

With regard to the terms of reference of the Joint Standing Committee on the National Capital and External Territories, I hereby submit some innovative strategies that Canberra's national institutions could utilise to maintain viability and relevance, to sustainably grow their profile and visitor numbers, and to increase revenue.

### **1. Creating a strong brand and online presence.**

A video production and distribution service, *ArtsCast Australia*, comprising a consortium of national cultural institutions, would make use of the internet's interactive capabilities to deliver live streaming and video-on-demand broadcasts, and to enable online participants to engage in real time with key events, educational programs and exhibition openings.

The provision of this broadcast-quality digital channel would be delivered by a centralised video production capability and available globally via online platforms such as the ABC, Apple TV, Amazon Prime, Google and Android TV.

The collective strength of the *ArtsCast Australia* brand – encompassing content generated within all national cultural institutions – would far exceed the presence able to be generated by the institutions individually, and would generate strong benefits from the ability to develop an integrated marketing strategy across the video content created by all participating institutions.

*ArtsCast Australia* would ensure cultural institutions integrate video production and distribution into their businesses in the online environment, collaboratively, efficiently and productively.

*ArtsCast Australia* would contribute to the growth and sustainability of cultural institutions by improving the visibility of institutions – as cultural events they coordinate are recorded, marketed and delivered live, enabling the Australian and international community to easily access a cross-section of Australian cultural content through one fully accessible portal.

### **2. Experimenting with new forms of public engagement and audience participation.**

*ArtsCast Australia* would deliver unprecedented benefits through enabling a transformative change in the way the institutions interact with the broader community.

*ArtsCast Australia* would utilise emerging technologies to assist in invigorating Australia's cultural life, offer new opportunities for community engagement, and ensure events held within Canberra's national cultural institutions are accessible to all Australians.

By supplying video crews, live webcast capabilities and video-on-demand facilities, the *ArtsCast Australia* shared services project would partner with cultural institutions, enabling the institutions to focus on existing core strengths of events, education and exhibitions.

*ArtsCast Australia* would become a hub of cultural discourse between experts and audiences, by combining high definition video with the high speed of the National Broadband Network and highly engaging social media technologies.

Through *ArtsCast Australia* cultural institutions will be able to meet accessibility requirements, including through the live transcription and on-demand captioning of video, and through using a video delivery platform compliant with Digital Transformation Agency and World Wide Web Consortium guidelines.

Currently cultural institutions tend to utilise overseas-based technologies such as YouTube to transmit video content, which cannot be fully utilised by people with vision impairments, thereby denying hundreds of thousands of Australians access to content they as taxpayers have paid to be made!

### **3. Conducting outreach outside of Canberra.**

No longer is it necessary to be in the right place at the right time to hear or see an authority present an enlightening and entertaining discussion of a particular cultural phenomenon, movement or moment in history; nor is it now necessary for Australians to receive cultural content at the end of a one-way delivery channel.

*ArtsCast Australia* would enable all Australians, no matter where they live, to have the opportunity to participate in the cultural life of the nation, through accessing high quality video content generated within major Australian cultural institutions, and through participating in a national conversation via interactive internet technologies.

*ArtsCast Australia* would dramatically mitigate the barriers of time and space preventing most people from accessing the high quality cultural content generated via events held at Canberra's cultural institutions, and will allow real time interaction with events by audiences distributed across Australia.

Through development of *ArtsCast Australia* many more Australians from diverse backgrounds and locations would have the opportunity to participate in Australia's cultural life – families, young people, people with disabilities, and people in regional areas would particularly benefit.

The potential to generate a huge schools market with K-12 students tuning in to live interactive events tailored to their areas of study and stages of development.

Older Australians may remember tuning in to educational radio programs being distributed throughout schools via classroom speakers – *ArtsCast Australia* is the natural development of that idea, updated for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **4. Cultivating private sector support.**

The collective and high profile content *ArtsCast Australia* would enable has the potential to attract significant sponsorship from businesses active in related industries such as information technology.

### **5. Developing other income streams.**

While cultural institutions are expert in their knowledge of their collections and their ability to hold events involving world-leading academics, artists, curators, historians and others, they generally rely on external content creators to produce video material related to their activities, or if producing content in-house are usually reliant on one or two staff members.

The project will increase and strengthen the capacity of the arts to contribute to our society and economy, as it would encourage access to high-quality audiovisual cultural content throughout all Australia's educational institutions, and in the homes of those seeking to pursue independent learning.

The project would bring about significant long-term savings in the cultural sector by enabling greater efficiencies in the creation of audiovisual content and greater access to it, and would enable the institutions to generate professional-quality video content for sale to broadcasters across a range of delivery channels.

**6. Ensuring the appropriateness of governance structures.**

An initiative such as *ArtsCast Australia* should be overseen by a board consisting of representatives from the Department of Communications and the Arts and each partner cultural institution.

José Robertson

