

Name: Erica Jolly

Submission:

Dear Mr Garrett,

Australia's national cultural policy needs to embrace the cultures of the sciences the arts and the humanities, We have lived in a society where the sciences have been separated from the arts and the humanities. That is beginning to change. A sculptor may take his inspiration from quantum mechanics, a scientist may be a fine poet. In an address at the National Press Club, the Hon Senator Kim Carr reminded the scientists present that it was important not to lose their humanity, to remember our rich culture and not to close off options. We have pigeon-holed 'culture', making it 'high' or 'popular'. We have ignored the scientific work of the First Australians in their powers of observation and how they adapted to and built their societies in the environment around them. We have set up barriers and decided that different ways of seeing belong in different realms. We have ignored the significance of 'cross over' and encouraged people to take up intransigent positions about what constitutes culture.

Music, for example bridges the arts, literature and the sciences in so many different ways. Yet we value one aspect of it and ignore the unseen aspects of it. It brings together the intellect and the emotion at its best in all kinds of genres. The arts and the environment, which are your responsibility, epitomise these connections. Awareness of the beauty matters as does the sense of its fragility in the face of human exploitation. We need to understand the science and not just 'emote' about the world around us of which we are a part. So a national cultural policy should bring together the disciplines in such a way that we create a society not caught up in rigid dogmatic positions. We need a society that recognises education in its many guises as an investment for the nation not a cost. Our national cultural policy needs to reinforce connections and with them a feeling of recognition of the value of diversity. Most of all - remember our humanity. You did well to have the arts added to English, maths, science and history in the national curriculum.

Yours sincerely

Erica Jolly BA Hons History, MA English Literature

I am a life member of the Australian College of Educators, the education/health liaison person for the Australian Federation of University Women - SA and I taught for forty years in four different kinds of secondary schools - a girls' tech, a boys' tech, an English grammar school and a comprehensive school, Marion High School that became a 'lighthouse school' for SA. I am a writer about education.