

SUBMISSION: South Australia's Arts Plan 2019-2024

April 12 2019

The AIUS is a forward looking, independent, not-for-profit, member based organisation that exists to provoke rich conversations, deep discussion and rigorous debate about urban life in Adelaide and South Australia.

In this submission on the revised Arts Plan we focus our comments on the how the State government might function to support the Arts and Cultural and Creative Industries (ACCIs).

These sectors, as is now widely recognised by policy makers, politicians and researchers, promote a sense of community wellbeing through participation, experience and consumption, while building the image and vibrancy of urban areas and regions as tourist and migration destinations (thus adding another aspect to South Australia's inter-regional competitive edge). Moreover, the CCIs are a sector with untapped potential for new forms of employment growth.

For brevity this submission selectively comments on the key themes of Ambition, Government and Governance, First Nations, Audiences, and Ecology/Industry.

AMBITION

- **Bold:** socially, culturally and economically
- **Diverse:** creativity and culture for all creative cultures regardless of cultural background
- **Ubiquitous:** consuming and experiencing culture as part of everyday urban life

PRIORITY AREAS AND OUTCOMES

- South Australia has an international reputation as an arts innovator, an urban centre with expertise in festivals, and with a history of using policy innovation to develop the urban cultural economy.
- Examples include: the creative use of urban space (Renew, The fringe, small bars, supporting niche cultural production in food, fashion, design and as a UNESCO Music City).
- Rather than claim one area is more significant than others (visual arts over dance, live music over theatre etc.), AIUS suggests the priority areas should be in building supportive government institutions to address:
 - **Job creation:** permanent, part-time, small business
 - **Urban/State branding:** using festivals as levers of urban vibrancy, enhancing the experience of the city as space of unexpected and stimulating experiences, and urban design and events to enhance this cultural economy. **Quality Arts and culture should be embedded across all State Government agencies.** Specifically, the **Department of Planning Transport and Infrastructure** should incorporate consideration of arts in all new developments, to strengthen communities

and create meaningful places. This could be administered through a ‘percent for art’ mechanism.

- **The inclusion of a greater diversity of artists and cultural entrepreneurs** in the creation of cultural experiences in urban and regional areas (see state funding discussion below).
- **To do differently:** reconsider how funding is allocated and the structure for accessing this (see state funding discussion below). Stronger consideration and emphasis need to be given regarding the impact on people’s sense of connection to each other, and place, in development decisions.
- **Opportunities for the future:** The AIUS considers that many of the urban cultural policies introduced over the proceeding decade have revitalised the image and experience of Adelaide for tourists and locals alike. The policy process should now focus on expanding and refining these, while building upon the reputational gains.

GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNANCE

- Government’s role should be to **enable, facilitate, connect and amplify** arts and culture across all portfolios.
- Externally, government-funding mechanisms are significant for developing employment opportunities.

1. Funding structures

- Our main point is that while there are Arts that traditionally require significant public support, government can have the most impact in the development of the ACCIs through policies that create ‘**competition spaces**’ or a ‘**tournament**’.
- We use these terms to show that government arts programs can have impacts beyond the immediate assessment/funding nexus.
- In particular access to arts funding should create competition between artists and cultural entrepreneurs to access funding through the development of proven track records prior to funding.
- The tournament aspect, like ‘World Cups’ in sport, is structured to have the most competitors in the preliminary rounds, and this is the most inclusive funding tier (the greatest number dispensed) but with smaller grants.
- As events, organisations, artists, cultural entrepreneurs develop and build commercial presence/recognition more selective, but greater state contributions are at the next funding tier.
- Funding could be based on **public private partnerships** to leverage buy-in from applicants. This combination of ‘competition’ and ‘tournament’ encourages entrepreneurial creative development but also provides a structured pathway for ‘creatives’ to build careers, businesses, and widely known events.
- The policy image here is of creating a pyramid or hierarchy where creativity can be incentivised into market exchange. Three or four funding tiers should be sufficient.
- This funding model suggests a **streamlining of applications**; a sector blind approach where a more generic set of criteria that are appropriate for each level of funding (emerging artists/events, artists/events building recognition and expanding, established artists – ongoing support for major works/events; with each phase evaluated though co-defined KPIs)

- The evaluation judgment is then based upon the quality of application and applicant in terms of economic, cultural and social contribution to cities and regions – rather than more subjective criteria of artistic merit. While an anathema to romantic visions of the arts, state funding needs to be explicit regarding the impact of such targeted funding on economic development goals.

2. *Impact beyond direct funding*

- Making an **artistic track record a prerequisite** encourages cultural entrepreneurs to create performances, events, exhibitions, tours, and markets before they access state funding.
- Here then the state has not only a **multiplier effect** through direct funding, but the act of incentivising cultural production through the future funding, spilling over into the images and experiences of a vibrant urban experience – night, day and weekend.
- For this model to work the initial tier of funding would need be significant enough to make the investments of time, money and energy worthwhile, but would have the added benefit of drawing upon artists and cultural entrepreneurs passions and creative talents.

3. *State government as a facilitator. Continue role as:*

- Build networks with key CCI experts, distribute information, knowledge.
- Disseminate information opportunities – other funding sources, events, funding/philanthropic databases.
- Support Events: arts markets, buyer markets, and linked to cultural centres.
- Informal training on holding cultural events, digital marketing, networking events.

FIRST NATIONS ARTS AND CULTURE

1. *Re-imagine the State Museum as centre for the presenting First Nations Culture: Tourism benefits*

- Despite pockets of interest and excellence, First Nations arts and culture remains neglected across the nation.
- The South Australian Museum has many cultural artefacts that can act as materials in the recognition and education around this culture.
- The **State museum is located on a key location in Adelaide that can enrich the tourist (and local) experience.**

2. *Museum: as site of cultural performances*

- One area where the state government could have immediate impact in terms of **enhancing tourism, building understanding, and recognising colonisation** is with a revamped and re-curated First Nations cultural exhibitions and performances at the State Museum.
- For First Nations, the (new or old) Museum is a site of potential for it is space of high tourist traffic and could become, through innovative interior design a **site of bringing culture to life.**

- **Leaving aside debates on the commodification of culture**, this could include **performances of arts (dance)** and cultural **practices, regular ‘shows’** – and marketed towards tourists, and could offer new forms of job creation and the learning of culture for all cultures.
- Compare this current state with other First Nation people’s cultural exhibitions and performances overseas: e.g. USA, Canada, New Zealand.

1. *Recognition in the city*

- Part of the journey into the future together can be enhanced through greater recognition of First Nation languages.
- Inclusion of First nation language in Government correspondence.
- Inclusion of First Nation language in place names, signage and sites of cultural significance in the city.
- Complete redevelopment of Tarndaynagga (Victoria Square, Southern End).
- Develop similar events using city space such as Yabarra Light Show/Story that was part of Fringe 2019 (see: <https://playandgo.com.au/index.php/yabarra-gathering-of-light-the-most-stunning-and-important-light-sound-display-you-need-to-see-fringe-2019/>).
- More urban art/murals by First Nation artists.

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

There is an enormous capacity of arts and culture to **positively impact** the lives of the most vulnerable people in our community **to ‘leap frog’ disadvantage, particularly young people.**

Consideration should be given to how **State Government in partnership with Local Government and Regions might increase opportunities for vulnerable young people to participate in quality arts experiences** across music, performance, writing, digital tech, film and the visual arts.

State government to increase participation in the arts as a gateway to building creative capacity as a transferable skill:

- Place arts at centre of primary and secondary Education policy: From **STEM** to **STEAM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, ARTS, Maths).
- **Participation subsidy:** Like junior sports vouchers, encourage audience engagement through audience subsidies for both young and old; increase participation and experience for groups excluded.

URBAN CREATIVE ECOLOGIES: INDUSTRY AND INNOVATION

- As our submission focuses on the ACCIs and the stimulation of the urban cultural economy – as a place/space of experiences, jobs growth, consumption, play and pleasure – the final comments do not want to limit the policy focus to ‘industry’ for the ACCI is diverse, featuring various organisational forms and job positions.

- Instead we want to foreground the city – and suburbs – as the space of the creative sector.
- Against this urban backdrop, and using urban venues, parks, bars, pop-up spaces and other ‘flexible urbanisms’, the aim of building a cultural and creative ecology is to provide the experiences and pleasures of culture to as wider audience as possible.
- Here consideration must be given **to the levers** within the State Planning Reform to strengthen arts and culture. This could be addressed in the **People and Neighbourhoods Discussion** paper as well as expanding the interpretation of the Design Principle ‘Context’ to reflect the complexity of our sense of connection to each other and place and the role of **urban design** in shaping our places.
- State Government should work in **partnership with Local Govt.** and the regions to develop a ‘**creative spaces**’ **online platform**. Individual councils do not have the resources to do this locally and an economy of scale could easily be realised.

Therefore what can be done through the arts sector to:

- **Cultivate skills including entrepreneurial and innovation across business and industry:** use state funding to incentivise production as noted, develop informal workshops for training and development in for example, arts events, promotion in the digital age, dealing with permissions, budgeting. Furthermore, all South Australian Universities are developing Creative Enterprise degrees – draw on existing education and research expertise in these areas.
- Enhance tourism: continue ‘festivalisation’ programs, enhance First Nation cultural presence in the city and museum, iterate art and culture back into place marketing. Social media presence.
- Harness the opportunities of digital technology: continue to support digital media as job creation sector in gaming and design.
- Enhance creative spaces and places: continue to support existing festivals, night time economies through small bars and live music policies (in particular noise abatement that does not penalise existing or new venues). Work with local councils.
- Establish an industry and “point of difference” for South Australia? This is a matter of leveraging the images and experiences of tourists and locals into reputational capital. Can this be managed? **Using our recommended funding structure, the approach should focus on enhancing, increasing, and refining the supply of cultural and artistic experiences; supply creates its own demand.**

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to an important policy discussion. In summary we foreground the:

1. Acknowledgement of the value of arts and culture in enriching urban life
2. Greater celebration of First Nations Culture
3. A bold vision for funding
4. Advocate for further engagement with industry, academia, practitioners and policy to co-design an ambitious strategy.

If you would like any follow-up detail, or have any queries please contact:

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