadcast – these are often also known as ‘cultural industries’.

**Creative industries:** A sector which harnesses a range of creative and business skills for commercial production purposes, and may include large-scale industrial functions for manufacturing and distribution through the use of support materials and communications technologies. Creative industries include film and television production, broadcasting, electronic games, architecture, design and fashion, publishing, media and advertising.

**Cultural heritage:** In parallel with core arts and creative industries there will be a strong recognition of Australia’s cultural heritage, and in particular, Australia’s Indigenous culture which is the oldest living culture in the world. Australia’s Indigenous culture is unique, and comprises both dynamic, living systems and expressions which must be supported to develop, and endangered systems and expressions which must be protected and where possible, revived.

WHERE IS AUSTRALIA NOW?

Before looking to the future, it is necessary to understand where Australia is now and how it continues to change.

It is on this basis that we can consider the following questions: Do current policies reflect and support the profile of modern Australia? How do the arts and creative industries contribute to the Australian economy? How many Australians and which parts of the community participate in the arts? What impact do the arts and cultural heritage have on our society – on education outcomes and social cohesion?

HOW DOES THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT SUPPORT ARTS AND CULTURE?

The Australian Government supports Australia’s cultural life in extremely diverse ways which reach far beyond direct financial support – through regulation, legislation and setting standards (including intellectual property), through support for international conventions, taxation offsets and support for training and education in the arts.

The Government provides broad support to Australia’s arts and creative sector through a suite of funding programs and support mechanisms. These range from direct grants to funding through its agencies.

The Australia Council is the Australian Government’s main arts funding body across visual arts, performing arts and literature. Its aim is to enrich the lives of all Australians and its communities by supporting exceptional and distinctive Australian art, access for all Australians and a strong and vibrant arts sector.
In the screen sector Screen Australia provides grants for a variety of genres for film and television and is moving into new online and digitally based content.

Government support has enabled training for elite artists and musicians in national training institutions and has supported thousands of talented individuals to prepare for and forge their careers in film, theatre and music. For example, graduates from the National Institute of Dramatic Arts, and the Australian Film, Television and Radio School have made enormous contributions to our local screen and broadcast industries and Australia’s cultural life and received international recognition and awards.

The Government’s Indigenous cultural funding supports a network of community-based arts, cultural and languages centres across Australia, from highly urban areas to remote communities. These have helped put Indigenous arts and culture on the national and international map and have contributed substantially to the high profile of these activities, to pride in identity, and resulted in substantial economic benefits for Indigenous communities.

In film, a new generation of Indigenous filmmakers is emerging to convey compelling stories from their lives and communities, through films that have resonated with Australian and overseas audiences.

The Government also funds national collecting institutions which perform a central role in preserving and making Australia’s art and culture accessible. These institutions have traditionally centred their activities on collections management which includes documentation, conservation and exhibition. However, changing community expectations of access and service have created additional areas of common interest, including education, interpretation, regional delivery and digitisation of collections.

Currently the Australian Government spends more than $740 million per annum directly on arts activity through the Office for the Arts and related portfolio agencies. The table on page eight outlines some of the key components of the Government’s support.
**KEY COMPONENTS OF AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT IN A STRONG AND CREATIVE CULTURE IN AUSTRALIA**
(Figures refer to key elements of arts and culture support provided through the Office for the Arts and related portfolio agencies, 2011–12)

**Cultural institutions and agencies including**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution/Agency</th>
<th>Funding ($)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia Council, grants to arts organisations, artists and for audience development</td>
<td>$177.0m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screen Australia, grants for support and promotion of film development including producer offset</td>
<td>$91.9m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia Business Arts Foundation</td>
<td>$1.7m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Film Television and Radio School</td>
<td>$24.1m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian National Maritime Museum</td>
<td>$23.4m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bundanon Trust</td>
<td>$1.6m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Archives of Australia</td>
<td>$62.39m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Film and Sound Archive of Australia</td>
<td>$25.8m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Gallery of Australia</td>
<td>$45.8m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Library of Australia</td>
<td>$58.8m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Museum of Australia</td>
<td>$42.2m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museum of Australian Democracy</td>
<td>$16.5m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for the National Portrait Gallery comes from the Office for the Arts departmental funds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Support for non-profit organisations providing professional artists’ training including**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Funding ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Youth Orchestra</td>
<td>$1.6m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Ballet School</td>
<td>$1.3m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Australian National Academy of Music</td>
<td>$2.6m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flying Fruit Fly Circus</td>
<td>$0.2m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Association – now known as NAISDA Dance College</td>
<td>$4.7m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Institute of Circus Arts</td>
<td>$2.0m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Children’s Television Foundation</td>
<td>$2.7m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Institute of Dramatic Arts</td>
<td>$6.8m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Targeted programs *including*

- Regional touring programs (Playing Australia $6.5m; National Collecting Institutions Touring and Outreach Program $1.0m; Visions of Australia $2.2m; Contemporary Music Touring program $0.4m)
- Regional and community arts (Festivals Australia $1.1m; Regional Arts Fund $3.0m)
- Indigenous arts, culture, languages and jobs support $48.0m
- Cultural Heritage (Distributed National Collection $0.6m; National Cultural Heritage Account $0.5m)
- Visual arts (Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, non-Indigenous component, $6.2m; Artbank, Australia’s largest buyer of contemporary art $1.0m)
- Literature (Public Lending Right program $10.1m; Educational Lending Right program $11.4m; Prime Minister’s Literary Awards $0.4m)

In addition: a joint project with the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR) – the Creative Industries Innovation Centre (CIIC) funded by DIISR with $17.0m over 4 years.

### Associated initiatives being delivered through these programs and institutions

- **Australian Screen Production Support:** since the introduction of the Australian Screen Production Incentive, over $400m has been delivered through the tax system, and in response to the 2010 review of the Australian Independent Screen Production Sector, the Government announced a $56m restructure and funding boost over four years to further support the sector;

- **National Arts and Disability Strategy:** complementing the broader National Disability Strategy, this framework encourages improving access to and participation in artistic and cultural activities for people with disabilities;

- **Indigenous Contemporary Music Action Plan:** a framework which Australian, state and territory governments are using to refocus their existing programs, consider new directions and identify new partners to support Indigenous contemporary music; and

- **National Indigenous Languages Policy:** addressing the serious problem of language loss in Indigenous communities through coordinated action among the bodies involved in support of Indigenous languages.
Other Australian Government agencies also make significant investments towards a strong creative culture, for example:

The Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy:
- supports the ABC and SBS, community radio and TV and Indigenous broadcasting;
- administers Australian content rules; and
- recently launched the National Digital Economy Strategy, which sets out a vision for Australia to realise the benefits of the National Broadband Network and position Australia as a leading digital economy by 2020.

The Treasury and the Australian Taxation Office:
- support the Australian Screen Production Incentive; and
- foster philanthropy through tax deductible status for cultural organisations and charities.

The Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research provides creative industries support through the Creative Industries Innovation Centre which is part of Enterprise Connect. It also supports the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations supports:
- creative arts, history and English in the national curriculum;
- arts and cultural components of literacy programs;
- funding for cultural studies, creative arts and humanities in higher education; and
- teacher training and Indigenous employment.

The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities supports Australia’s natural, Indigenous and historic heritage.

The Department of Immigration and Citizenship supports multicultural arts and festivals through its Diversity and Cohesion Program.

The Department of Families and Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs increasingly draws on arts organisation in its community building and wellbeing programs.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade works with the Office for the Arts on the negotiation of free-trade agreements; cultural cooperation and audiovisual co-production arrangements; collaboration with UNESCO; and to coordinate and deliver the priorities of the Australian International Cultural Council. In addition, the Department supports a number of cultural diplomacy programs.

The Australian Government also works closely with state and territory governments to ensure effective intergovernmental support for the arts, such as through joint funding of the Major Performing Arts Sector.
ASSOCIATED REVIEWS AND INITIATIVES

In parallel with the development of the National Cultural Policy there are a range of other reviews and initiatives underway, which will be taken into consideration as part of the development of the policy.

**Review of Private Sector Support for the Arts**
A 2011 review which examines the current Australian Government arrangements for encouraging private sector support for the arts in Australia and will consider new models and potential enhancements to existing Australian Government measures.

**Review of Major Performing Arts Sector**
A review aiming to ensure support of a vibrant and sustainable performing arts sector, and developing a funding model co-operatively with the states which rewards success, provides greater access for Australian audiences, promotes enhanced artistic excellence, and ensures prudent levels of accountability from major performing arts organisations.

**A Creative Industries Strategy for 21st Century Australia**
Soon to be released, this will outline a whole-of-government strategy to support our creative businesses, by leveraging major Australian Government investment, optimising commercial capacity and growing creative content and services.

**Convergence review**
This 2011 review is examining the policy and regulatory frameworks that apply to the converged media and communications landscape in Australia.

**Review of the National Classification scheme**
This 2011-12 review will consider issues including: existing Commonwealth, State and Territory classification laws; the current classification categories contained in the Classification Act, Code and Guidelines; the rapid pace of technological change; the need to improve classification information available to the community; the effect of media on children; and the desirability of a strong content and distribution industry in Australia.

**National Design Policy**
Following a 2010 election commitment to look at the possibility of a national design policy, scoping is currently underway with reporting to Government due in September 2011.

**National Arts Curriculum**
Development of a national arts curriculum is underway, and is being managed by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority.
WHAT IS AUSTRALIA’S VISION FOR ARTS AND CREATIVITY FOR THE FUTURE?

A new National Cultural Policy will aim to engage with the broadest possible range of Australians with an interest or varying degrees of involvement in arts and creativity. It will reflect the diversity of modern Australia; protect and support Indigenous languages and culture; make the most of emerging technologies and new ideas; strengthen the capacity of the arts to contribute to society and the economy; support excellence and strengthen the role arts and creativity play in telling Australian stories.

Through this policy we will recognise the intrinsic value of arts and creative activity in creating a strong Australian culture, and also the wider value of arts and creativity that flows from this – that is, the benefits they bring to society and the economy – because cultural policy is not just about supporting the arts. It is about supporting, enabling and strengthening communities and developing our creative culture so that we are ready to take on the challenges and opportunities of daily modern life.

This cultural policy needs to reflect the complex and diverse ways in which Australians take part in arts and creative activity – whether through downloading or uploading creative material online, visiting museums and galleries, creating artworks, learning about Indigenous culture, borrowing a book from the local library, listening to a rock band at a club, going to the movies or watching television.

It needs to reflect the way our creative industries thrive with the contribution of a population of young people who have experienced an education rich in the arts – an education which develops the tools to think critically and creatively, and to come up with innovative solutions to complex problems. These are the skills that will drive our future as a creative, productive nation.

It will embed the arts and creative skills in national life by recognising and strengthening the links between a creative culture and priorities to boost economic productivity, drive innovation and strengthen community cohesion.

IT’S TIME TO SET IN PLACE A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK TO REALISE THAT VISION

A strategic framework will provide clarity and focus for what Australia wants to achieve over the next 10 years.

A National Cultural Policy will represent an approach across government and highlight the contribution that a revitalised approach to the arts can make to Australia’s broader social and economic goals. It is a major opportunity to refocus and renew Australia’s commitment to the arts, its creative industries and cultural life, to set a cultural agenda reflecting the Government’s priorities, and to work closely with everybody for whom the arts and creative sectors are important.

A new cultural policy will bring arts and the creative industries into the mainstream. It will look to the future. Progress must be measurable, and the Government will invest in ways to assess the impact that the National Cultural Policy has on society and the economy.

At its highest level, the framework will serve to highlight how artistic and creative activities are part of every Australian experience, and contribute to building the audience of the future. It will give emphasis to the way these pursuits and experiences underpin and add weight to the nation’s social and economic aspirations.
It will provide a new way of clarifying responsibilities between local, state and Federal governments, major cultural organisations and agencies, and will set a new foundation for engagement and collaboration to ensure that all Australians benefit from the cultural life of our nation.

Based on the vision outlined above, a strategic framework might incorporate the following goals:

- To ensure that what the Government supports and how this support is provided – reflects the diversity of a 21st century Australia, and protects and supports Indigenous culture.
- To encourage the use of emerging technologies and new ideas that support the development of new artworks and the creative industries, and that enable more people to access and participate in arts and culture.
- To support excellence and world-class endeavour, and strengthen the role that the arts play in telling Australian stories both here and overseas.
- To increase and strengthen the capacity of the arts to contribute to our society and economy.

The importance of collaboration and partnerships in achieving our goals cannot be overstated. Many networks are in place but many more can be created to make the most of our strengths. The Australian Government needs to consider new ways to support the sector and new models for promoting stronger engagement between arts organisations and the philanthropic and business communities.

It is also necessary to look closely at the many positive roles government can play in supporting Australia’s cultural life and how this reaches far beyond funding, recognising the diverse ways government can and does support the arts and creativity. Australia needs to leverage this support to drive funding further by building a broad set of partnerships. This will also help diversify and broaden the funding base for arts and cultural activity and organisations to contribute to long-term effectiveness and resilience.

In developing a National Cultural Policy, it will be important to recognise the conditions in which these goals can be achieved, and, at the same time, acknowledge that we are working in an environment where there is competition for limited government resources. This requires tough decisions, but also highlights some opportunities – to rethink the way things are done now, to reflect on what things are done well, and to consider what could be done better.
GOAL 1: TO ENSURE THAT WHAT THE GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS — AND HOW THIS SUPPORT IS PROVIDED — REFLECTS THE DIVERSITY OF A 21ST CENTURY AUSTRALIA, AND PROTECTS AND SUPPORTS INDIGENOUS CULTURE

ABOUT THIS GOAL

The arts enrich our lives, and all Australians, no matter where they live or where they are from should have the opportunity to participate in the cultural life of the nation. Improving access to the arts is vital to shaping identity and building strong, resilient, prosperous communities.

WE WILL KNOW THAT THIS GOAL HAS BEEN REACHED IF:

- More people experience and are inspired by Australian arts, and participation in making and sharing creative activity has increased, including through digital technologies.
- More Australians from diverse backgrounds and locations have the opportunity to participate in Australia’s cultural life – families, young people, people with disabilities, and people in regional areas.
- Australia’s Indigenous arts and culture are supported and developed in ways that recognise their importance as one of the world’s most enduring cultures.
- The arts and creative activity reflect and respond to our multicultural society.

WHAT STRATEGIES CAN WE USE TO GET THERE?

- Continue to work with arts organisations, cultural partners and local authorities to identify and build audiences, particularly in places where engagement in the arts is low.
- Existing endeavours and new artists and arts organisations will be encouraged to broaden their activities to reach and resonate with a broader audience.
- Support initiatives designed to increase people’s engagement in the arts, irrespective of their socio-economic or educational background or their geographic location.

“Of course the value of the arts goes well beyond economics. They provide an opportunity for people to express themselves, to connect with each other, to tell stories, to entertain and to be entertained, all of which make communities more vibrant and worthwhile places in which to live or to visit.”

Rick Allert AO, Chair of Western Desert Resources (formerly the Chair of the Australia Council’s Major Performing Arts Board, and Founding Board Member and Councillor, Australia Business Arts Foundation), 2010
GOAL 2: TO ENCOURAGE THE USE OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND NEW IDEAS THAT SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ARTWORKS AND THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES, AND THAT ENABLE MORE PEOPLE TO ACCESS AND PARTICIPATE IN ARTS AND CULTURE

ABOUT THIS GOAL

New methods of communication have changed the way Australians create, access and participate in arts and culture. Young people are increasingly blurring the boundaries between arts consumption and participation, and driving capacity to innovate and benefit from the new global digital economy. Cultural diversity is helping fuel innovation by bringing different insights to traditional practices. To support and develop this innovation and celebrate new and diverse artforms, building on emerging technologies will re-invigorate cultural life and offer new opportunities for community engagement.

The creative industries draw on the creative skills and talents of our workforce, driving new ideas and change. Australia needs to develop new skills, bringing arts and creative industries into the mainstream of Australian life. Achieving a globally competitive creative industries sector is vital to Australia’s prosperity, propelling a creative, imaginative nation in the 21st century.

WE WILL KNOW THIS GOAL HAS BEEN REACHED IF:

• Organisations and artists are encouraged to innovate and push the boundaries to explore new art forms.
• Diversity is nurtured, supported and encouraged.
• Australia’s creative industries sector continues its strong growth.

WHAT STRATEGIES CAN WE USE TO ACHIEVE IT?

• Recognise and support the development of innovative work which makes the most of new and emerging technologies.
• Strengthen the capacity of artists and performers to manage copyright and intellectual property, particularly in relation to online content.
• Support a competitive creative sector through initiatives including those set out in the Government’s Creative Industries Strategy. For example:
  • Optimising commercial capacity by improving business development, pursuing trade and investment, identifying markets and meeting consumer demand.
  • Growing creative content and services by driving creative innovation, powering intellectual property and copyright, exploring flexible business models, and promoting collaborative networks and spaces.

“Australia’s future wealth will hinge on developing ideas, creativity, problem solving and innovation.”

Glen Boreham, Chair, Screen Australia (formerly the Managing Director, IBM Australia and New Zealand), 2009
GOAL 3: TO SUPPORT EXCELLENCE AND WORLD-CLASS ENDEAVOUR, AND STRENGTHEN THE ROLE THAT THE ARTS PLAY IN TELLING AUSTRALIAN STORIES BOTH HERE AND OVERSEAS

ABOUT THIS GOAL

Australia has developed a reputation for its world-class arts and artists, many of whom are awarded international prizes such as Academy Awards and Grammy Awards, through to awards in many other fields, including architecture, visual arts and literature. More than ever, our arts and associated industries are performing at the highest levels – reflected in more requests for touring, increased reliance on our expertise, and greater demand for Indigenous arts. The arts tell our stories and increasingly utilise our innovative capacities and talents.

WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE REACHED THIS GOAL IF:

• Artistic excellence and talent are supported and celebrated.
• Australia’s institutions and performance companies and artists are increasingly celebrated as being world-class.
• Indigenous arts, language and culture continue to attract both domestic and international interest and recognition.

WHAT STRATEGIES CAN WE USE TO ACHIEVE IT?

• Promote excellence and encourage world-class standards in Australia’s major funded organisations and individuals.
• Provide incentives to organisations and individuals breaking new ground to enable them to evolve and realise their full potential.
• Recognise the central role of Indigenous arts, languages and culture through continued support and investment.
• Promote greater awareness of Australian culture overseas through international recognition of our significant cultural attributes, history and Australia’s contribution to the world.

“Brett Dean’s score breezes in with all the freshness and vitality of Australian surf . . . Bliss, with its message to hang on to our dreams, is an experience that engages and enriches beyond measure. After this, you cannot say that opera is “dead”. Rather, it speaks to us with greater relevance, clarity and inventiveness than ever.”

The Scotsman, 2010
GOAL 4: TO INCREASE AND STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY OF THE ARTS TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

ABOUT THIS GOAL

A creative nation is a nation where education and training unleash creative talent and critical appreciation. An education rich in the arts fuels children’s curiosity and critical capacity; it prepares children for better academic achievement and for creative flexible thinking. Every child has the right to experience and learn about the arts from a young age. The arts also help children gain a greater understanding and appreciation of people from other cultures who are living in Australia. The arts inspire future audiences, build the workforce of the future and the next generation of leaders.

Connected to the role of education in the arts is the capacity of the arts, and its many associated industries, including the creative industries, to contribute to the economy. There is strong evidence showing that growth in these areas directly contributes to the strength of the Australian economy, and to the perception of our society as vibrant, modern and inclusive.

WE WILL KNOW WE HAVE REACHED THIS GOAL IF:

• As part of their educational experience, all children and young Australians have the opportunity to learn about the arts.
• There is increased training and more career opportunities in creative industries, the arts and its many supporting industries.
• More international visitors target Australia as a cultural destination, supporting our economy.
• Arts and creativity are increasingly included in the mainstream of broader government priorities aimed at strengthening our society and economy.

WHAT STRATEGIES CAN WE USE TO ACHIEVE IT?

• Better connect what Australia is doing in the arts with the Government’s education revolution through support for building skills and capacities to contribute to widespread engagement and involvement of all Australians with the arts and creativity.
• Better connect what Australia is doing in the areas of arts and creative industries with other mainstream initiatives, such as the rollout of the National Broadband Network, and Closing the Gap.
• Deliver initiatives that build pathways in the arts to equip young Australians with skills of critical thinking, innovation and design that are so fundamental to the nature of the modern economy.
• Consider ways to increase support from the private sector and individuals in recognition of the benefits arts and creative industries can bring to the economy and to society.

“If we know anything, it’s that the real driver of creativity and innovation is imagination and diversity, and those things are essential to competitiveness.”

Sir Ken Robinson, Author and international advisor on education in the arts, 2009
In thinking about a new national cultural policy, it is worth considering some of the changes that have taken place in the almost two decades since Creative Nation. Some key changes are summarised below.

**AUSTRALIA IS INCREASINGLY ENGAGED AND COMPETITIVE INTERNATIONALLY**

More than ever before, Australia is connected with the rest of the world. On the one hand, this means Australian artists, cultural organisations and cultural products need to compete on the world stage. On the other hand, it means that Australians have expanding access to a broader range of arts and cultural content from around the world which competes in Australia with our own culture.

Australia’s international reputation as a vibrant, thriving, creative culture also continues to grow, making this an attractive place to live and work, not just for artists, but for the broader creative industries workforce and other skilled workers.

The strength and diversity of Australia’s culture can underline the attractions of Australia as a place for international businesses and professionals to operate and work. Australia can also better link artists, cultural organisations and products and project Australia’s interests more effectively internationally through a range of cultural diplomacy initiatives. Australia needs to ensure that Australian artists and content are supported and developed in this global environment.

**AUSTRALIA HAS ACCESS TO A BROAD RANGE OF TECHNOLOGY**

According to a survey by the Economist Intelligence Unit, Australia ranked ninth out of 69 countries in terms of e-readiness in 2007. It ranked first in the Asia-Pacific region and equal second in the world for both its ‘e-literate’ social and cultural environment and its legal environment.  

More than 70 per cent of the Australian population have access to the internet. This will only increase as the Government rolls out the National Broadband Network. Information and communications technology is a key driver of Australia’s strong economic growth and innovation. In order to remain competitive, Australia needs to adapt to a new generation of technology users and tools.  

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A recent report from Australia’s Major Performing Arts Group notes that Generations Y and Z are ‘digital natives’, to the extent that it is intuitive for them to communicate, research and be educated and entertained online. Older generations too use the Internet to research and make purchases, including tickets to live performances. This means that businesses seeking to engage with younger generations now and in the future will be almost compelled to have rich, online content as a baseline of being a part of the known world, much in the same way as once, businesses felt the need to promote performances in the Saturday broadsheets.4

Emerging technologies present opportunities for Indigenous communities to use new media to present their art, language and culture to wider audiences and to enable traditional cultural practices to be transmitted to future generations.

AUSTRALIA’S 21ST CENTURY SOCIETY IS MADE UP OF PEOPLE FROM MANY BACKGROUNDS AND CULTURES

Australia’s Indigenous culture, and the languages which underpin it, is a unique and significant feature of our broader cultural environment. As the oldest living culture on earth, Indigenous culture is vital to the identity and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and is a powerful source of inspiration and enrichment for all Australians.

Since 1945, Australia has welcomed more than 6.5 million migrants to our shores, including 675,000 refugees, significantly broadening our social and cultural profile. Recent immigrants have come from Asia, Africa and the Middle East.5 It is important to hear their stories and appreciate their history and heritage, as part of what it means to be Australian.

Australia’s new multicultural policy, The People of Australia, emphasises the breadth and diversity of Australian society, and reaffirms the Government’s unwavering support for a culturally diverse and socially cohesive nation.6 It recognises Australia’s multicultural composition is at the heart of our national identity and is intrinsic to our history and character.

Australia needs to recognise that this diversity is a strength which helps the nation to succeed in a complex and changing world.

AUSTRALIA HAS AN INCREASINGLY HIGHLY EDUCATED POPULATION

61 per cent of Australians aged between 25 and 64 have vocational or tertiary education. The tertiary graduation rate of 49 per cent is

4 Ibid.
5 DFAT, op. cit.
the highest among OECD countries — Australia consistently performs above the OECD average on a range of educational, skills and access to technology indicators. Australia needs to encompass this audience, whose expectations of opportunity and access are sophisticated and high.

**AUSTRALIA IS A RELATIVELY PROSPEROUS SOCIETY, WITH A STRONG, GROWING ECONOMY**

Since 1990, Australia’s economy has grown in real terms by an average of around 3.3 per cent a year. Australia’s GDP in 2006–07 (in value terms) was just over $1 trillion, making it the world’s 13th largest economy overall and the 10th largest industrialised economy. Unemployment has fallen, from a peak of almost 11 per cent 15 years ago to below 5 per cent in 2008—the lowest level since the 1970s. Australia needs to identify the skills required to build our future workforce and seize opportunities for further growth. Whilst we have a strong economy, consideration needs to be given to the patchwork nature of it – and our responses and initiatives geared towards this reality.

**EMPLOYMENT, EXPENDITURE AND ECONOMIC IMPACT**

Arts, creative activity and the creative industries make a substantial, positive contribution to the economy. Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Centre for International Economics gives us a broad, positive picture of the contribution arts, creative activity and the creative industries make to our economy in terms of employment, GDP, expenditure and tourism, but also highlights the potential for growth.

**Employment**

A growing number of Australians, including Indigenous Australians, are finding employment and work opportunities in the arts and cultural sector, and a significant number of people volunteer their time in support of arts and culture. This volunteer effort effectively doubles employment figures in the sector, but also underlines the relatively low wages of workers and variable employment prospects in the industry, and its heavy reliance on unpaid work.

2006 Census data shows that 345,950 people were employed in cultural industries (e.g., performing arts venues, printing, publishing), representing 3.8 per cent of all employed persons. Some 284,791 people, 3.1 per cent of all employed persons, were employed in cultural occupations (e.g., writers, performing artists, designers).

In 2006, over 207,000 people provided more than 30 million hours of volunteer work for arts and heritage organisations.

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7 [http://www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)
8 DFAT, op. cit.
9 DFAT, op. cit.
11 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), *Employment in Culture* (6273.0), 2006. (Cultural occupations based on Australian culture and leisure classifications.).
12 ABS, *Voluntary Work* (4441.0), 2006.
Employment in the creative industries continues to grow and Australia needs to ensure that it remains competitive on the global stage.

**Contribution to GDP**
The creative industries are an important part of the emerging services economy in Australia, contributing more to the economy both in terms of output and employment than is commonly recognised.

In 2006, the creative industries workforce totalled 486,700 people, representing a 5.3 per cent share of the Australian workforce and a 10 per cent growth across five years.13

In 2008-09, the creative industries were valued at more than $31 billion in terms of industry gross product, representing an average growth rate of 3.9 per cent in real terms – a faster growth rate than the broader economy over the 10 years to 2008-09.

Notably, this contribution to industry gross product is also larger than that of a number of other traditional industry groups, such as agriculture, forestry and fishing; electricity, gas and water supply; and accommodation and food services.14

**Expenditure**
Australian households spend a significant amount of money on culture.15 A relatively small amount of this is allocated to buying art or attending cultural events or performances, highlighting both the need to build markets and audiences in these areas – but also where Australian audiences are – attending cinemas, watching television and reading books. Our understanding of what might be included as ‘culture’ is also expanding, as are the ways in which we access and engage in culture, using new technologies.

The increasing number and use of new online viewing platforms is changing the profile of audiences, and their expenditure, in ways which are only now starting to be recognised and recorded.16

**Cultural tourism**
Cultural and heritage visitors17 contribute a significant amount to the Australian economy. Given the amount of money such visitors spent per trip in 2009 ($6,280 compared to other international visitors who spent on average $3,83218), any potential for growth in this market should be identified and encouraged.

Many Australian tourists and audiences seek to enrich their travel and cultural experiences by participating in and attending Indigenous tours, festivals, exhibitions and performances. Indigenous cultural tourism is significant for communities: it promotes Indigenous art, languages and culture to a wider audience, builds and reinforces the pride that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have in their identity, and can increase the capacity of their communities to participate in these opportunities, and in education, training and employment.

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17 A cultural and heritage visitor participates in at least one of the following activities during their trip: attends theatre, concerts or other performing arts; visits museums or art galleries; visits art, craft workshops or studios; attends festivals, fairs or cultural events; experiences Aboriginal art, craft and cultural displays; visits an Aboriginal site or community; or visits historical/heritage buildings, sites or monuments.
18 Tourism Research Australia, *Snapshots 2009: Cultural and Heritage Tourism in Australia*. 
In 2010, 23.2 million cultural and heritage visitors contributed approximately $28 billion in tourism expenditure to the Australian economy. The yield from cultural and heritage tourists is significantly more than non-cultural visitors – for example, the spend per trip from domestic (within Australia) cultural tourists is over 85 per cent greater.\textsuperscript{19} In 2010, half of all international tourists to Australia visited a cultural or heritage destination. The number of international tourists participating in cultural and heritage activities has shown moderate growth over the last 10 years, with an average growth of 2.9 per cent per annum since 2001.\textsuperscript{20}

PARTICIPATION

Australians participate in the arts and creative activity at all levels. Participation can include anything from visiting a museum or gallery, creating artworks using traditional materials or digital media, attending a live performance, playing in a band, or going to a movie. The arts are also strongly supported by the Australian community and attitudes towards them are increasingly positive.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, more than 15 million, or 86 per cent of, Australian adults attended at least one cultural event or performance in the year 2009-10.\textsuperscript{21} The Australia Council’s research indicates nine out of 10 Australians creatively participate in the arts (by making something themselves), or receptively participate (by attending a live event, going to an exhibition or reading).\textsuperscript{22} If going to the cinema is added to the list of cultural activities undertaken by Australians, there is an even greater level of participation.

The Australia Council’s 2010 report, \textit{More than bums on seats: Australian participation in the arts}, notes that levels of engagement with the arts are high, and that Australians widely believe the arts should be an important part of every Australian’s education, make for a richer and more meaningful life, and that there are plenty of opportunities to get involved. Not only is there widespread enthusiasm and positivity about the value of the arts, but Australians also support ongoing Australian Government funding.\textsuperscript{23}

It is nevertheless clear that not only are preferences for what Australians attend are changing, but so too are audience demographics. There is an opportunity to respond to these changes in the way the Australian Government supports the arts.

Australia needs to target new, younger audiences, thereby building the audiences of the future, listening to the needs of modern Australia and meeting the expectations of the community at large. Opportunities exist to refocus the Australian Government’s investment in contemporary arts, and draw on new and emerging technologies.

\textsuperscript{19} Tourism Research Australia, op. cit.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} ABS, \textit{Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues and Events (4114.0)}, 2009-10.
\textsuperscript{22} Australia Council, \textit{More than bums on seats: Australian participation in the arts}, 2010.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
“It is now widely demonstrated in the United States of America, Canada and Europe, including the United Kingdom, that those students whose learning is embedded in the arts achieve better grades and overall test scores, are less likely to leave school early, rarely report boredom and have a more positive self concept than those students who are deprived of arts experiences”. The greatest impact of participation in the arts – and the ones which other programs cannot achieve – arise from their ability to think critically and question their experiences and those of others … with all the … magic, symbolism, feeling, metaphor and creativity that the arts can offer. 24

SOCIAL IMPACT: EDUCATION AND SOCIAL COHESION

Recent research and available cultural indicators underline the significance of arts and creativity in supporting education and social cohesion.

According to a recent report from the Australian Council for Educational Research, there is strong evidence to support the principle that fostering creativity at a young age will build the foundations of a strong, resilient population, armed with capacities for critical inquiry, lateral thinking, innovative solutions and powerful communication. These are the skills that will drive Australia into the future.

In research undertaken by the Australia Council and Regional Arts Australia, there is also compelling evidence for the value of arts and creativity in building resilience and identity in regional and Indigenous communities.

During June and July 2009 Regional Arts Australia consulted widely across Australia with an estimated 85,000 people engaged in the arts and cultural development. Results indicated that more than 85 per cent believed the arts play a vital role in community wellbeing and entertainment. This is supported by previous consultations, which found that arts and cultural development activities are an integral part of communities, build identity and ownership, which in turn leads to strong, resilient people as well as contributing to the economy of the nation.25

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