

SENATE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE
REFERENCES COMMITTEE
INQUIRY INTO PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND THE
ISLAND STATES OF THE SOUTH-WEST PACIFIC
SUBMISSION

Submission No: 14

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No. of Pages: 8

Attachments: No

in reply please quote

From the office of the
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

24 June 2002

Mr Brenton Holmes
Secretary

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee Room
S 1.57, Parliament House CANBERRA ACT 2600


Dear Mr Holmes

The Australia Council is pleased to provide input to the Parliament Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee inquiry into Australia's relationship with Papua New Guinea and the island states of the south-west Pacific.

Australia is a culturally rich nation and the work of our artists is central to contributing to our sense of national identity and our place in the world. The Australia Council fulfils a crucial role in supporting Australian artists and arts organisations to pursue artistic excellence, to create and present their work, to take advantage of opportunities to improve and develop their skills, and to tour and promote their work to wider communities.

We would encourage the Inquiry to place historic and contemporary cultural relations at the centre of the framework in which political, economic, trade tourism and investment activity can be placed, discussed and understood.

Yours sincerely



Jennifer Bott
Chief Executive Officer

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Australia

Council for
the Arts



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Australia Council submission: Inquiry Australia's relationship with Papua New Guinea and the island states of the southwest Pacific

Introduction to the Australia Council

The Australia Council is the Federal Government's principal arts funding and advisory body. Its mission is to enrich the life of the nation by supporting and promoting the practice and enjoyment of the arts. Council's vision is to:

- enable Australia's arts and its artists to pursue excellence;
- preserve, maintain and develop the distinctive features of Australia's culture;
- ensure all Australians have the opportunity to engage with the arts and to enjoy a rich cultural life; and to
- shape a future Australia in which the arts play a meaningful and vital role in everyday life.

Australia is a culturally rich nation and the work of our artists is central to contributing to our sense of national identity and our place in the world. The Australia Council fulfils a crucial role in supporting Australian artists and arts organisations to pursue artistic excellence, to create and present their work, to take advantage of opportunities to improve and develop their skills, and to tour and promote their work to wider communities domestically and internationally

The Australia Council is a Commonwealth statutory authority created under the *Australia Council Act 1975*. Section 5 of the Act states that the functions of the Council include: (a) formulate and carry out policies designed:

- (i) to promote the appreciation, understanding and enjoyment of the arts.
- (ii) to promote knowledge and appreciation of Australian arts by persons in other countries;

The Council's policies inform its actions and its support for the arts. There are three formal Council policies: National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Policy (NATSIAP); Arts in a Multicultural Australia Policy (AMA); and Regional Arts Development. A fourth policy, Young People and the Arts, is currently in development.

The Australia Council *Corporate Plan 2001-2004* represents Council's role and Goals for this specific period. Two goals are particularly relevant

To support the excellence, diversity and the distinctiveness of Australia's artists and its arts by "showcasing" distinctive Australian arts and artists within Australia and internationally.

To improve the vitality and viability of the arts ... by initiating and facilitating collaborations and partnerships between arts organisations, governments, commerce, philanthropists and charities to create new opportunities for the arts and for artists;

The Australia Council uses its national perspective, rich peer expertise and field connections to provide high-level support to the Government to achieve its objectives across portfolios. Council works closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) on a number of levels. The Chief Executive Officer serves as member of Australia International Cultural Council (AICC), Committee for International Cultural Promotions (CICP), and The Australian National Commission for UNESCO and Executive Board member of the Asia Australia Institute (AAI). The Council Chairman is a member of the Australian Business Arts Foundation and the AICC.

Relations between states

The Australia Council acknowledges the Inquiry's concern with the current state of relations between states in the region.

Historic and contemporary cultural relations are the fundamental framework in which political, economic, trade tourism and investment activity can be placed, discussed and understood.

The richness and diversity of the cultures of the region are not limited to current nation state borders. Our own Indigenous and multicultural heritage in Australia demonstrates this.

The current state of relations is an overwhelming one of unrealised opportunity for exchange and development not only culturally, but also at the level of activity which the Inquiry Term of Reference specify.

The Australia Council recognises that reconciliation with a nation's history and contemporary circumstances is important if cultural progress is to be achieved. We respectfully acknowledge that this issue may also be relevant to some other communities and / or nations in the region.

The Australia Council National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Policy principles are respect; authority; rights and responsibilities; and diversity. We propose that the Inquiry explore these values as a solid base for its work. The objectives of the Policy include:

- development of improved mechanisms for support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and arts organisations;
- building linkages with other key stakeholders;
- maintain and improving networking opportunities.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous people staff the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Unit.

The culturally diverse nature of Australia's population presents challenges and opportunities. It is particularly important that, in a post colonial western nation, the Australia Council values the traditions and capacity for innovation that exists in Australian multicultural and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society and encourages the creativity and artistic expression resulting from this diversity.

The Australia Council's Arts in a Multicultural Australia policy objectives aim to:

- achieve high-quality and well-profiled artistic practice and content; foster
- attitudinal change promoting inclusiveness in the arts sector; develop a
- sustainable infrastructure for multicultural arts practice

The Australia Council revised the policy in 2000 and a five-year framework of strategies is now underway with Council support and strategic funding. The revitalisation of the AMA policy has renewed Council's leadership in cultural diversity and the arts in both Australia and internationally.

The Australia Council proposed to the Australia International Cultural Council the establishment and maintenance of a comprehensive online calendar of Australian arts and cultural activity occurring overseas. This resource and complementary sources of information would be a useful tool for furthering relations between states. The proposal was endorsed and supported at the April 2002 meeting of the AICC. It comprises:

- development and maintenance of a comprehensive and current calendar of Australian arts and cultural events occurring overseas; collation, and where necessary creation, of
- high-quality promotional materials that showcase Australia's artistic and cultural diversity; establishment and maintenance of a purpose-built online resource to costeffectively disseminate this information and interact with target users worldwide.

The proposed online calendar is designed to advance the international cultural promotion and coordination objectives of the AICC as well as the international audience and market *development objectives of the Australia Council and other cultural agencies*

Economic Relations

While there are limitations in data available about state economic outputs in the region it can be argued that culture underpins much of the trade, tourism and investment that has occurred in Papua New Guinea and Pacific states.

The Australia Council makes a substantial investment in support of the presentation of the arts internationally. The Australia Council spends approximately \$6m on International Projects annually through both the **Audience and Market Development Division** and our artform grant programs.

Of particular importance is the Council's support for the Council of Pacific Arts and the Festival of Pacific Arts held each four years. The Pacific island nation, the Republic of Palau, will host the Festival of Pacific Arts in the summer of 2004. This is the largest festival held in the Pacific region and is held only once every four years. All Pacific

island nations join together to share dance, music, **chant, visual art, traditional craft,** theatre, philatelic and literary arts. Culinary arts have been added to the list.

The Shanghai International Festival of Arts ('SIFA') is one of the premier arts festivals in the People's Republic of China. Following the first Festival in 1999, a new organisation, the Centre for the China Shanghai International Festival of Arts, was created to coordinate programming and marketing of the Festival. Australia's participation in the SIFA is being funded through DFAT on behalf of the AICC. The Council has invested \$180,000, and is represented on the Advisory Committee for the project.

It is vitally important that governments in the region work to ensure that arts and cultural products traded as Indigenous can be authenticated as such. The Australia Council has supported the establishment of an Indigenous Label of Authenticity. The introduction of this national certification scheme has been a challenging process. Mooted for over 10 years the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) commenced funding the National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Association (NIAAA) re the development of the label in the early 1990's. A component of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board's (ATSIAB) Triennial funding (NIAAA has been a Triennial client of the ATSIAB for the past 6 years) has been for a position to assist with the development of the label which was launched nationally in October 1999 at Government House.

The Council plays a significant role in international market development & promotion. DFAT is a partner in the Australia Council's Australian Performing Arts Market, a biennial innovative trade show established in 1994 to increase international and national touring opportunities for Australian performing artists and held to date in Canberra and Adelaide. The aim of the market is to promote and help secure international, and national tours, of contemporary Australian performing arts in key international markets. The 5th Market was held in Adelaide 25 February to 1 March 2002. For the second time three companies from New Zealand appeared and for the first time two companies from Singapore were presented in the Market Spotlight or showcase program. Delegate numbers for the 5th Market increased by approximately 24 % on the 4th Market.

It is estimated that more than AUD 25 million has been generated for Australian performing artists from the first four Markets.

There was a strong Indigenous performing arts focus in the Market including: an Opening Address by Australian Indigenous artist and festival director Rhoda Roberts; an

¹ Festival organisers include Mr Chen Shenglai, President and Ms Wei Zhi, Vice President of the organisation. Under Mr Chen and Ms Wei, the Center oversees the choice of the festival program and invites all international artists. The Center proposes the program to the governing Committee, jointly chaired by the Mayor of Shanghai and the Deputy Minister of Culture. The Center for the China Shanghai International Festival of Arts has offered Australia a dedicated component in the November 2002 Festival. Australia is the first country to be assigned 'guest nation' status at the Festival. The Festival runs for one month from 1 November to 1 December.

Indigenous Arts Briefing Session including participation from New Zealand, and strong Indigenous representation in the Spotlight program.

The Market's program also included representatives of overseas arts agencies including Creative New Zealand and the National Arts Council, Singapore, and representatives of overseas performing arts markets including CINARS, Canada; Tokyo Performing Arts Market, and the Asian Arts Mart (Singapore).

Development Cooperation

Cooperation for development between states in the region has a complex and illuminating history. We encourage the Inquiry to attend to the lessons of that history as the Tongan proverb says: 'if you don't know from whence you come, how can you know where you are going'?

The Australia Council has substantial experience through its support for and involvement in cultural development and exchange. The Council notes the great value of artist's residencies and exchanges to promote cultural development, understanding and

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exchanges

enrichment for individuals, communities and states.

The Australian Cultural residency Program conducted by DFAT has a real contribution to make in the region. Council is aware of interest in establishing residency opportunities between a number of communities including between Papua New Guinea and Australia.

The latter would build well on the *Joint declaration of principles guiding relations between Papua New Guinea and Australia* struck in December 1997.

In conjunction with UNESCO the Australia Council initiated a two stage Pacific Exchange Project to involve other arts organisations in a program of Australian and Pacific Artists' residencies, touring exhibitions and exchange projects in the late 1990s. An example of the current opportunities the Australia Council supports is the Cite Internationale des Arts residency.

In 2000, visual artist Maria Filippow was selected as the first artist supported by Council's Community Cultural Development (CCD) Board in residence at the Cite Internationale des Arts. The three-month stay provided unique opportunities to showcase some of the work Maria had been involved with in Melbourne. The *Visionary Images* project saw Maria working with other artists, disadvantaged youth, youth workers and volunteers on the development and production of images which were exhibited on advertising billboards and in public art sites. The works also toured as an exhibition to the Brisbane Powerhouse, Bond University on the Gold Coast and to the Southern Exposure Gallery in San Francisco. "*Visionary Images* was very well received," says Maria. "People were surprised at the quality of the work, and were impressed by the successful utilisation of media by communities. The project successfully turns advertising media into a two way dialogue, expressing what the community thinks is important. Artists at the Cite were from all over the world and exposure to *Visionary*

Images artwork and methodologies gave other practitioners and artists, who are not working in CCD, an idea of the practice they could take home with them".

Another aspect of the residency was the chance to develop international contacts with key organisations and agencies in other countries. "I made many contacts in Europe, where CCD has virtually no profile at all. In France, where CCD is in its fledgling stage, people were interested in Australian assistance in the development of CCD internationally. An international advertising company in association with Caritas is keen to utilise our methodology to breakdown stereotype perceptions of refugees and homeless people." Maria also gained insight into international cultural and organisational protocols, such as how UNESCO operates. "UNESCO youth services has now put young people in Melbourne in touch with other communities and agencies around the world, and many of our future projects will reflect this international focus".

The Australia Council works with Australian and International agencies to further cooperation and development.

The Australia Council works with the DFAT on an ongoing basis. The Audience and Market Development Division is responsible for overseeing the Council's international activity framework and provides briefings for DFAT staff including Ambassadors designate, cultural attaches and locally engaged Foreign Affairs staff on familiarisation visits to Australia. The Council has worked with DFAT on coordinated international cultural/arts/trade programs in foreign countries such as India in 1996 and Britain in 1997. As well, Council maintains direct links with a number of Australia's foreign posts particularly in Japan, USA, France, UK and in South East Asia. Council is often called upon to provide advice and briefings on arts activities in foreign countries and on proposals for international activity involving Australian artists. It also provides advice on visits to Australia by cultural guests of the Government including visiting arts journalists and directors of cultural and arts events.

Council works closely with DFAT through the AICC and joint projects such as HeadsUp Australian Arts 100 in London in June 2000'; the Next Wave Down Under festival in Brooklyn in October 2001" and upcoming events in Berlin", Shanghai and the recent 5t' Australian Performing Arts Market in Adelaide.

Australia has a relatively advanced approach to intellectual property rights and regulation. Therefore we have much to offer in terms of cooperation and development including the recognition that more needs to be done to adequately address Indigenous Intellectual Property matters.

Implications

The key messages the Australia Council wishes to give to the Committee with implications for the Inquiry are:

1. The value of placing culture at the centre of the Committee Terms of Reference.

2. The diversity of cultures and communities in the region needs to be recognised and in particular, understood to not only fit only within national borders.
3. The importance of learning from the history of relations and cooperative efforts in the region.

In the last decade UNESCO has supported a number of regional meetings of the heads of cultural agencies which provide useful points of reference for the Inquiry. Therefore the inquiry may find a number of reports of interest:

The UNESCO Consultation of Pacific Cultural Directors Wellington 25-29 March 2001
The New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO *UNESCO Pacific Heads of Cultural Agencies Meeting Suva 14-16 July 1997*

If the Committee has any questions about this submission please contact Mark Stapleton
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ENDNOTES

'HeadsUp Australian Arts 100

The Australia Council and the National Council for the Centenary of Federation (NCCF) co-presented 'HeadsUp' Australian Arts 100 in London, as part of Australia's Centenary of Federation celebrations. HeadsUp was an important component of the ceremonial, political and promotional celebrations of Australia Week in London, from 30 June to 9 July 2000. 'HeadsUp' comprised a significant 10-day program of contemporary Australian arts, providing a snapshot of some of Australia's best music, theatre, visual art, contemporary dance, film, theatre, visual art, literature, photography and new media arts. Theatre highlights included three Indigenous works - Deborah Cheetham's *White Baptist*, *Abba Fan* and Leah Purcell's *Box the Pony* at the Barbican Centre, and Ilbjerri Aboriginal and Tomes Strait Islander Theatre Co-operative and Playbox Theatre's co-production of *Stolen* at the Tricycle Theatre. Dance was represented by Chunky Move's *Export Files* at The Place. The music program included contemporary fine music, a chamber concert at Wigmore Hall, a concert showcase 'Into the Fire' by the Australian Art Orchestra and South Indian percussion ensemble Sruthi Laya Quartet, and a program of Australian popular and cabaret music. Financial support for the project from the Australia Council totalled \$368,692 and from the NCCF \$345,000. Management of the project was contracted to David Malacari at the Adelaide Festival Corporation. 'HeadsUp' was a successful project, gaining wide media coverage in the UK and in Australia, although the focus of media interest was clearly on the political and historical components of Australia Week in London. UK Arts International, an organisation which tours productions throughout the UK, used the opportunity of the 'HeadsUp' to bring a number of producers and venue presenters to London to see Australian work, in particular the Theatre and Dance programs.

Next Wave Down Under- Brooklyn Academy Of Music, October 2001

Despite terrorist attacks, some artist cancellations, and US-led coalition military campaigns against terrorism, Next Wave Down Under happened through the commitment of the Australian artists and companies and the collaborative efforts of BAM, the Australian partners including - the Australia Council, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade - through the Australia International Cultural Council, the Australia Film Commission, and the Australian Consulate in New York. Around 130 Australian artists travelled to New York to participate in Next Wave Down Under which was the first time that the Next Wave Festival, one of the world's most important contemporary arts festivals, focused on the arts of a single nation in its 19-year history. BAM carried much of the risk on this event. All artists, performances and film screenings received an extremely warm and enthusiastic reception with productions and performances resonating very strongly with New York audiences at this extremely challenging time. The Australian Government contribution totalled approximately \$A 1.55 million, the estimated project expenditure \$A2.7 million, and earned income totalled approximately \$A700,000. *Next Wave Down Under* included four major performing arts productions: *Cloudstreet*, Bangarra Dance Theatre's *Corroboree*, Chunky Move's and *The Theft of Sita*; a BAMcafe program of contemporary music and literature, an online New Media Arts exhibition, and a month-long program of Australian cinema.

° Summer Season Of Australian Arts In Berlin - 2002

Planning is now well advanced for this promotional season of Australian contemporary arts, to be staged in conjunction with leading Berlin presenters and venues between June and September, 2002. The proposal for an extended season of Australian contemporary arts came from Berlin performing arts presenters inspired by the range, quality and originality of Australian arts profiled through the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games opening ceremony and other promotional events. A total of approximately \$1.2 million has been committed as the core program budget for the Summer season, with a total of \$850,000 allocated from the Audience and Market Development budgets across FYs 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04 and \$350,000 allocated by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through the Australia International Cultural Council. Additional funding has been allocated but not yet committed by DFAT through the AICC and by the Australian Film Commission for the proposed Summer season film program.