

From the office of the Chair

5 December 2019

The Hon. Paul Fletcher, MP
Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts
PO Box 6022
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

Thank you for your letter dated 22 October 2019 outlining your expectations for the Australia Council in 2019-20. We welcome your recognition of the centrality of arts and culture to Australia's identity and prosperity, and the ways in which our work contributes to key policy priorities.

The Australia Council has developed a Statement of Intent to articulate our strategic priorities for 2019-20 as we continue to deliver our functions as the Australian Government's principal arts funding and advisory body.

In 2018–19 the Council invested in creative experiences that reached 22.6 million people across the globe. Our investment has significant implications to Australia's rapidly growing creative economy: cultural and creative activity provides \$112 billion to Australia's GDP.¹ Artists and creatives are increasingly positioned as major global influencers alongside the growing recognition that leadership in fostering creativity is vital to supporting the jobs of the future and driving economic growth. Our research has demonstrated the high value of international cultural tourism to the Australian economy and to our soft power. New Australia Council research on domestic tourism, soon to be released, adds to the evidence base about Australians' high levels of engagement with the arts and highlights the growing potential for the arts to drive domestic tourism and regional economies while enriching and connecting Australians through creative experiences.

2019-20 will see us begin to realise the aims of our new Strategy 2020-2024, *Creativity Connects Us*. With the announcement of the new cohort of Four Year Funded organisations in April 2020 and the recent reform of the Major Performing Arts Framework, there is a timely opportunity to review our investment streams to ensure all Australians participate, create and enjoy the arts, no matter where they live or their life experience.

In June 2020, Council will lead the First Nations Australian delegation for the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture to be held in Hawai'i, reinforcing the significant role that culture plays in

¹ The cross-industry comparison is based on Gross Value Added. BCAR 2018, Cultural and creative activity in Australia, 2008–09 to 2016–17. ABS 2018, Australian System of National Accounts, 2017-18 (Cat. no. 5204.0).

Australia Council for the Arts

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our regional relationships. We will also work towards concluding our interim role of providing secretariat support to the First Nations arts sector to assist with the proposed development of a National Indigenous Arts and Cultural Authority, following a National Summit on First Nations arts and culture in the second half of 2020.

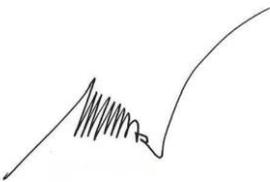
In this period we will conclude transforming the working practices of the Council with the full implementation of our updated business systems at our new premises. A revised organisation structure will align the workplace to our new Strategy and Corporate Plan.

This Statement of Intent, along with your Statement of Expectations, and the Council's Strategy and Corporate Plan, provides a roadmap to support us as we begin this new stage of our journey.

We would welcome your approval of the attached Statement of Intent. Once approved, we will publish both the Statement of Expectations and Statement of Intent on the Council's website.

I look forward to working with you in support of Australia's rich cultural and creative activity.

Yours sincerely



Sam Walsh AO
Chair

Encl. Australia Council's Statement of Intent 2019-2020

AUSTRALIA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS

STATEMENT OF INTENT 2019 - 2020

INTRODUCTION

In the Statement of Expectations, the Minister for Communications, Cyber Security and the Arts outlined expectations for the Australia Council in 2019-20.

Consistent with the *Australia Council Act 2013*, as well as the Australia Council's Strategy and Corporate Plan 2019-2023, this Statement of Intent is a high-level statement of the Council's purpose, what we do to achieve the outcomes expected of us by the Government and Australian community, and our key objectives for 2019-20.

OUR PURPOSE

The Australia Council is the Australian Government's principal arts funding and advisory body. Our purpose is to champion and invest in Australian arts and creativity.

WHAT WE DO

The Australia Council champions and invests in Australian arts and creativity through an integrated suite of activities:

- we invest in artists and organisations through peer assessed grants, fellowships and awards that enable art to be created and experienced
- we advocate for the social, cultural and economic value of the arts and creativity
- we provide advice to government on matters connected with the arts
- we manage Government-directed initiatives and frameworks in support of the arts
- we deliver strategic activity that builds industry capacity, increases markets and audiences for Australian creative work and enables more people to be inspired by and benefit from their creative engagement
- we conduct research and analysis that deepens understanding of the role and value of arts and creativity
- we collaborate with state, territory and local governments
- we partner with others to increase investment in and support for creativity.

OBJECTIVES

Enhance and promote the arts in Australia

Our vision is a creatively connected nation where creative enterprise is entrenched across society, industry and government as the fuel that ignites our social, cultural and economic success.

The Council's new strategic objectives outlined in our Corporate Plan 2019-23 respond to the rapidly changing landscape of Australian arts and creativity. Our strategic direction has been informed by a deep and rigorous body of evidence, consultation and analysis. *Our five strategic objectives will be our focus in 2019-20:*

- *Australians are transformed by arts and creativity*
 - *We will enable more opportunities for Australians to be captivated by, and inspired through, experiencing the arts.*
- *Our arts reflect us*
 - *We will support equity of opportunity and access in our creative expression, workforce, leaders and audiences.*
- *First Nations arts and culture are cherished*
 - *We will build on our long term commitment to First Nations arts and culture, recognising the importance of First Nations peoples' self-determination, cultural authority and leadership to our collective prosperity.*
- *Arts and creativity are thriving*
 - *We will support the best circumstances for a thriving arts sector.*
- *Arts and creativity are valued.*
 - *We will increase awareness of the value of public investment in arts and creativity.*

Our research continues to build knowledge and evidence about Australian arts activity, and the environment in which the arts are created, distributed and experienced. A current focus is on the creative economy: our recent research on international arts tourism shone a light on the pivotal role that the arts play in driving international tourism to Australia and positively contributing to Australia's soft power. New research on domestic tourism to be released in December 2019 adds to this, showing that Australians are increasingly engaging with the arts when they take short daytrips and longer overnight stays across the country. The research highlights the role and value of the arts in both supporting local economies – particularly in regional Australia – and in authentically connecting people to the place they are visiting, its people, landscape and history.

Ensure funding is accessible to all communities

The Council will continue its sector engagement and outreach activities to regional and remote Australia to engage and speak to artists, audiences, stakeholders and partners involved in the making and sharing of great art. Where relevant, these opportunities are delivered in partnership with colleagues from state and territory arts funding agencies on key trends, opportunities and issues facing artists and arts participation. Many of Australia Council's Capacity Building programs are delivered in regional communities and include regional leadership exchanges with the local community.

The Australia Council will continue to work with the Department of Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts as well as state and territory arts funding agencies on implementation of the National Performing Arts Partnership Organisation Framework to deliver sustainable, transparent and accountable support to performing arts organisations². This includes a priority to improve 'access to the arts for Australians in regional and remote communities'. As part of this implementation process, the Australia Council is managing a National Touring Scan to analyse key delivery gaps (including in geographic and art form spread of touring) and community developmental potential so that as many Australians as possible can benefit from live performing arts experiences.

² The Partnership Framework replaced the Major Performing Arts Framework.

Australia Council investment review

The Council will review all its investment streams, including Four Year Funding for Organisations, open grants and other opportunities within existing resources, with consideration given to:

- Council's functions set out in our Act that aim to ensure all Australians are able to participate, create and enjoy the arts no matter where they live or their life experience; and
- Council's priorities as set out in our Corporate Plan which include:
 - geographical spread
 - social cohesion
 - strengthening cultural and creative industries.

Concluding our work as secretariat supporting establishment of a National Indigenous Arts and Cultural Authority (NIACA)

A National Summit on First Nations Arts and Culture is scheduled for October 2020 at the Adelaide Convention Centre.

Following the National Summit, the Council will conduct a formal handover to the NIACA interim steering committee, elected from the National Summit, thereby concluding the interim secretariat role of the Australia Council.

Finalising the transition to new business systems

The Council undertook a full Business Systems Transformation in 2018-19. This saw the successful implementation of a range of systems intended to streamline our business activities and increase the effectiveness of Council's operations. This includes new grants management system, information management environment, client relationship management and financial systems. During this time, we also successfully moved to new premises that better support the Council's collaborative work practices.

Supporting Australian artists and arts organisations to build international relationships and explore new markets

The cross-portfolio impact of a thriving creative sector is substantial. Our international engagement through our grants program and strategic activities strongly contributes to international perceptions of Australia as an open, innovative and diverse society aligning with the Government's soft power objectives. A whole of Government approach to creativity could significantly amplify Australia's soft power, as has been seen in other countries such as Canada, the UK and New Zealand.

While we continue to support the traditional markets of North America and Western Europe, our international investment in and engagement with Asia continues to increase, build engagement in new markets and partnerships. We are committed to representing of Australia's diversity and richness of arts and cultural practice internationally through First Nations exchange programs, as well as engaging artists in the Asian diaspora to build cultural connections in our neighbourhood.