



13 February 2006

Dear colleagues

In November 2005 the Australia Council for the Arts appointed me to Chair the Reference Group overseeing a Scoping Study of Community Partnerships. The Scoping Study has two main focuses:

- to consider the current state of play in community cultural development practice; and,
- scope out how the Australia Council can effectively expand and support the wealth of arts practice working in and with communities.

As part of this process we have so far prepared a number of background and discussion documents.

We have undertaken an initial consultation phase and commissioned Deborah Mills to undertake a stock take and analysis of community cultural practice and the sector. She has prepared two papers.

We have also held a meeting of the peers who have been appointed by the Australia Council to various committees supporting the continued work of Community Partnerships and they have provided crucial input.

I am now pleased to announce that we are entering into an extensive public consultation phase.

Deborah Mills' background papers are now accessible on the Australia Council website [http://www.ozco.gov.au/news\\_and\\_hot\\_topics/hot\\_topics/community\\_partnerships\\_scoping\\_study\\_public\\_consultations/](http://www.ozco.gov.au/news_and_hot_topics/hot_topics/community_partnerships_scoping_study_public_consultations/) as is a summary of the submissions received to date and other relevant material. If you prefer you can email [cpstudy@ozco.gov.au](mailto:cpstudy@ozco.gov.au) and we will forward you a copy of the papers.

Attached to this letter is a *Scoping Study Draft Future Directions Paper*, which we have prepared. This document is the basis on which we will be conducting our public consultations and the meetings we hold with a broad range of stakeholders. As I have stated at the start of this document it is a preliminary draft of ideas. We look forward to and encourage your comments, suggestions and critical analysis.

The public consultations will take the format of an introductory session and then we will be taking bookings for small groups (3-8) to speak to us about their views. We would encourage people, where possible, to have preliminary discussions with their local colleagues and perhaps book a time together. The group sessions will also be open to the public so people can sit and listen to what others have to say. *(If there are issues or views that you wish to keep confidential you can make a written submission).*

I will chair the consultations sessions and there will be other members of the Scoping Study Reference Group or Community Partnerships Committee and Australia Council staff supporting the Scoping Study present.

We also encourage you to distribute this information widely and if you or others are unable to attend the public consultations we would welcome your written comments on the Draft Future Directions document. If you prefer we can take your comments over the phone. The process we are following is open and flexible to ensure that we have a range of ways of hearing from you. Written submissions can either be emailed to [cpstudy@ozco.gov.au](mailto:cpstudy@ozco.gov.au) or posted to: Community Partnerships Scoping Study – The Australia Council for the Arts, PO Box 788, Strawberry Hills, NSW 2012. We will be accepting written submissions until Thursday 30 March. This will have to be the absolute cut off date as we will be drafting the final report in April.

The Report of the Scoping Study will then go to the Community Partnerships Committee for comment and in mid May it will be presented to the Australia Council for consideration and response at their June meeting. Following the meeting the Report and the Council's response will be made public by early July.

I cannot emphasise enough that this process is open and evolving, and will only work if you engage with us to map out a future to increase the opportunities for arts and cultural development in and with communities.

Yours sincerely

Anne Dunn  
Chair, Scoping Study Reference Group



## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR THE SUPPORT OF ARTS AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN COMMUNITIES**

### **SCOPING STUDY DISCUSSION PAPER**

For more than 30 years the Australia Council for the Arts has invested in arts and cultural initiatives both in and with communities. In 2004 an internal Council review and restructure determined that Council should do more in this area, and where possible do it better. Council's aim is to be better informed and more flexible in responding to creative opportunities as they arise and to build a better environment for innovation, experimentation and creativity. During the first half of 2006, the Council is undertaking a sector review and scoping study to consider how its achievements to date can best be built on into the future.

The Scoping Study will propose to the Australia Council directions for the support and development of arts and cultural practices within communities in Australia. The study will identify ways to assist in meeting contemporary community needs and interests, and in supporting vibrant, diverse arts and cultural development activities by communities and artists. The terms of reference for the scoping study have now been established and the reference group has been formed to oversee the study.

During 2006 the Scoping Study Reference Group will engage in consultation with communities, arts practitioners, spheres of government and the non-government sector, and is currently seeking your advice and comment on the draft directions paper following.

**This is a work in progress – please contribute to its development**

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## **Preamble – an introductory note to community cultural development practitioners**

The Scoping Study Reference Group was established by the Australia Council following the release of *Arts Catalyst* - an internal review and restructure that had a significant impact and created opportunities for the arts sector and the organisation. However, it also had major ramifications for the Community Cultural Development Sector in Australia. The changes resulted in the abolition of the Community Cultural Development Board, and the establishment of the Community Partnerships section – an entity with a significantly broader focus than its predecessor. The announcement of the Council restructure in December 2004 prompted widespread and sustained protests from the community cultural development sector, in particular regarding:

- The lack of consultation or engagement with the community cultural development sector in the development of these changes;
- The perceived lack of recognition of the professional body of practice developed by and within this sector over many years; and
- The perceived lack of acknowledgement of the achievements of community cultural development, its wide and varied partnerships and its contribution to Australian arts and cultural development and society as a whole.

The Scoping Study Reference Group is aware that many in the community cultural development sector remain unsettled and cynical about this current process and its purpose.

Notwithstanding these views and sentiments, the community cultural development sector has also strongly expressed willingness to engage in spirited debate, to change and develop, to broaden its definition and scope and to work in partnership across Council, with other spheres of government and non-government organisations, and in new relationships with communities.

We invite you to engage with us in the challenge to develop future directions for expanding the development of arts and cultural activities in communities.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 *Developing a framework for supporting a wide range of community focused arts and cultural practices*

Currently there is no generally accepted name for this broader field of community focused arts and cultural work. One of our opportunities and challenges in this scoping exercise is to develop a shared framework and language for describing, supporting and promoting this diverse range of practice.

The breadth of community focused arts and cultural practices currently operating in Australia is remarkable. It encompasses areas of expertise as diverse as arts and young people, regional arts, arts and disability, arts in education, community arts, community cultural development, creative industries and cultural diversity. These practices also intersect with the work of practitioners from a wide range of other art forms (theatre, performance, writing, dance, music, new media, visual arts) who from time to time engage and collaborate with and in communities in different ways as a part of their art making.

It is not the aim of this study to propose any single practice or field that somehow distils these myriad approaches into a single field or way of working. Rather we see the diversity of the practice as its vitality and essence. The challenge as we see it, is working together to create an inclusive and enabling framework that improves the interconnectedness of the practitioners, and enhances the effectiveness and overall impact the work being delivered. Rather than a single practice our vision is for a diverse, inclusive, and multiple coalition of community focused arts and cultural practitioners.

## 1.2 *Creative Partnerships*<sup>1</sup>

This is a dynamic, diverse, innovative, creative and growing field of endeavour often operating at the very cutting edge of arts and cultural development practice. It is also a part of the arts and cultural sector that has already demonstrated its significant potential to partner beyond the arts industry with government agencies, businesses and communities in responding to the opportunities and challenges facing the cultural development of Australia. In essence we propose it is this nexus of partnership, creativity and community that in the broadest sense describes the area of interest Creative Partnerships.

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<sup>1</sup> Creative Partnerships is a new term for the Community Partnerships section and practices proposed by sector representatives during recent workshops and consultations, and appears in some parts of this paper. For the purpose of this draft consultation document Creative Partnerships and Community Partnerships are interchangeable.

## 2. A rationale for supporting community focused arts and cultural practices

**The Australia Council's support** for community focused arts and cultural development can be argued both in terms of its inherent value as a fundamental part of our broader cultural and community life, as well as its value on more practical levels. A vibrant Australian culture is an intrinsic public good as well as both an economic and social issue.

The interface of artistic practice and communities has the potential of producing some of the most exciting contemporary artistic outcomes, which reflect our cultural identity as Australians and the dynamic practice of artists working in this realm.

A wide range of research<sup>2</sup> has shown that Australians want to see the arts better integrated in everyday life – in our schools, as a way of helping us to see our world differently, as a way of expressing the distinctiveness of our communities, as a way of helping imagine a better future for ourselves and our communities.

Community focused arts and cultural practices are also a vital interface between the arts and cultural sector and the everyday lives of the broader community. From research<sup>3</sup> we know that arts and cultural activities make significant differences to our lives.

- Inclusiveness – by making art together and learning about each others' cultures we live together with respect and tolerance.
- Belonging – by creating distinctive places together we give spaces a sense of identity and people a sense of ownership.
- Community building – by making art together we build new communities in our neighbourhoods, suburbs, towns and rural areas.
- Identity – by making art and engaging in cultural activities in and with communities we create art that is relevant to people's lives.
- Diversity – by respecting and interacting with cultural diversity our arts institutions become more relevant, dynamic and reflective of Australian communities.
- Dialogue – by giving our diverse communities access to cultural resources we give them a voice.

Australian communities are rapidly changing and diversifying. There are emerging trends and needs in the fabric of Australian life where engagement in arts and cultural activities can help to create understanding, address challenges and celebrate our achievements. Arts practice in Australia itself has evolved with changes in the community, building up a remarkable bank of creative skills and

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<sup>2</sup> See Deborah Mills paper *Cultural Development and the Arts in Everyday Life* available at [www.ozco.gov.au/cp](http://www.ozco.gov.au/cp) and *Australians and the Arts* by Paul Costantoura, Saatchi and Saatchi.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

artistic practices. These transformations and our responses to them, are shaping a unique national identity that recognises and celebrates our cultural diversity.

The Scoping Study is mindful of this context.

### **3. Terms of Reference**

The aim of the scoping study is to propose to the Australia Council directions for the support and development of creative communities, and in particular to:

1. Define the goals and objectives of supporting art in and with communities
2. Provide a broad assessment of current achievements, gaps and challenges
3. Identify the emerging trends and needs for creative communities
4. Develop a policy framework for creative communities
5. Consider the role of the Australia Council in supporting and developing creative communities:
  - a. within the Community Partnerships section, including grant programs
  - b. with and between the Boards and Committees of Council
  - c. with Key Organisations and CCD infrastructure
6. Consider potential partnerships with spheres of governments and major non-government organisations
7. Propose possible sustainable strategies and actions
8. Consider ongoing mechanisms for communication and relationships between the Australia Council and the sector

### **4. Discussion on Terms of Reference**

This paper is the result of ideas and issues raised through the consultations and research conducted to date as part of the Scoping Study. It is intended to stimulate open discussion and debate around future directions for the support of arts and culture in and with communities.

#### **4.1 Terms of Reference 1 - Define the goals and objectives of supporting arts in and with communities**

The goals and objectives must be consistent with the Australia Council Act 1975, and in particular its mission viz:

- *Enable Australian arts and its artists to pursue excellence*
- *Preserve, maintain and develop the distinctive features of Australia's culture*
- *Ensure all Australians have the opportunity to engage with the arts and enjoy a rich cultural life*
- *Shape a future Australia in which the arts play a meaningful and vital role in everyday life*

It may also be worth considering some of Councils current goals and the possible alignment/synergies.

- to increase community engagement in the arts and to promote individual participation in them
- to win recognition of the arts as a key element in Australia's social, cultural and economic development
- to foster greater emphasis on artistic innovation, experimentation and research and development within a rapidly changing world
- to improve the vitality and viability of the arts.

Within this framework we are seeking your ideas regarding the specific **goals and objectives** supporting arts and cultural development in and with communities: (contributions to identify new goals or re-working are welcome)

1. To give all Australians an opportunity to critically engage with and share their cultural heritage.
2. To give all Australians an opportunity to critically engage with new art.
3. To give all Australian the opportunity to engage and participate in their own forms of cultural and art production.
4. To acknowledge the diversity of cultures within and of Australian communities.
5. To give people from these diverse cultures have access to the resources they need to express themselves and share their cultures.
6. To support artists to work in and with communities.

**Diversity of Cultures** relates to Australia's multiple cultural heritages and cultural identities, and the myriad arts practices arising from them. This growing diversity is our nation's wellspring of innovation, creativity and artistic excellence. Cultures emerge from communities of people who have things in common, be it geography, or common characteristics or interests such as age, ethnicity, religion or occupation. People move in and out of different cultures and can belong to many at one time. In this sense it is the culture and the art-making arising from this diversity that is proposed as the starting point for exploring community focused arts and cultural practices in Australia

Council could adopt these goals and objectives as applying across all its activities. To ensure the transition from rhetoric to action across the broad range of Council activities, the goals should be supported by an evaluation framework that enables the governing Council to assess the performance of all areas of its operations against the goals on an annual basis.

#### **4.2 *Terms of Reference 2 - Provide a broad assessment of current achievements, gaps and challenges***

##### ***Terms of Reference 3 - Identify the emerging trends and needs for creative communities***

These two terms of reference are discussed extensively in a paper prepared for the scoping study by Deborah Mills – *Cultural Development and the Arts in Everyday Life*. A copy of this paper can be found on the Scoping Study website at [www.ozco.gov.au/cp](http://www.ozco.gov.au/cp).

If you would prefer, a copy can be emailed to you. Please contact Elizabeth Tupper at [cpstudy@ozco.gov.au](mailto:cpstudy@ozco.gov.au).

The Reference Group welcomes further contributions to the discussion of achievements, gaps and challenges, and identification of emerging trends and needs in communities.

Please participate by emailing your contributions to Elizabeth Tupper.

#### **4.3 *Terms of Reference 4 - Develop a policy framework for creative communities***

The term "creative communities" has been used in the scoping study as a way of describing a wide range of arts and cultural activities and practice in and with

communities. As noted above, there is currently no generally accepted name for this broader field of community focused arts and cultural work.

The Reference Group seeks input on appropriate language that is broad and inclusive and can be easily recognised and identified with by communities and artists alike.

The Reference Group proposes for discussion principles of good partnerships that may be applied to working in and with communities:

- Partnerships are based on shared purpose and vision and mutually beneficial goals which are developed and endorsed by all parties at the outset
- Partners respect each others values, history, goals, cultures (including organisational), knowledge and wisdom
- Each partner benefits and contributes to the project and roles are clearly defined
- Partnerships are based on collaboration and partners work to solve complex problems
- Partners have a focus on achieving high quality artistic and community development outcomes
- Partners share responsibility as well as risk and reward, and also have the ability to exit the partnership on agreed terms.

The Reference Group welcomes your comments on this Term of Reference.

#### ***4.4 Terms of Reference 5 - Consider the role of the Australia Council in supporting and developing creative communities***

The Reference Group is considering the following role for the Australia Council in supporting and developing art and culture in and with communities:

- A. Providing leadership and support for the greater integration and recognition of arts and cultural development into the broad fabric of Australian life
- B. Facilitating and supporting community, government and private sector agencies to foster arts and cultural development as essential to Australian life and to the place of these agencies in civil society
- C. Working with Australia's diverse cultures to share their experience and cultural knowledge, and therein forge a unique national identity

- D. Making publicly funded arts more accessible – intellectually, financially and socially - to more Australians

#### **4.5 Terms of Reference 5 (a) - Consider the role of the Australia Council in supporting and developing creative communities within the Community Partnerships section, including grant programs**

##### **4.5.1 Title**

The Reference Group is giving consideration to a proposal that the term Creative Partnerships be considered in place of Community Partnerships.

##### **4.5.2 Activities of Community Partnerships**

The consultations and research to date have identified a number of areas where the Australia Council could focus its work in its Community (Creative) Partnerships. These include:

- Embracing, promoting and interacting with the cultural diversity within and of communities;
- Addressing the inequality of access to cultural heritage and new art;
- Establishing the special contribution the arts can make to the lives of people with disabilities;
- Supporting and extending the Australia Council's work in Arts and Education;
- Supporting the arts in Multicultural Australia policy through collaborative initiatives and funding programs;
- Encouraging and promoting the interaction between arts produced in and with communities and arts institutions;
- Seeking to influence the cultural vitality of places and communities through a partnership with local government;
- Providing the policy framework and peer group assessment process required to support projects effectively;
- Developing and implementing a promotions and communications strategy in association with the Australia Council and the sector;
- Enriching the *Creative Innovation Strategy* of the Australia Council, which aims to establish and grow new partnerships and pathways between artists and creative practitioners and organisations, government, cultural agencies and industry, both nationally and internationally (this document

can be found on the Australia Council website at [www.ozco.gov.au/news\\_and\\_hot\\_topics/news/creative\\_innovation/](http://www.ozco.gov.au/news_and_hot_topics/news/creative_innovation/)); and

- Supporting partnerships with a range of stakeholders, including the Australia Council, organisations, artists, communities, institutions and all spheres of government.

It could do this through a variety of means that include the creative ways of facilitating, brokering and supporting partnership initiatives developed collaboratively with people participating in arts and cultural activities in the community.

In particular, the Community Partnerships Committee and Section could play a leadership role in facilitating whole-of-government responses to achieve arts and cultural development outcomes.

#### **4.5.3 Strategic Role of Community Partnerships**

Feedback during the research and from questionnaires suggests a significant role for Community Partnerships in generating strategic action that will support the formation and maintenance of new and expanded partnerships across many sectors.

Proposed partnership development, initiatives and strategies for consideration include (in no particular order):

1. Local Government - development of strategic partnerships and collaborations with local government
2. Education and Arts - Support and extension of the Australia Council's work in Arts and Education
3. Emerging Communities - grants program or strategic interventions to ethnic infrastructure
4. Regional Initiatives - Including Regional Arts Fund – a Government initiative with established guidelines
5. Youth and Arts - Including Young and Emerging Artists Grants – a Government initiative with established guidelines
6. Disability and the Arts - Supporting disability and the arts initiatives
7. New Arrangements for Grant Delivery - Possible partnerships with the State/Territory governments or national and/or regional organisations
8. New Directions - implementation of the Scoping Study
9. International Directions - Developing opportunities for artists and organisations to present internationally and stimulate exchange
10. Applications to Council's Strategic Initiatives Budget - Ensuring opportunities for additional funds for community partnerships initiatives

11. For the Australia Council to engage with philanthropists, the corporate sector and non-government organisations in the support of arts in and with communities
12. Whole-of-Government – working with Australian and State Government Departments
13. Artform Boards - Joint initiatives to devise a range of strategies to increase Council-wide delivery of arts in and with communities
14. Research and Development – Joint initiatives to identify trends and impacts of arts in and with communities

#### **4.5.4 Grant role of Community Partnerships**

In addition to the strategic partnerships it is proposed that Community Partnerships continue to fund grant programs, in particular:

1. Grants to communities for projects. The method of assessment and allocation of these grants needs greater flexibility and could be delivered by Australia Council alone, or in conjunction with others, e.g. State Governments or other arts agencies.
2. Funds for professional development, awards and fellowships would continue to be available on an application basis, but may also be allocated on a strategic basis
3. Funds allocated strategically may be through an expression of interest to achieve particular outcomes in priority areas, through strategic investment and/or through an open application process
4. Grants/partnerships and strategic investment in Key Organisations (see below)
5. Grant categories would be expected to cover areas such as new work and promotion and presentation

It is proposed that all grant applications be based on partnerships.

#### **4.5.5 Peer Assessment**

All strategic initiatives and grants are proposed to be allocated following a peer assessment process.

The Reference Group considers that Community Partnerships should develop a peer assessment pool, which includes the broad range of work and interest areas required to adequately assess the diverse range of Creative Partnership activities.

This would also enable a balance between the need for appropriate peer assessment and input and a continuity of knowledge within the assessment panel.

#### **4.5.6 Membership of Community Partnerships Committee**

The Community Partnership Committee is considered to be a peer assessment body. Its membership should reflect the agreed strategic priorities and opportunities. This may mean that the membership of the committee would need to be augmented from time to time to include relevant expertise and interests.

#### **4.5.7 Allocation of grant money by Community Partnerships directly, or through the art form boards:**

The Reference Group recognises the importance of the process by which the grant monies are distributed, and is interested in discussion on the following two models:

Through the Community Partnerships Committee:

The strengths of the proposal to have the funds allocated directly by Community Partnerships are:

1. Maximising the strategic outcomes and create flexibility and a nexus between grants and initiatives
2. Clear presence and recognition of the practice of working in diverse community contexts
3. More effective use of Council's limited human and financial resources.

Through individual Artform Boards:

There has been considerable discussion of the proposal that Community Partnership money could be allocated through the other art form boards of the Australia Council.

The strengths of this proposal are seen as being:

1. Directly engage with other artform boards in supporting work in and with communities
2. Reduce peer and administrative costs.

#### **4.5.8 Key Organisations – producers**

The Reference Group sees the value to the development of the sector in continuing to support key producer organisations, and is interested in exploring an expanded leadership role for these organisations.

These are organisations that have demonstrated that they are leaders in providing communities access to sustained arts and cultural development.

They would be committed to producing some or all of the following outcomes:

- Sustained art making in own strategic context
- Flagship organisation of best practice that undertake and publish research
- Provide critical leadership and open debate around issues for the sector

- Assist in brokering partnerships
- Provide career pathways and opportunities for artists
- Develop and promote work by diverse artists
- Proactively and innovatively engaged with cultural diversity within and of communities
- Be engaged in an international program

#### **4.5.9 Key Organisations – access**

The Reference Group believes that providing access to marginal and excluded groups is a key function of Community Partnerships.

These are organisations that have demonstrated that they provide access to heritage and new art to a particular cultural community.

- They would be committed to producing some or all of the following outcomes:
- Providing access to a particular cultural focus
- Provide access to heritage and new art
- Supporting sustained art making for groups in their own strategic context

#### **4.6 *Term of Reference 5 (b) - Consider the role of the Australia Council in supporting and developing creative communities with and between the Boards and Committees of Council***

This discussion paper suggests that each board, committee and section of Council would have a responsibility to assist the Australia Council to meet its objectives in the engagement of communities and the development and presentation of art and culture in and with communities. It is proposed that a matrix of evaluation be developed that would:

- a. provide a framework for the work with communities by all parts of Council, and
- b. provide a way of Council assessing its achievements and setting new targets

The Reference Group sees the building of new relationships and partnerships with the boards and committees of Council to be a strategic priority. Comment and input on the focus of these relationships would be welcomed.

#### **4.7 Term of Reference 5 (c) - Consider the role of the Australia Council in supporting and developing creative communities with Key Organisations and CCD infrastructure**

The interviews and questionnaire responses suggest a high need for clarifying the type, breadth and role of infrastructure organisations.

It is proposed to consider a regional network that covers the whole of Australia to deliver direct services to artists and organisations, and for supporting and promoting art and cultural development in communities.

Outcomes for infrastructure bodies include:

- Provide professional and project development support for artists and arts organisations
- Broker relationships with all spheres of government
- Play a role in stimulating debate over policy and practice issues
- Promote Community Partnerships and Australia Council programs

The Reference Group is considering a more effective arrangement than the current grants process between Community Partnerships and these organisations, and is considering a contractual model where by organisations could be invited to submit of expressions of interest or a tender process.

#### **4.8 Term of Reference 6 - Consider potential partnerships with spheres of governments and major non-government organisations**

**Term of Reference 7 - Propose possible sustainable strategies and actions**

**Term of Reference 8 - Consider ongoing mechanisms for communication and relationships between the Australia Council and the sector**

We will welcome your input and specific suggestions on these three Terms of Reference.