

31 January 2007

Dr Kathleen Dermody
Committee Secretary
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Dermody

The Australia Council is pleased to make this submission to the Committee's *Inquiry into the nature and conduct of Australia's public diplomacy*.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Karilyn Brown, Executive Director, Community Partnerships and Market Development, on 02 9215 9047.

Yours sincerely

Dr Catherine Brown-Watt
Acting Chief Executive Officer

**Submission by the Australia Council for the Arts to the
*Senate Inquiry into the nature and conduct of Australia's public
diplomacy***

January 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The promotion of the arts on the international stage is critical to developing a strong identity for Australia in other parts of the world. With Australia playing an ever-increasing role in the global arena from business and trade relations to environment and security issues, it is vital that Australia's 'world-class' creative sector is part of the Government's broader international strategy of building a better understanding of Australia's identity, culture and values.

Australia is a richly diverse, sophisticated and dynamic nation – our whole-of-government public diplomacy efforts are critical in positioning our country internationally, and in influencing what people think about when they think about Australia.

There is a burgeoning international interest in Australian arts and culture that has been driven, and has continued to drive, many major Australian export successes. These successes have actively and meaningfully complemented and enhanced Australia's diplomatic efforts in profiling our strong, independent national identity.

Works produced by our artists and cultural organisations reflect our characteristics as a tolerant, vibrant, innovative, diverse and creative nation.

For example, Australia's Indigenous arts sector has grown greatly in size and importance both nationally and internationally in recent years. Not only has the Indigenous art movement led to a genuine recovery of Aboriginal cultural heritage, it has also had a highly positive effect on Australia's artistic and cultural reputation internationally, attracting artists, curators, tourists, collectors and arts students to Australia.

A significant recent achievement has been the Australian Indigenous Art Commission at the Musée du quai Branly in Paris (through which eight Indigenous artists were commissioned to create 10 large scale, permanent public art works, a project managed by the Australia Council). A report on the opening of the Commission at the Musée from the Australian Embassy in Paris stated:

“Australia's role in the Quai Branly Museum is genuinely admired by French officials, and it has provided a new arm of cooperation on counter-terrorism, the Pacific, and defence. The Quai Branly museum – which will serve as a base for new curatorial exchanges and other cooperative activities in years to come – underscores the vitality and importance of public diplomacy in Australia's foreign policy outlook.”

INTRODUCTION

The Australia Council is the Australian Government's principal arts funding and advisory body. It enriches the lives of Australians and their communities by supporting the creation and enjoyment of the arts.

An overview on the Australia Council's governance and organisational structure can be found in the Council's 2005-2006 Annual Report (Attachment A).

The Australia Council performs a crucial role in supporting Australian artists and arts organisations to create and present their work, take advantage of opportunities to improve and develop their skills, and tour and promote their work to wider audiences.

The Council also plays a vital role in developing new audiences for the arts here and overseas; in promoting appreciation of the value and role of the arts in the Australian community; and in ensuring access to and participation in the arts by all Australians.

The Council places great emphasis on the development of a strong identity for Australian arts internationally, investing some \$7.4 million in 2005-06 to develop international opportunities for Australian arts, particularly through its international market development strategy.

The following divisions of the Australia Council are responsible for supporting international activities:

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board:** supports the development and promotion of traditional arts practices and new forms of artistic expression among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in urban and regional areas, and in all artforms.
- **Arts Development Division:** includes six artform sections that manage grant assessment processes and artform development: Dance, Literature, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts and Inter-Arts.
- **Community Partnerships and Market Development Division:** responsible for the Australia Council's work in the areas of audience development, arts marketing, international market development and promotion, and community engagement strategies.
- **Major Performing Arts Board:** ensures that Australia has an artistically vibrant, financially viable and broadly accessible major performing arts sector.

Through various grant programs and initiatives, these four divisions of the Council fund international activities in the following areas:

- artists' residencies in overseas studios
- tours of exhibitions and performing arts projects
- tours by individual artists to key international events

- representation in major recurrent international events, including performing arts markets, international bookfairs, art and craft fairs, music markets, festivals, arts conferences, and visual art biennials and triennials
- international visitors' programs
- collaborations between artists and their communities/countries of origin
- specific major showcase events, programs and strategies in target regions/markets

The Australia Council's International Market Development Strategy provides a framework through which a significant number of initiatives and projects have been delivered successfully, raising awareness of Australia's diverse contemporary arts and culture across key target markets.

The Australia Council's primary international market development objectives are to:

- encourage international demand for contemporary Australian arts
- consolidate and develop international markets through key promoters and presenters
- open up new international audiences for Australian arts

The number of Australia Council grants for international touring has increased over the past three years.

While the main areas of activity include the US, UK, France, Italy, Germany, Canada and Japan, considerable attention is being given to new and developing markets, including China, Korea, Singapore, Latin America (Mexico, Brazil and Chile), and Central & Eastern Europe.

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Number of grants	319	365	423
Number of countries	52	46	45

Specific international market development programs managed and funded by the Australia Council can be found in Attachment B

Through these programs, the Australia Council has been able to engage far more strategically with international partners and presenters to create sustainable relationships for artists to present and develop their work in an international arena.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The following points address each of the Committee's terms of reference. Comments have been confined to the nature of the Inquiry and should not be seen as an exhaustive account of the Australia Council's international activities.

A. The extent and effectiveness of current public diplomacy programs and activities in achieving the objectives of the Australian Government

The Australia Council has assisted in projecting a strong identity for Australia and there has been considerable demand for Australian product on the international stage. Some of the most noteworthy are:

- The Australian Indigenous Art Commission at the major new museum in Paris, the Musée du quai Branly, (June 2006).
- The Venice Biennale (Italy) that, in 2005, secured the highest visitor numbers yet to the Australian Pavilion (190,000 visitors).
- There continues to be a strong take-up of Australian artists presented at International Performing Arts Markets in the USA, Canada, Japan and Singapore through invitations to tour and present their work on the international stage.
- Close working relationships with overseas arts agencies such as the Arts Council of England, the British Council, the Alliance Francaise, the Goethe Institut and the Canada Council on particular projects.

It is important to note, however, that the majority of international market development initiatives undertaken by the Australia Council are done so in partnership with a number of stakeholders: Australian and international government agencies and departments; international arts venues, festivals, organisations and presenters; peak arts industry organisations (such as the Confederation of Australian International Arts Festivals; the Biennale of Sydney; the Melbourne Art Fair; Asialink; and the National Gallery of Australia).

To ensure the ongoing success of our efforts to maintain highly positive interest in and understanding of contemporary Australia, we need to ensure that all agencies responsible for promoting and profiling Australia internationally, work closely and collaboratively in their efforts to achieve long term success.

The Australia Council has been an active facilitator of partnerships with key agencies to deliver international programs.

In this respect, the role of the Australia International Cultural Council (AICC) has been a very important framework and impetus for strong collaborative partnerships between the various government agencies involved in Australia's image abroad, including:

- the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), and its diplomatic posts;
- the Australian Film Commission (AFC);
- Tourism Australia;
- Austrade;
- the Australia Council for the Arts;
- the State/Territory arts funding government agencies.

In recent years, these agencies have jointly participated in a number of highly effective strategies for engagement with and support of Australia's public diplomacy efforts, including:

- *artsaustralia berlin* (Germany) during 2002 & 2003 (managed by the Australia Council);
- *Ancient*Future* Australian Arts Festival (Japan) in 2003 (managed by DFAT);

- *Undergrowth Australian Arts* (UK) during 2005, 2006 and 2007 (managed by the Australia Council);
- *OzArts India* (India) during 2006 and 2007 (managed by DFAT).

These showcase strategies have facilitated the presentation and tours of exemplary works by Australia's finest artists and arts companies, programs supported by excellent on-the-ground marketing and coordination, and have resulted in many successful, long-term outcomes for Australia.

Commenting on the success of the *Undergrowth Australian Arts UK* program, the High Commission made the following observations:

“The networks formed through the collaboration between the Australia Council for the Arts and the High Commission enabled the post to expand its arts and cultural network within the UK. This provided the High Commission with greater public diplomacy opportunities and increased the value of our brand with the Australian and UK arts industry. In achieving a greater awareness and interest of modern Australia through the Undergrowth Arts program, the High Commission has been able to use Undergrowth as a major tool in our public diplomacy activities with other sectors including trade, education, and tourism which have benefited from the growing awareness of our creative sector.

An essential element of the success of the program came from the position of Program Manager based in the UK. The Program Manager was well connected in the UK arts community and became an essential part of development and exposure of Australian Arts in the UK. The position was a conduit between the High Commission, the Australia Council and UK and Australian Arts representatives.”

From Japan, the Australian Ambassador in a letter to the Chief Executive Officer of the Australia Council following the completion of *Ancient Future*, wrote:

“On why cultural diplomacy matters in advancing our overall interests particularly in Japan, I suggest that in a society as sophisticated as this, our cultural credentials matter in the overall sense of our being seen to a greater extent as equals in a national sense (a somewhat amorphous concept, but I believe a valid one).

I would add that because the Japanese are generally well educated they are interested in both our traditional indigenous culture as well as our contemporary culture. In the course of *Ancient Future* many senior business people, officials, politicians, media and members of Japan's social elite responded positively to our different events, in a number of cases having their pre-conceived ideas about Australia changed.

Moreover you will appreciate the fact that in the eyes of many beholders cultural sophistication is linked with technological and overall skill and creativity. This perception also gives some Japanese additional reasons why Australia is a good place to visit. All this has implications for our economic relations beyond the mere promotion and export of our cultural product as such.”

Over the coming years, the Council will continue to work collaboratively with other government agencies through the AICC and its identified focus countries including India, France, Malaysia, China and the US.

Council is also making concerted efforts to develop opportunities regions that have an interest in, demand for and potential capacity to financially support Australian arts and culture, including, for example, Latin America (in association with the Council of Australia Latin American Relations at DFAT), and Korea.

In recent years the Australia Council and DFAT, and many of DFAT's overseas posts, have maintained mutually productive and proactive working relationships, including:

- Active engagement around key international showcase programs, such as those in the UK, US, Germany, France and Japan. Posts have been wholeheartedly engaged in the programs, and have provided considerable support through the provision of Public Affairs assistance, receptions, negotiations, media and PR assistance, and access to facilities.
- The Australia Council's initiative to create locally-based Arts Market Development Officer/Program Managers positions in target regions (Japan, UK, Berlin) has been strongly supported by the relevant posts, which have contributed office space and facilities, and Public Affairs support, for these positions.
- Working closely with DFAT and all posts in promoting and evaluating the *OzArts Online* initiative, which was launched in February 2004 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Alexander Downer at the Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM) in Adelaide.
- Providing regular detailed briefings for DFAT heads of missions, senior staff and cultural officers.
- Active engagement with a number of visitor programs managed by DFAT, through its highly successful International Cultural Visitors Scheme.
- Annual detailed briefings to DFAT graduate interns, prior to them taking up their various postings.
- The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade holds public affairs meetings each year in every region. The Australia Council contributes to the briefing for these meetings.
- Regular distribution of arts publications to cultural relations staff at overseas posts, and increased direct contact with these staff.

B. The opportunities for enhancing public diplomacy both in Australia and overseas

1. Infrastructure and Resources

Over the past decade, the Australia Council has made a considerable commitment in international market development. The scope and diversity of international initiatives and activities supported by the Australia Council is extensive. This work has resulted

in a strong global interest in, and demand for, the work of Australia's contemporary artists across all artistic disciplines.

Yet this success belies the many challenges, which face the promotion and export of Australian contemporary arts and culture internationally. Larger counterparts such as the UK, France and Germany (operating the British Council, Alliance Francaise, Goethe Institut respectively), have successfully established international administrative infrastructures for the permanent and systematic developments of international markets for their cultural exports.

By contrast, Australia has no dedicated, permanent international infrastructure with which to promote Australian arts. Given this, the Australia Council is required to simultaneously support the creation and development of the arts in Australia (a role that is parallel to Arts Council England), whilst also developing demand for Australian contemporary art and culture through international markets (a role similar to the British Council).

Subsequently, the Australia Council's allocation of limited resources must reflect a dynamic balance between the creation, production, promotion and distribution of Australian arts and culture.

In turn, the resources available to other agencies involved in the international positioning of Australian arts and culture – DFAT, AICC, Austrade, some State and Territory governments – are also extremely limited.

Despite this, our collective efforts in recent years have been hugely productive.

However, it is clear from the considerable demand that has been generated, from the evidence of significantly increasing interest internationally in our arts and culture, and from the widely acknowledged value of our collective enterprises to date, that we are not going to be in a position to maintain our levels of productive outcomes without increased financial resources for the key Australian agencies and departments involved.

2. Long-term Engagement

A critical element in any international engagement focusing on enhancing interest in and understanding of Australia, is the need to embark on strategies which are sustained, often for a period of 2-3 years or longer.

While efforts to raise the profile of Australia through short term, highly focused DFAT/Tourism Australia trade/tourism events and campaigns have merit and value in the cultural relations arena, and in increasing awareness about Australia and lead to outcomes for tourism and economic development, their focus and scope can often be in danger of promoting a somewhat predictable suite of characteristics and facets of the Australia nation.

Through a commitment to longer-term arts strategies and public diplomacy efforts, delivered through many forms of engagement, we are able to ensure far more viable

and sustainable outcomes for Australia internationally, and a more contemporary and sophisticated understanding of who we are as a society and a nation.

3. Enhanced Role for Diplomatic Posts

DFAT's diplomatic posts have a critical, ongoing role in the relationship between the international presentation of Australia's arts and culture, and our public diplomacy efforts.

The allocation of Cultural Relations budgets to the posts is extremely modest, and clearly impacts on the capacity of posts to effectively and significantly add value to important cultural opportunities within their regions, let alone contribute to the actual costs of supporting an event. While we have noted that some posts have been successful in generating financial and in-kind support from local sources for Australian cultural activities (a film program, opening night receptions), there is a clear need for increased core cultural relations funding to be made available to Posts.

This will provide integral infrastructure and liaison points for the Australia Council and Australian arts companies and artists to engage in these markets and extend their public diplomacy activities in those countries.

It is important to note that their capacity to achieve successful outcomes is crucially dependent on:

- An adequate cultural relations budget at the post
- An adequate staffing allocation for cultural relations activity
- The presence of staff with arts management expertise and knowledge of Australian cultural infrastructure and funding processes, and knowledge of, and networks with, the local arts scene, and preferably with relevant language skills
- The active support of the head of mission for cultural relations activity
- Recognition within the post of the importance of cultural relations as an arm of Australian diplomacy and foreign policy.

Where all these factors are present, posts are able to:

- Proactively identify opportunities for Australian arts and artists that also achieve cultural diplomacy outcomes
- Provide useful advice on cultural policy issues and arts market development opportunities for Australian arts and artists in the local market
- Provide effective support/strategic advice to touring Australian artists and arts organisations
- Engage in collaborative project planning and management where there are mutually beneficial outcomes for the arts sector and cultural diplomacy.

4. Locally-based Arts Market Development Officers

There is a critical need to develop a more consolidated approach to the employment of more Arts Market Development Officers or Program Managers (as in Berlin, UK,

Japan) in specific target regions overseas.

For example, the situation in Berlin is unique. In June 2000, an Arts Market Development Officer position was established at the Australian Embassy in Berlin as a joint initiative of the Australia Council and the Australian Embassy, Berlin. The Embassy provides important logistical support for the position and a small contribution towards salary, and the Australia Council covers salary and travel for the position. In its initial years the role has continued to be critical for expanding market opportunities for Australian arts and artists, developing new and long term presenter relationships with contemporary German arts organisations and managing initiatives such as the two-year *artsaustralia berlin 2002 and 2003* programs to promote contemporary Australian arts in the German and more broadly European markets.

A similar role was established, with the Australian High Commission in London, for the recent two-year Undergrowth Australian Arts UK program. However, insufficient funds preclude the Australia Council from continuing to fund this position.

AMDO's would work in close collaboration with Council through CPMD and with posts. They would act as in-country points of contact and information, advocates to build and strengthen relationships and networking in a sustainable way, to open up further opportunities for Australian artists and companies. Their extensive on the ground market knowledge and intelligence in target regions for government. A consistent AMDO presence in the UK, US, Europe and Asia would ensure this.

C. The effectiveness of and possible need to reform administrative arrangements relating to the conduct of public diplomacy within and between Commonwealth agencies and where relevant, the agencies of state governments

There are no administrative arrangements that impact on the Australia Council's conduct of public diplomacy activities with other agencies that we consider need reform.

D. The need, and opportunities for expanding levels of funding for Australia's public diplomacy programs, including opportunities for funding within the private sector.

The Australia Council makes the following recommendations to the Committee on opportunities to expand levels of funding for Australia's public diplomacy programs.

1. Significantly increased funding to the Images of Australia Branch of DFAT.
2. Significantly increased funding to the Australia International Cultural Council of DFAT – the AICC has played and must continue to have an effective and collaborative coordinating and investment role in Australia's cultural relations and activities internationally.

3. Expanded levels of core cultural relations funding to Australia's diplomatic posts.
4. Additional, strategy-specific allocations of cultural relations funding to Posts where they have a responsibility to assist in working in partnership with the Council in the delivery and promotion of 1-2 year major cultural showcase programs or events (such as the Australian Indigenous Art Commission in Paris, or the Undergrowth Australian Arts UK program).
5. Increased funding to DFAT, to enable a partnership between the Australia Council and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to appoint Arts Market Development Officers in 4 to 5 key strategic posts in North America, Asia, UK, Central Europe and Latin America.
6. Ongoing support by DFAT for its International Cultural Visitors Scheme.
7. Ongoing opportunities for the Australia Council to contribute more regularly to the annual, regionally-based public affairs meetings held by DFAT, to provide a complete update on the Council's international market development activities, strategies and directions, and to facilitate cooperative approaches and regular communications.
8. An ongoing role for the Australia Council in providing one to one briefings with Ambassadors, High Commissioners and senior officials before they take up their posts.
9. An ongoing role for the Australia Council in providing briefing sessions to DFAT graduate interns prior to them taking up their various postings.

The Australia Council will continue its participation in whole-of-government strategies, and in brokering project partners and financial investment to promote Australian arts and culture overseas.

The Australia Council is also committed to increasing partnerships with the private sector for sponsorship and philanthropy, particularly through Council's collaborative relationship with Artsupport Australia. Exemplary examples include the commitment of \$500,000 by the Harold Mitchell Foundation to the Australian Indigenous Art Commission at the Musee du quai Branly in Paris in 2006, and the commitment of more than \$1M by private donors and business partners to Australia's participation in the 2007 Venice Biennale.

Attachment B

Specific international market development programs managed and funded by the Australia Council include:

- ***Literature International Market Development***

This program supports Australian publishers and literary agents to secure sales of Australian literary titles through attendance at major international book fairs.

- ***Visiting International Publishers***

This program promotes Australian literature and increases rights sales by supporting visits to Australia by leading international publishers, literary agents and scouts in association with Australian publishers and literary agents, and major Australian writers festivals.

- ***International Visual Arts and Craft Fair Strategy***

This program assists Australian commercial visual arts and craft galleries invited by fair organisers to attend major international visual arts and craft fairs.

The primary goal of the program is to secure international sales of contemporary Australian visual arts and craft. A secondary goal is to promote the work of living Australian visual artists and craftspeople in key overseas markets by increasing public awareness and raising the profile of Australian contemporary visual arts and craft internationally.

- ***Triennale India***

The Council has supported participation by Australian artists in every Triennale India since 1971.

- ***Venice Biennale***

Venice is the oldest established visual arts biennale. Founded at the end of the 19th century, it is widely considered to be one of the most important and prestigious events on the international contemporary visual arts calendar. The Council has funded and managed Australia's representation at the Venice Biennale for nearly 40 years.

As one of the most important critical forums for the dissemination of contemporary visual arts, the Venice Biennale provides a unique opportunity to promote leading exponents of Australian visual arts practice to the international visual arts community.

- ***Australian Music Online***

A major online project to market Australian contemporary music nationally and internationally.

- ***OzArts Online***

Supported by the Australia Council, the Australia International Cultural Council and the Cultural Ministers Council, OzArts Online is a vehicle for

promoting, profiling and marketing contemporary Australian arts to international buyers, curators, collectors, presenters, festival directors, publishers, and producers.

- ***International Pathways***

A quick-response scheme for international touring and market development for contemporary Australian musicians, bands and ensembles that have been invited by international presenters to tour internationally.

- ***International Performing Arts Market Strategy (IPAMS)***

The following international markets have been identified as key IPAMs for Council's involvement in 2007-09: the Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP) annual conference and market in New York; the Tokyo Performing Arts Market (TPAM); Asian Arts Mart in Singapore; CINARS in Montreal, Canada; Mexico: Gateway to the Americas; and the Performing Arts Market Seoul, (PAMS) South Korea.

The aim is to build links in emerging international markets and to consolidate efforts in existing markets by promoting Australian contemporary performing arts at these events.

- ***Playing the World***

A quick-response scheme for international touring and market development for contemporary Australian theatre companies that have been invited by international presenters to tour internationally.

- ***The Australian Performing Arts Market***

The Australia Council's biannual international showcase and trade show for Australia's contemporary performing arts, generating significant interest and follow-on invitations from over 250 international delegates and 300 national delegates.

The 8th Market will be held in Adelaide, 25-29 February 2008, in partnership with Arts SA and in association with the Adelaide Bank Festival of Arts, the Adelaide Fringe, and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

- ***The Australian International Music Market (AIMM)***

This international music showcase event is held in association with the Queensland Music Festival. The 3rd edition of AIMM will take place in Brisbane, 23-26 July 2007, with international and national delegates.

- **Major, long-term and regionally-specific market development strategies**

Including *artsaustralia berlin* (Germany) during 2002 & 2003, and *Undergrowth Australian Arts* (UK) during 2005, 2006 and 2007