

22nd October 2020

Committee Secretary
Senate Committee on Australia's Creative and Cultural Industries
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

SUBMISSION BY

**THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY ART & DESIGN SCHOOLS (ACUADS);
AND
THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF DEANS AND DIRECTORS OF CREATIVE ARTS
(DDCA)**

**TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S CREATIVE AND
CULTURAL INDUSTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS**

Dear Committee Chair and Members,

This submission to the Inquiry is made on behalf of the Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools (ACUADS) and Australian Council of Deans & Directors of Creative Arts (DDCA). Both peak bodies thank the Committee for the opportunity to make a submission responding to this new inquiry into the creative and cultural industries of Australia. To begin, we describe both of the peak bodies showing our unique placement to respond to the Terms of Reference which is informed by our scholarship, training and research concerning the nations creative graduates.

The Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools (ACUADS) is the peak discipline body of university visual arts, crafts and design. ACUADS currently represents over twenty Australian university art and design faculties, schools and departments and other academic units offering university degrees at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in art, craft and design. This submission is made on behalf of the ACUADS Executive (Professor Denise Ferris, Professor Kit Wise, Professor Marie Sierra, Dr Charles Robb, Dr Lyndall Adams, Ms Sarah Pirrie, Dr Bruce Slatter, Associate Professor Veronika Kelly, Professor Laurene Vaughan, and Mr Andrew Lavery). The submission drew on the expertise on the Cultural Value Impact Network at RMIT University, as well as Adjunct Associate Professor Esther Anatolitis. As academics working in the art and design sector, we wish to highlight both the economic and non-economic benefits of creative arts research and teaching for our society, as well as the need for a national cultural policy to inform the future landscape of the sector.

The Australian Council of Deans & Directors of Creative Arts (DDCA^[1]) was established in 2013 to represent the tertiary institutions that deliver practice based creative arts teaching and research in Australia. Its membership comprises 27 university and arts specialist tertiary organisations and 4 specific arts discipline peak bodies.^[2] We encompass the breadth of creative arts education and research disciplines including all visual and performing arts and creative writing. This submission is made on behalf of the DDCA Executive (Professor Clive Barstow, Professor Su Baker, Professor Kit Wise, Professor Marie Sierra, Professor Cat Hope, Professor David Cross, Professor Craig Batty, Professor Kim Cunio and Dr Jenny Wilson).

We now address all five Terms of Reference in this submission:

1. Direct and indirect economic benefits and employment opportunities of creative and cultural industries and how to recognise, measure and grow them

- In recent decades the approach to cultural policy within Australia has been piecemeal. Both across different levels of government and between different fields of creative practice a patchwork approach has arisen. Now is a critical time for a cohesive and strategic policy approach that can aid the further development and flourishing of the creative and cultural industries to benefit both the economy and Australian society. The establishment of a National Cultural Policy is needed, one with more visible accountability in Ministerial and Government Department structures. This initiative would support the evaluation, recognition and expansion of the cultural sector and is critical to the perception of Australia as a contemporary society. While metrics such as the contribution the sector makes to national GDP and employment are well documented, less attention has been given to the indirect economic benefits that the arts and cultural sector generate. By not capturing and reflecting this contribution the economic value of the arts and cultural sector is understated. Clear and transparent data that reflects the full economic value generated needs to be in the public domain. The economic and social value of that contribution needs to be clearly understood and communicated. The value of the broader non-economic benefits must also, in addition, be acknowledged.
- Clear long-term vision reflected in a National Cultural Policy can aid the stability and future sustainability of the creative and cultural industries. Furthermore, as educators and trainers of current and future creative graduates who will drive the future development of our arts and cultural sector, stability and sustainability reflected in policy settings is also critical to our graduates as they seek to build successful careers.
- Governmental support at Federal, state and local levels for the creative arts in Australia, is significantly less than in many other comparable developed countries. From the establishment of arts and creative incubators to support the development of small creative enterprise and other initiatives that a National Cultural

Policy can address this will help ensure Australia is well placed to develop its creative economy further. Evidence supports that beyond the direct benefits from creative and cultural industries spill overs and innovation transfers benefit the broader economy as well as deliver important social benefits for Australians. Acknowledging that creative art is a global endeavour, ACUADS and the DDCA would like to see a comparably supportive national setting that encourages our talented graduates to remain in Australia rather than move to other nations that offer more incentives to drain Australia's pool of creative talent. This will require active national policy recognition of the important role that creative arts plays in our society, our communities and our economy.

2. The non-economic benefits that enhance community, social wellbeing and promoting national identity, and how to recognise, measure and grow them

- Again, while the direct economic benefits such as contribution to national income, exports and employment are generally well known (although as we have raised evidence on the indirect benefits is far less visible), it is the intrinsic value of the creative and cultural industries output that must also be recognised. The social benefit generated is a public good that benefits all Australians regardless of whether they participate directly or not in the arts and culture. Here, value resides in the essential contribution cultural activity makes to a society's narratives, its history, and sense of self as a nation. It is through our engagement with culture that we are able to situate ourselves in the world and develop as a society. These qualities of national identity enhance resilience and wellbeing; addressing these social indicators is especially important as we move through and beyond the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Measuring these benefits requires new indicators and approaches to how we conceptualise and assess cultural value. Not all the benefits translate neatly to quantitative metrics. Many benefits can only be measured qualitatively; i.e. through deep engagement with artists, institutions, and the diverse publics with whom they reach. Understanding the experiences generated by art for artists, audiences and other stakeholders including the public at large, is the key to "measurement" and subsequent recognition of the creative arts' intrinsic value. Approaches that recognise the widespread benefits beyond cultural value, reflecting more than the economic value, presents an opportunity to reconfigure evaluation frameworks and the ways in which we measure creative arts' value. This has implications for how we subsequently value and recognise the contributions made by artists within our society.
- Related to this, the Higher Education sector, with its network of galleries, exhibition venues, performance spaces and regular creative/arts events also represents an important contributor to the creative and cultural industry itself.^[3] Recent research finds evidence of the public benefit and positive spill-over effects generate for communities from universities' cultural infrastructure assets. Yet, as the university

sector responds to recent challenges that have disproportionately impacted the creative arts, such assets are at risk as universities look to divest to realised short term financial benefits at the expense of longer term community benefit. This situation is exacerbated by a lack of reporting or record keeping on operating venues by either the Higher Education Agency or the Australia Council for the Arts.

3. The best mechanism for ensuring cooperation and delivery of policy between layers of government

- A more visible Department and Minister resourced to have ongoing meaningful dialogue with peak bodies across the sector, as well as coordination across the different layers of government, would facilitate optimum cooperation to deliver sound policy and extended opportunities through the cultural sector.
- Specifically, we advocate for improvements to the remit and agency of the Meeting of Cultural Ministers; for example, expanding to include local government; representatives of key industry bodies; the Higher Education sector; related ministers (education, tourism). This may result in establishing a new Creative Industries ministerial forum.
- At present the extent and nature of government support for artists varies depending on the state or territory the artist is located and also depending on the nature of how the artist has been employed. There is a role for the Commonwealth Government to ensure that a level of support is available for emerging artists irrespective of geographic location and their type of type of creative practice. Furthermore, in recognising the precarious nature of creative work, support to artists needs to reflect the challenges associated with different employment modes that characterise the gig economy including self-employment, short-term contractual work and part time/casual work which dominate the sector and present serious challenges from those who are emerging or who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Australia Council for the Arts has sought to do this but has suffered from a legacy of budget cuts that have diminished its capacity to successfully deliver the necessary structural support into the future.

4. The impact of COVID-19 on the creative and cultural industries

- While every artform sub-sector within the arts and cultural sector was negatively impacted by contract cancellations, closures and COVID-19 protocols, the pandemic has foregrounded the crucial nature of the creative industries and the cultural sector. The arts are playing a central role in a COVID-19 recovery in terms of the mental health and wellbeing of our citizens and by maintaining a sense of national identity when everything else is being eroded. The arts however are often seen as

superfluous in the context of short-term recovery strategies. In the long-term, investment based on national policy is needed to re-establish a cultural identity that is positive, creative and forward looking driven by a healthy arts sector as all levels of education, training and professional practice.

- At the same time, sections of the creative and cultural industries have thrived during COVID-19. This demonstrates the remarkable resilience and adaptability within the sector. Evidence of this is apparent for instance in their education functions which have adapted to online models with remarkable success. New opportunities for collaboration between the Higher Education institutions, schools and the GLAM sector (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) have come to the fore; including in regional and international contexts. There is a unique opportunity to build on these learnings and success, to support both the creative and cultural industries and the Higher Education sector, one example is the recruitment of international students.

5. Avenues for increasing access and opportunities for Australia's creative and cultural industries

- Start access to Australia's creative and cultural industries early. If Australian kids can have widespread access to diverse sporting opportunities what analogous opportunities exist to look at art, to engage with our culture for the everyday Australian family? Make the value of art and culture visible; make it very clear that culture is not marginal but mainstream.
- It is not only a matter of emphasising the centrality of the arts and cultural industries to our society, it is also about centring it within education, from primary school and secondary school to tertiary education, where the creative arts prepare individuals for the challenges of a changing world. A key dimension is to better enable engagement with the creative arts across all year levels of the Australian Curriculum; including through cross-disciplinary opportunities such as STEAM.
- The value of creative and critical thinking in an increasingly automated workforce will be vital for the next generation of workers. Much literature exists^[4] that point to the essential skills demanded by employers to focus on those that are directly transferable from the creative arts. The skills of critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, leadership and empathy are all emphasised and developed through the creative arts. The arts need to be valued as an essential form of understanding; what it means to be human in an increasingly mechanised workforce. In these respects, the opportunities that education in the creative arts offers in a globally competitive labour market are immense.
- The Higher Education Creative Arts sector makes a specific and significant contribution to both collaborating with and supporting the creative and cultural industries, with deeply embedded networks of industry partners, alumni and work

integrated learning opportunities. Our graduates earn more than those in maths and science and often perform better than other disciplines in establishing new businesses as well as progressing to further study. COVID has dramatically impacted the viability of art and design schools, often more marginal in university budget models, and therefore the future career pathways for Australian creators and innovators.

We thank you for your consideration.

Professor Denise Ferris
ACUADS Chair
On behalf of the ACUADS Executive

Professor Clive Barstow
DDCA President

[1] <https://www.ddca.edu.au/>

[2] <https://www.ddca.edu.au/members>

[3] Wilson, Jenny. The hidden topography of Australia's arts nation: The contribution of universities to the artistic landscape [online]. *Australian Universities' Review*, The, Vol. 58, No. 1, Feb 2016: 20-29. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1091216.pdf>. Also: Noonan, D.S., Woronkowitz, J. & Hale, J.S. More than STEM: spillovers from higher education institution infrastructure investments in the arts. *J Technol Transf* (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10961-020-09825-2>

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