



**Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Migration
PO Box 6021
PARLIAMENT HOUSE ACT 2600**

SUBMISSION: *INQUIRY INTO MULTICULTURALISM IN AUSTRALIA 2011*

The Kultour Network welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Migration Inquiry into Multiculturalism and the Contribution of Migration to Australian Society. We believe that the Arts plays key role in creating cultural harmony and vibrancy in multicultural Australia.

ABOUT KULTOUR

Kultour is the national voice that advocates for the importance of cultural diversity in the activation, experience and participation in the Arts for the benefit of the broader Australian community, reflecting our Multicultural society. Kultour's network is represented across all States and Territories.

PREAMBLE

Australia became a party to the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* on 23 September 2009.

There are a number of obligations that are incumbent on the Parties, which are called upon to:

1. endeavour to promote in their territory the creation of an environment which encourages individuals and social groups to create, produce, disseminate, distribute, and have access to their cultural expressions, paying attention to the special circumstances and needs of women and social groups, including persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to have access to diverse cultural expressions within their territory and from other countries of the world;
2. ensure information sharing and transparency by providing appropriate information in their reports to UNESCO every four years on measures taken to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions;
3. foster the public's understanding of the importance of the diversity of cultural expressions through educational and public-awareness programmes;
4. acknowledge the fundamental role of civil society in protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions by encouraging the active participation of civil society in efforts by Parties to achieve the objectives of the Convention;
5. incorporate culture into sustainable development and strengthen international cooperation in support of developing countries by several means, for instance, by strengthening their cultural industries, building their capacities to develop and implement cultural policies, technology transfer, financial support and preferential treatment for their artists and other cultural professionals and for their cultural goods and services.

KULTOUR SHARED VALUES

The role of the Arts:

Art has the ability to transform life and inspire creativity in all aspects of human existence.

Importance of Diversity of Expression and Equity:

The 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions states that cultural diversity is a driving force of development, not only in respect of economic growth, but also as a means of leading a more fulfilling intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual life. The relationship between culture and diversity is one of mutual foundation.

Cultural Transmission:

Equitable exchange and dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based on mutual understanding and respect and the equal dignity of all cultures is the essential prerequisite for constructing social cohesion, reconciliation among peoples and peace among nations.

Access to All: Access, participation and celebration of the Arts in all their diverse forms is a human right, and it plays a formative role for younger generations in the understanding and awareness of oneself in the world.

These four shared values underpin the submission from the Kultour network in relation to the terms of reference prescribed. This submission has Arts and Culture at the helm of cultural diversity as a key player in social dynamism and cohesion.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Multiculturalism, social inclusion and globalisation

Need for arts policy in multicultural Australia

Migration is not static; therefore it is critical that whole of Federal government agenda be flexible in providing a framework and leadership across policy development for all Australians.

SUCCESS THROUGH THE ARTS: Art in Multicultural Australia policy (2001-2006) heralded a new era in recognising the contribution that the culturally and linguistically Diverse (CALD) arts sector provides to Australia's rich cultural life. It provided the framework and support for new initiatives and strengthened existing organisations and programs across the country supporting multiculturalism locally and nationally.

RECOMMENDATION: That Australia meets its obligations to the UNESCO Convention through reinstating the Art in Multicultural Australia policy with an injection of financial support that confirms Government's commitment to support a vibrant and diverse arts community for the benefit of all Australians. And that cultural policy be developed that supports the presence and participation of the CALD community at multi-levels of peer decision making.

Increased participation by the CALD arts sector in public diplomacy programs in the promotion of Australia as an open and inclusive society

The celebration of a multicultural, multilingual, and multi-faith community promotes Australia as an opening and welcoming society. Globalisation has opened new ways to trade. In order to succeed, international collaboration is critical. If Australia is to participate and benefit from these opportunities, it needs to be openly working with cultural intelligence; public diplomacy and the arts play a key role in generating such awareness.

RECOMMENDATION: That there be support for international promotion of Australian arts and culture reflecting multicultural Australia through dedicated programs across the Department of Foreign Affairs, Austrade, and other portfolios outside the arts.

2. Settlement and participation

The role of the arts in promoting cultural inclusion and citizenship

With the constant flow of migration, settlement programs play an important role as emerging communities make Australia their new home. However, the danger is that these programs can result in ghettoisation if there are no vehicles for cultural expression. Often settlement programs look to the Arts as an “add on” program rather than a driver. The Arts is primarily experience based and as such should be integral to these programs. It plays a unique role in bringing community together in an inclusive and validating manner, by focussing on the celebration of heritage through full and integrated ongoing participation that includes migrants as valued contributors to Australian life.

SUCSESSES IN THE ARTS:

- (1) In New South Wales and South Australia, projects engaging Muslim women through the arts are having major impact in promoting cultural inclusion and citizenship.
 - a. *Muslim Women’s Arts Project* is a Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre Initiative that provides support for projects to build self-esteem and capacity in diverse Muslim groups and forge a sense of group culture as well as a sense of inclusion in wider Australian society; to build social capital; to develop the artistic, leadership, and community and cultural development skills of Muslim women in the arts from around Australia; and to engage Muslim and non-Muslim communities in dialogue, as participants in the creation of the artworks and/or as audiences.
 - b. *Nexus Muslim Threads Project* is a Nexus Multicultural Arts initiative comprising community workshops and a culminating exhibition to bring Muslim and non-Muslim women together to work collaboratively to create embroidered/quilted craftworks that tell stories of home origins, identity, migration, settlement and perceptions of the new country. It aims to reduce isolation, enhance social skills development between Muslims and non-Muslims, build tolerance and understanding between cultural groups, give Muslim women self-confidence, improve their ability to communicate and be part of the wider community, and reduce/breakdown cultural barriers.
- (2) In Victoria, Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV) has been presenting the *Visible Music Mentorship Program* for the last 5 years. It is a dynamic music mentorship program that aims to provide pathways into the mainstream music and arts industries for artists from refugee and emerging CALD communities. It was established in 2005 as a small pilot project involving five African groups from the Horn of Africa funded by VicHealth. Since then, *Visible* has connected 300 artists from diverse refugee and emerging culturally diverse communities with some of Melbourne’s most versatile and talented artists/ producers. *Visible* was created to provide a step up in the community and music industry for recent arrival and refugee communities.

RECOMMENDATION: That arts and cultural initiatives be supported and seen as integral to settlement/diversity programs through a whole of government approach including yet not limited to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship.

3. National productive capacity

The contribution of the CALD arts sector to the creative industries and tourism in Australia

Migration has played an important role in providing richer and diverse cultural experiences for Australians. Internationally renowned arts and cultural programs such as WOMADelaide (part of the World of Music, Arts and Dance Festivals¹) is a perfect example of one of Australia's leading international cultural events that provides opportunities to showcase local CALD Australian talent as well as internationally acclaimed acts. It attracts over 80,000 paid audiences over a four day period on an annual basis, generating a significant injection into the South Australian economy.

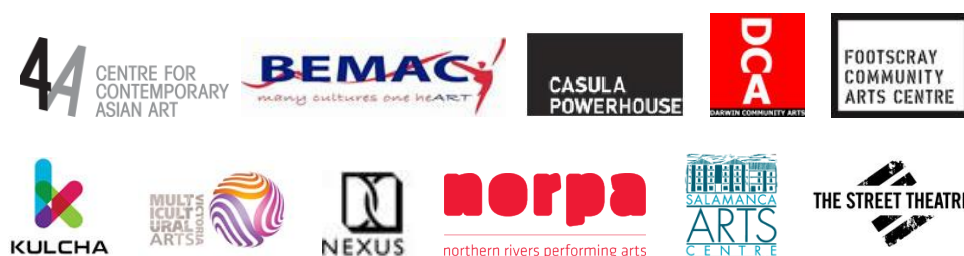
Although there is a perceived increase in participation and activation of small social and cultural enterprises from skilled migrants in the arts, this level of participation has yet to be accurately measured. With examples of the impact of WOMADelaide, a commitment to supporting major cultural activities that profile Australian's cultural diversity in the arts across the country would increase the potential for diversifying productive capacity for the cultural sector.

Australia is uniquely placed to take economic advantage of its cultural diversity. The input of CALD communities results in a more globalised (experience, knowledge and product) which in return gives Australian creative companies and sole traders an edge for modelling and exporting more culturally relevant products.

RECOMMENDATION: That support is provided to experts in the field to research the nexus between the Arts and Cultural Diversity in relation to national productivity and that there be a commitment to develop and support major cultural activities and social enterprises across all states and territories through interdepartmental government initiatives and investment matching the research.²

KULTOUR NATIONAL NETWORK

4A – Centre for Contemporary Asia Art (NSW), BEMAC (QLD), Casula Powerhouse (NSW), Darwin Community Arts (NT), Footscray Community Arts Centre (VIC), Salamanca Arts Centre (TAS), KULCHA Multicultural Arts of WA (WA), Multicultural Arts Victoria (VIC), NEXUS Multicultural Arts (SA), NORPA (NSW), The Street Theatre (ACT)



¹ WOMAD - World of Music, Arts and Dance the internationally established Festival, which brings together artists from all over the globe. The central aim of the WOMAD festival is to celebrate the world's many forms of music, arts and dance. It aim to excite, to inform, and to create awareness of the worth and potential of a multicultural society.

² Kultour is currently mapping potential models for this kind of research.

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE MATERIAL

This summary highlights some of the KEY points discussed during the National Multicultural Arts Symposium³ in May 2009 that were presented to the Australia Council for the Arts, the Australia Government's Arts Funding and Advisory Body:

Key Findings

- CALD art is a determiner of Australian cultural identity.
- Cultural diversity is a key driver of innovation in the Arts
- Arts and social inclusion together have the to bring about change
- CALD arts as a space for artists to explore their cultural diversity
- Culturally diverse audiences are growing the arts – not the converse!
- Intercultural dialogue provides opportunities to build relationships between contemporary Indigenous Australians and Australians from CALD backgrounds

Key Need/Issues

- Strong need for ongoing discourse about cultural diversity in the arts and as part of broader national debate
- Need for a national centre for CALD arts leadership
- Need for peer CALD representation on all Boards and assessment panels for further dialogue on diverse aesthetics (expressions) that may not be measured through existing mechanisms.
- Need for the development of CALD arts producers for CALD new artwork
- Refugee Arts and the need for visibility of these artists and communities
- Existing racism as experienced by CALD artists

Potential Initiatives

- Dedicated arts funding for intercultural and CALD work that supports: creative and sector development, creation of new work, research and presentation engaging all Arts Boards at the Australia Council for the Arts, Office for the Arts and other government departments
- Kultour to manage strategic initiatives for future Arts in a Multicultural Australia Policy implementation, as the national peak body.
- Initiatives to bring people together working in the CALD arts field (especially for the more geographically isolated) on an annual basis for knowledge and skill transfer and exchange.
- Stronger and meaningful engagement with technology and contemporary media arts culture for CALD artists and producers, and pathways for access to new technologies and innovation.
- Showcase opportunities for CALD artists and their work to hear from more CALD artists at various levels (from community to established, to top international level) about their experience and needs.
- Professional development initiatives and support for the development of CALD producers
- Regional support for development, both of sector and CALD arts creators

³ Nexus Multicultural Arts, in partnership with Kultour, hosted the National Multicultural Arts Symposium May 2010, *Diversity in the Arts: Theory + Action*, providing a rare opportunity across Australia to draw on the experience of experts from across Australia actively engaged in the production, presentation, research and promotion of culturally and linguistically diverse arts.