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Submission:

Arts Access Australia

<http://www.artsaccessaustralia.org/>

National Cultural Policy Consultation Response January 2010

<http://nationalculturalpolicy.com.au/>

Arts Access Australia is the national peak organisation for arts and disability with a network of members and representatives in every state and territory. We work to increase the low cultural participation rates of the one in five Australians with disability as identified by the Cultural Ministers Council report 'Cultural Participation by Persons With a Disability and Older Persons'.

http://www.culturaldata.gov.au/publications/statistics_working_group/cultural_participation/cultural_participation_by_persons_with_a_disability_and_older_persons_2003

Arts Access Australia welcomes the current consultation process on developing a National Cultural Policy and especially notes point 10 of the discussion framework:

"Australian culture is produced by its people. The role of government is not to directly shape culture but to enable all Australians – whatever their background, beliefs and abilities – to explore and nurture their creativity and draw on the wealth of our culture to enrich us all."

In developing a National Cultural Policy we ask that the Australian Government recognise the human right to cultural participation as it did in becoming a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). The cultural sections of UNCRPD Article 30 state:

UNCRPD Article 30 - Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities:

- a. Enjoy access to cultural materials in accessible formats;
- b. Enjoy access to television programmes, films, theatre and other cultural activities, in accessible formats;

c. Enjoy access to places for cultural performances or services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and tourism services, and, as far as possible, enjoy access to monuments and sites of national cultural importance.

2. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to enable persons with disabilities to have the opportunity to develop and utilize their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of society.

3. States Parties shall take all appropriate steps, in accordance with international law, to ensure that laws protecting intellectual property rights do not constitute an unreasonable or discriminatory barrier to access by persons with disabilities to cultural materials.

4. Persons with disabilities shall be entitled, on an equal basis with others, to recognition and support of their specific cultural and linguistic identity, including sign languages and deaf culture.

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

By developing a policy framework that reflects the aspirations and rights of people with disabilities the Australian Government will be supporting work it has already begun through the National Arts and Disability Strategy released in October 2009.

Arts Access Australia believes the Cultural Ministers Council National Arts and Disability Strategy names most of the essential issues that need to be addressed for people with disabilities to have equitable opportunities for cultural participation. What we are yet to see is a commitment to resources necessary to implement the National Arts and Disability Strategy along with a timeline for doing so. Our expectation is that resources and timelines will begin to be addressed as the National Arts and Disability Strategy Implementation Committee is formed and begins its work in 2010.

http://www.cmc.gov.au/working_groups/national_arts_and_disability_strategy

In developing a National Cultural Policy that includes disability Arts Access Australia draws your attention to the following key policy issues:

* **Data.** There is a clear need for baseline data about arts and cultural education, training, participation and employment by people with disabilities. Without this baseline it is difficult to set targets and monitor progress towards inclusion.

* **Pathways.** There is no clear pathway from arts and cultural education and training to employment. People with disabilities interested in the arts can easily

become lost in the transition points between school, vocational education and training, university and the workforce.

* Cross Portfolio Approach. In addition to the Arts the cultural participation of people with disabilities is determined by policies and programs in the Disability, Mental Health, Education, Employment and Ageing portfolios. Links to these portfolios need to be articulated in a National Cultural Policy.

* Twin-Track Approach. Given the systemic and attitudinal discrimination faced by people with disabilities effective policy responses require a twin-track approach of dedicated programs of support as well as mainstream inclusion.

* Access to Culture. Access to premises is an area where there is work underway (<http://www.aq.gov.au/premisesstandards>) along with access to the audio visual aspects of digital media (http://www.dbcde.gov.au/television/television_captioning/television_captioning_discussion_paper/media_access_discussion_report). There is still a need for further work to be done in promoting access to the web through Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (<http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/>) and access to cultural programs and events (the goods and services provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act). The National Cultural Policy needs to clearly state that access means more than access to premises.

A major gap in Government cultural programs and policy that needs to be addressed is ageing. There has been no significant Australian research or policy work done since the 1995 Australia Council 'Older Australians and the Arts report'.

<http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/736017>

Arts Access Australia has researched international creative ageing programs and strongly recommends that the Australian Government include a focus on creative ageing as part of its National Cultural Policy.

<http://www.artsaccessaustralia.org/creative-ageing>

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