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MEETING OF
CULTURAL
MINISTERS

COMMUNIQUE

Today, Friday 30 March 2012, a meeting of Arts and Cultural Ministers was held in Melbourne, hosted by the Victorian Premier and Minister for the Arts, the Hon Ted Baillieu MLA.

Attendees:

Victoria: (chair)	The Hon Ted Baillieu MLA Premier and Minister for the Arts
Australian Government:	The Hon Simon Crean MP Minister for the Arts
New South Wales:	The Hon George Souris MP Minister for the Arts
South Australia:	The Hon John Hill MP Minister for the Arts
Western Australia:	The Hon John Day MLA Minister for Culture and the Arts
Tasmania:	The Hon Lara Giddings MP Premier, Treasurer and Minister for the Arts
Northern Territory:	The Hon Gerald McCarthy MLA Minister for Arts and Museums

Apologies:

Queensland:	The Hon Timothy Nicholls MP Minister for Finance, Natural Resources and the Arts
New Zealand:	The Hon Christopher Finlayson MP Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage
Australian Capital Territory:	Ms Joy Burch MLA Minister for the Arts

Observers

Mayor Genia McCaffery, President, Australian Local Government Association
Professor Barry McGaw, AO, PhD, Chair Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority
John Quinn, Assistant Secretary of the Asian Century Taskforce
Jenny Galligan, Executive Director, Arts Development, Arts Queensland

Meeting of Cultural Ministers Secretariat

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Meeting Summary

At this meeting, the Ministers:

- Recognised that the Australian economy is in transition and that arts and creativity will play a critical role in identifying and responding to new opportunities and thereby delivering stronger social and economic dividends.
- Discussed the development of the Australian Government's new National Cultural Policy and committed to develop an Arts Accord between the Australian, state, territory and local governments over the next 12 months, recognising that real change will be optimised through partnerships and collaboration.
- Welcomed progress in implementing the Major Performing Arts Framework and committed to establish the Excellence Pool to support the major performing arts companies;
- Agreed to work closely with education ministers on implementing the agreed *Australian Curriculum: The Arts*; and
- Noted continuing work to develop a national approach to Arts and Health and applauded the formation of a joint arts and health working group under the leadership of South Australia and committed to provide representation to the group.

Ministers discussed a range of other issues including the Australian Government's *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper*.

Further details of the Ministers' discussions are attached.

Media Contact

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National Cultural Policy

Ministers appreciated the opportunity to actively engage in the consultation process in the development of the National Cultural Policy, and praised the Australian Government's commitment to delivering the first National Cultural Policy in two decades.

Minister Crean indicated the new National Cultural Policy will show how the arts and culture can make a major contribution to Australian society and the economy 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.

Ministers acknowledged the importance of integrating arts policy within the reform agenda of all jurisdictions, and the need for clearer avenues of cooperation and collaboration.

To that end, Ministers agreed to the development of an 'Arts Accord' between the Australian, state, territory and local governments over the next 12 months and that this commitment will be reflected in the National Cultural Policy. Ministers noted that the development of an Accord is a key opportunity for all levels of government to articulate the respective and shared roles and responsibilities in supporting Australian arts and culture.

Major Performing Arts and Excellence Pool

Ministers welcomed progress on implementing the new national framework for cross-government support for the Major Performing Arts (MPA) sector. In particular Ministers discussed the new Excellence Pool and its role in funding for success within the MPA group. The MPA Excellence Pool will provide both governments and companies with additional capacity to leverage performance outcomes and financial capacity to fund innovation in the performing arts.

Ministers agreed to establish the Excellence Pool to be funded by the Australian Government and a combined contribution from other jurisdictions. Ministers committed to seeking funding for the Excellence Pool through their budget processes for commencement in 2013-14.

Ministers also agreed that companies would be eligible to receive funding based on peer assessment and only for proposals of national significance and impact.

Companies will be invited to submit Expressions of Interest consistent with the criteria for access to the Excellence Pool.

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Australian Curriculum: The Arts

Ministers agreed that development of the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* is a crucial tool to equip young Australians with the skills to become confident and creative individuals.

Ministers welcomed the news that the drafting of the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts* is almost complete and that a draft curriculum is expected to be available for consultation shortly. Ministers thanked the valuable input by Professor McGaw, Chair of the Board of ACARA. In particular Ministers acknowledged the process of targeted consultation following the release of the draft shape paper in October 2010.

Ministers agreed to propose reconvening the arts and education working group to investigate and report on how the arts sector and arts portfolio agencies can contribute to the implementation of the *Australian Curriculum: The Arts*.

Arts and Health

Ministers supported South Australia's leadership in progressing the development of a national approach to arts and health collaboration. Ministers acknowledged the commitment made by the Australian Health Ministers' Standing Council on Health in November 2011.

Ministers agreed that an Arts and Health framework is a significant opportunity for genuine whole of government engagement to strengthen arts and health initiatives and community health and wellbeing. Ministers noted the way arts can be used as a mechanism for achieving broader social and economic outcomes.