

**Arts Dinner 7
Tuesday 15 December 2009
Workshop Notes**

Question 1

Culture is at the heart of our nation and the arts are at the heart of our culture, feeding and in turn, being fed by it. Australian culture is unique, diverse and vital to our present and future wellbeing.

Answer: What's Culture? – Define whose culture – Statement is too broad.

Culture is Individual

Circular Statement

Where do we start – which culture comes first, or better still, whose?

This statement is not One but Five (statements)

Define ART – which art forms.

If ART is the heart of our culture then why is funding so low and difficult to get?

How many people get paid to write this Policy? How many of them are practising artists? How many of them have ever applied for a grant?

Regarding Question 6 - Aboriginal & Torres Strait cultures – the term “unbroken” is an insult in light of the history of this nation – I challenge the presentation of ONE tribe who have retained (rather been allowed to retain) the totality of their story, song, dance.

Question 2

Culture is expressed in many ways and reflects our way of life. It encompasses our values, traditions, attitudes and expressions and is shared by us all.

Answer:

We agree! with the Statement. Every nation has its own individual culture which makes them unique from other countries.

Culture is who we are, not something different.

Question 3

(Art & Culture) provides the intellectual and imaginative ground for broad understanding and connections. An education rich in culture and arts provides a strong foundation for learning, social engagement and skills development.

Answer:

Part A (First sentence)

- Agree
- Challenges/stretches cultural norms
- Overcomes prejudices
- Provides basis for understanding others
- Think outside square
- Historical connection explaining our past
- Creates sense of involvement and inclusion

Part B (2nd part Statement)

- Learning/social engagement/skills development
- Implies involvement again
- Provides a medium/mechanism for delivery of other academic skills/technology

National Curriculum – how will it be “tested” or measured/evaluated for success. How assess its effect on other aspects of students’ performance.

- A medium/process for communication delivering understanding on social issues.
- National policy development.
- Filter up of feedback of community understanding.
- Creates environment for engagement with those who wouldn’t necessarily normally communicate.

Question 4

There is a primary value in creative expression through the arts which governments actively support. Our democracy is strengthened by the diversity of cultural and artistic expression.

Answer:

1. Second statement should be the introductory thought. Democracy strengthened by cultural diversity and artistic expression and supported by Government, not controlled/limited by Government.
2. Government’s “active support” should reflect a greater value on artists’ time and skill.
3. Artistic expression should be an integral part of our social culture.
4. Creative thinking (artist) is at the centre/primary function of society and community (not economics).

5. Arts is not a subset of community, it is at the centre of the decision-making process.

Question 5

Australian culture speaks to our identity, it is an important area of common interest which enriches our quality of life and defines us to ourselves and others. Its rich legacy provides knowledge of the past and hope for the future; above all it engages with the moral principles to which we jointly aspire.

Answer:

Australian Culture

- Acknowledges the reality of what is an Australian identity – that it is an interesting mix of different cultural backgrounds and experiences. It is not homogenous.
- Australian identity/culture is recognised when we can laugh at ourselves, no matter what our background or racial connection.
- Our identity today is one of greater acceptance of each other's religion and cultural background. However, this does take time.
- Our identity is not a stereotype of things such as...we're sport-mad etc, we're a mix of all qualities e.g. beer drinkers, birdwatchers, and orchid growers.
- Is the media pushing an idea of what 'they think' our identity should be? What's possibly economically advantageous to the big media corporations??? e.g. racial issues inflamed by media reporting.
- Our future – influences things we haven't even thought of yet.
- Children today- not aware of their identity as Australians because the 'whole world' comes into their homes – their world via the internet is so wide – but in the process have they lost their identity as Australians?

Question 6

The culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is the unique backbone of Australian identity; it brings meaning to our nation with a culture unbroken in song, dance and stories over millennia.

Answer:

1. Aboriginal Art is unique
2. Definitely not backbone of Australian identity – There is no backbone – as so many multicultural traditions now contribute to the Australian identity internationally recognisable as Australian. Gordon Bennett is an example of our evolving Aboriginal Artist.

- (It is) One of many art traditions forming Australian identity.
- It is the most recognisably Australian, internationally, of those traditions.

*Comment from those answering Question 1

Regarding # 6 - Aboriginal & Torres Strait cultures – the term “unbroken” is an insult in light of the history of this nation – I challenge the presentation of ONE tribe who have retained (rather been allowed to retain) the totality of their story, song, dance.

Question 7

Culture (locally could be) a powerful source of wealth for the nation, contributing significantly to the economy and employing hundreds of thousands of Australians. It adds value, attracts students and tourists, provides valuable exports and is essential to sustainable economic activity. (Promotion?).

1. Finding ways to make it relevant to the locals.
2. Individual creative people don't realise that their personal contribution adds to the big picture, culturally.

Question 8

Australian culture is a conversation between past understandings and future vision. Culture must both preserve and innovate, ensuring that the links between the present and past remain strong, able to incorporate new and varied perspectives.

Answer:

- Australian culture is a young culture and it is trying to find its way.
- With the right encouragement our free society could lead to infinite creativity and innovation.
- Creativity and innovation need to be more highly regarded and rewarded and funded.
- Wisdom of the past needs to be revered and encouraged.

Question 9

Our culture draws on the creativity found in many walks of life, in traditional forms which should be preserved and new forms yet to be imagined.

Answer:

- We will not discover anything new if we do not explore.

- Simplify framework Item 9 ?? and combine? – a lot of repeating of key points.

Common Themes

- Freedom (non controlling)
- Acknowledgement
- Future direction
- Access/participation
- Sharing
- Economic contribution
- Foundation
- History/tradition/new/exploration
- Connections
- Alternative income streams for artists

Question 10

Australian culture is...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.

Answer:

- Australian culture is its people
- Too wordy – more succinct
- To ensure access and participations by all
- Acknowledge many cultures – Australia is a multicultural nation
- Government role to support not direct or shape - to enable
- Freedom to experiment