

Date: 29 September, 2020

To: The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications & the Arts, Parliament of Australia

From: Jo Lane, visual artist

Re: Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Australia's Creative and Cultural Industries and Institutions, 2020

Thank you for creating the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry into Australia's creative and cultural industries and institutions including, but not limited to; Indigenous, regional, rural and community based organisations.

Of the 5 considerations in the Terms of Reference I would like to address three that I believe I am qualified to address

- The direct and indirect economic benefits and employment opportunities of creative and cultural industries and how to recognise, measure and grow them
- The non-economic benefits that enhance community, social wellbeing and promoting Australia's national identity, and how to recognise, measure and grow them
- The impact of COVID-19 on the creative and cultural industries; and

This submission is in 3 segments

1. Firstly I wish to outline the inherent premise that the arts matter – to both creators and consumers. I am a practicing artist. I am expressing arts compulsory role in a vibrant, healthy society and world.
2. Secondly I wish to promote the economic effect of the arts.
3. Thirdly I want to outline the subjective psychological advantages to art's existence, the reason it needs to be valued and conclude, noting COVID-19's impact, by way of contribution to this important request for submission.

The Arts matter

As a practitioner and consumer myself, after years of creative application to commercial industries, I have come to understand the human journey 'The Arts' enhances. Studying 'The Arts', as a child and latterly, has opened up a whole new world to me. It allowed me to develop my lateral thinking skills, motor skills, social skills, decision-making and risk-taking skills, human relation skills, my problem-solving skills, expressive skills as well as alternate language and, most importantly inventiveness. Every single industry that has people involved needs these skills. For many years I applied arts related skills to media production as a way to make a living, which I did successfully. But this can equally apply to any industry or social system.

Because the work in The Arts has no other agenda other than to creatively express and depict the human condition and its perspectives, it needs to be recognised as integral to existence. Of course The Arts mean many differing things to the diverse people and communities that live in Australia. It

surpasses verbal language and transports to human essence. Without a valued and vigorous artistic community life is less rich, less cohesive, less compassionate and less emotionally intelligent.

Minimising education in the field is to deny complexity, imagination and intelligence to all endeavours critical to a smart society. They also enhance development of industries and enrich those lives not involved in them directly.

This is indeed a difficult notion when it comes to measurement let alone recognition. It is very hard to recognise the elements that make up 'well being' and 'success' other than direct economic comfort. 'Well being' is a multi faceted state and I am sure the submissions to this inquiry will express the arts contribution to communities in many poetic and grounded ways.

The Arts must NEVER be taken out of education systems.

Economic Effect

Many thousands people make a living through artistic endeavours and industries through galleries, art educational institutions, theatres, music venues, books, TV, radio and internet. Many artists who create for these platforms make a living through study, support then practice to provide content.

It has been said that visitor numbers to arts related events surpasses sports, and spending on artistic objects must also be in the millions of dollars.

In 2016, total Australian industry revenue grew 1.2% to \$1.43 billion up from \$1.41 billion. Over 18.78 million tickets were issued in 2016, up 0.8% from 18.63 million tickets in 2015. This figure is greater than combined attendances at every major sporting code including AFL, NRL, soccer, super rugby, cricket and NBL.

CREATIVE VICTORIA, FIGURES FROM LIVE PERFORMANCE AUSTRALIA – PUBLISHED 12 JANUARY 2018

The impact of COVID 19 has been huge. Personally I have seen financial devastation as many artists did not qualify for assistance as they did not fit in to the mandatory requirements to apply. Certainly in Victoria, artists were even told it was illegal to go to their studios, the only venue for them to produce work with which to make income (while construction workers were allowed to continue working on sites). They have rarely been mentioned in Government statements and assistance and consideration has been wanting. An increasing irony has also become evident where the country's 'lockdowns' to minimise the virus spread requiring home stay, there was more demand for consumption of work from creative people, television, film, music, books and visual arts. None of this has been acknowledged or appreciated enough.

Advantages

'The arts matter because they are local and relevant to the needs and wishes of local people. They help citizens to express their needs and to clothe them in memorable forms. They offer a way of expressing ideas and wishes that ordinary politics do not allow. ... Anywhere that neglects the arts short-changes its people.'

The Irish Times Jan 21, 2006 by John Tusa who ran the Barbican, in London, and was chairman of Britain's advisory Committee to the Government Art Collection, a trustee of the National Portrait Gallery, a trustee of the Design Museum, and a Board Member of English National Opera.

'Art connects us to the world, to each other, to others we can never meet or know. It affirms our relationship to the rest of humanity.'

JULIAN BURNSIDE | DAILY REVIEW MAY 10, 2018

The Arts are neither a nice to have nor a hobby. Artists and artistic endeavours need to be appreciated and supported to get on with the show for society's mental health. Art making and consumption are fundamental to a rich and inspiring nation of well rounded people, well formed ideas and innovation. No sexuality, race, ethnicity, background, belief or age has barriers to either 'arts' making or 'arts' consumption. It is in fact a way anyone has dignity in the face of adversity and importance in the act of celebration. It is an activity that shows ANYONE they are not alone. The arts matter because they help us to understand how we matter.

I implore the Committee report to the Ministry that the ARTS are one of the most important things the Australian Government can support, both financially and ideologically - creators, arts communities and arts venues.

Further to this, I proffer that the Government could, in fact, envisage a 'Creative Recovery' which is being used more internationally and more frequently after natural disasters now.

Yours sincerely in appreciation again

Jo Lane

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