

ABORIGINAL ARTS STRATEGY



High level summary of Reference Group meeting 13 July 2017

Attendees: Peter Louca (ASA), Jennifer Layther (ASA), Dr Jared Thomas (ASA), Lee-Ann Buckskin (Australia Council for the Arts), Leah Clark (SATC), Tricia Walton (Carclew), Marie Falcinella (Ku Arts), Louisa Norman (CASA), Kimberly Clements (ASA).

Apologies: Nici Cumpston (AGSA), Stephen Goldsmith, Klynton Wanganeen (Tandanya), Karl Telfer, Dearnna Newchurch (Adel. Fringe), Karina Lester (MLT), Mandy Brown (CASA), Nerida Saunders (AAR), Phoebe Azer (AAR), Commissioner Ina Scales (AAR), Commissioner Frank Lampard (AAR), Nicole Gollan (CoA), April Lawrie (DECD), Dr Roma Aloisi (Catholic Ed.), Kerri Reilly (SA Health), Shouwn Oosting, Sue Panagaris (DPC).

Absent: Timothy Ritchie (Tandanya)

Welcome and Introduction

- Lee-Ann Buckskin acknowledged that we are meeting on Kurna land and opened the meeting.
- The apologies were acknowledged and introductions were made.
- Lee-Ann gave an overview of the recent forums, their purpose and format.
- The recent Connecting Australians report produced by Australia Council for the Arts in June 2017 was raised as a point of interest. It shows great areas of growth and brings attention to areas to focus strategies on.
- It was mentioned that it will be worth looking at the state by state statistics to be released on Monday to see how South Australia is sitting compared to other states. Lee-Ann shared some of the statistics and the progress since the last report in 2013. It is a valuable reflection of what Australians want and which age groups are engaging the most. It highlights that there is now a greater understanding by non-Aboriginal people that culture is absolutely essential to Aboriginal life. It also demonstrates where there are gaps, which can be used to drive more focus to these areas.

Review of Minutes

- Jared addressed the actions from the previous meeting:
 - Jared has been in contact with Rodney Harrex from SATC regarding links with the Indigenous Art Code, etc.
 - Sue Panagaris has been invited to join the reference group.
 - All of the material gathered from the forums as well as previous minutes, etc., will be available on the Arts South Australia website soon. An email will be sent to notify the group of when the survey is available.
- The minutes were endorsed by Marie Falcinella and seconded by Tricia Walton.

Overview of the sector forum outcomes

- Jared gave a brief overview of how many people attended the forums and the structure of them.
- There were four main points which were consistent across each of the forums:
 - As the 'World's oldest continuous living culture' it is important to fund the development and maintenance of Aboriginal arts and culture accordingly.

- Arts South Australia needs to lead by example through establishing a Reconciliation Action Plan and ensuring that funded organisations require a Reconciliation Action Plan (participants consider that what happens within Arts South Australia is connected to what happens outside of Arts South Australia).
 - Telling the story of artistic and cultural success, opportunities and pathways are critical to future success.
 - Contributing to education outcomes led by artists and cultural custodians was also emphasised.
- Jared quoted a theatre sector forum participant who stated that “Support for Aboriginal arts and culture is support for Aboriginal life,” and how this idea was shared across all forums.
 - An Arts South Australia Reconciliation Action Plan would be valued by many people. Modifying the DSD RAP to be more personalised and specific to the arts was suggested.
 - Jared noted that through many of the forums there had been strong discussion and agreement about the importance of critical race theory underpinning cultural awareness/competency training.
 - Each of the forums also included discussion about the use of film as a vehicle to promote our successes and how this will lead to future success and how the South Australian Film Corporation’s Aboriginal Screen Strategy 2015-2020 may assist in advancing this work.
 - After the four common themes had been discussed Jared presented the top priorities from each of the forums in detail.
 - A reference group member emphasised how the RAP priority was consistent across all forums she was involved in. Arts South Australia having its own RAP means that any enquiries or general requests for information no longer sit with one individual but can be responded to by more people within Arts South Australia. It enables non-Indigenous people to respond to the Indigenous space, though it doesn’t replace the need for employing Aboriginal people in these roles.
 - It was noted that because a RAP and what it represents is already DSD policy, it should be easy to make the links and get traction when it comes to presenting the Strategy. Jared highlighted the work that Country Arts South Australia had undertaken with the development of their RAP including a 10% Aboriginal employment target.
 - Interest in an Aboriginal Arts Expo across each of the forums was raised. There was acknowledgement that different art forms often work closely together and inform each other and this would be a good way of building interest in arts careers.
 - Jared thanked Leah for her generosity during the tourism forum and acknowledged the synergies between the work of the two departments.
 - Leah pointed out that where hotels are specified in one of the priorities it could be replaced with the hospitality industry in general.
 - Jared made the point that people in each forum adopted a very holistic approach to arts and cultural practice rather than being focussed on their own art form. Everyone is thinking in broad terms about how to support the whole sector.
 - Work needing to be undertaken to educate artists and hotels/gallerists/others commissioning work about fair practice and pricing and the history of significant artists was highlighted.
 - Focusing on one or two projects connect to cruise ships and sites on Kangaroo Island to establish best practice was suggested.
 - The question of whether cruise ships do art auctions was raised. Leah responded that we only have one fully domestic cruise line so there could be a good opportunity to have a conversation and lead the way in this area.
 - There is a possibility for the Indigenous Art Code to address concerns relating to the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse, working towards regulation of what is considered an authentic Aboriginal experience. This is a national concern so it needs to involve others but we can create a starting point.

- It was mentioned that the top three priorities in visual art are all about employment and discussion about whether this might be because it's a more established art form so people are looking for the next step whereas other art forms are looking more at training and development as the priorities.
- Traineeship arrangements that are available were outlined. There could be a lot of opportunity providing the budget trainee subsidies go through. Jared pointed out that there used to be 17 trainees at Tandanya in 1997, through Carclew. It was agreed that it was a period of real influx and concentration on the sector but the sector can't wait for these cycles to happen again, activity needs to be driven now. Examples of recent trainees and where they had gone on to were raised, noting all trainees had come through as business/admin trainees. It was suggested that people go for traineeships in areas they consider safe and familiar, then they establish skills lead them in a variety of directions. It was noted that the notion of feeling safe is appropriate for the arts as it is a welcoming environment and has a good track record of building skills which people have used as a platform to expand from.
- The establishment of major Aboriginal arts and cultural institutions occurring 30 years ago was noted. Might be political will, the bicentenary etc which drove this. Most things were set up in 1987-88. We need to present and leverage from the successes of past governments. It was noted that political will exists at present to leverage from. It was noted that the need to embed commitment to Aboriginal arts and culture in policy had been a recurring point through the forums, ensuring that Aboriginal arts and culture has a consistent life and presence.
- It was highlighted that the SA Museum and Art Gallery of SA have expressed interest in wanting to share trainees so they can gain broader sector knowledge. The importance of trainees being exposed to opportunities for sector-wide engagement was emphasised.
- Peter Louca noted that, although it is probably implicit in the first two points from the forum discussions, we need recognition that Aboriginal arts and culture is Australian arts and culture.
- The need for venues to be more welcoming to Indigenous people, particularly in the employment space as well was noted. How do we nurture people into employment roles and leadership roles? It was suggested that better partnership with Universities are essential.
- Peter raised some questions for consideration, such as when the Strategy is fleshed out, how do we embed employment strategies into government? Can this become a vehicle for building on current strategies? Jared responded saying that there is an aim to halve Aboriginal unemployment by 2018 and by training and supporting Aboriginal tourism operators as an example of how to reach targets. It was suggested that aims could be met through re-examining our internal cultures. Our expectations around employment are not necessarily best practice and suitable for everyone, more emphasis on flexible working arrangements, etc.

Consultation/Survey

- A survey is being prepared as part of the consultation plan. We'd like support getting them out to your networks.
- Jared explained the plan for getting the survey out broadly. Multiple formats will be available and the survey will be translated into Pitjantjatjara.
- Lee-Ann suggested that we send some out as a test run. **ACTION: Kimberly to discuss this with the DSD Digital Strategy Manager.**
- Jared explained that the initial report will include the unpacked forum and survey responses.
- Peter noted that after all information was gathered it would be worth putting together a Cabinet note so that there is a stronger basis for further development. Due to there being some costs associated to make the Strategy happen, it needs to be an across government priority. It's a fairly universal desire and need which doesn't change when governments do, and it's a national issue of strategic importance.
- Jared is expecting that we can look towards a first step report by the end of the year through consultation with the reference group.

- Peter mentioned that the Strategy will not be a static document, and that it should be noted that it will continually evolve and we need to allow room for this evolution.
- The importance of setting out a range of priorities and noting where they hook into policy for incremental delivery was noted.
- The question was raised whether the reference group will continue? Jared would like to see the reference group take up some of the commitments as many actions fall outside Arts South Australia's jurisdiction.
- It was noted that none of the forum priorities are surprising, it's just about how to consolidate it and get the survey out to more people. She suggested sending it out on social media.
- Arts South Australia would appreciate Lee-Ann and Rose Lester accompany Arts South Australia when engaging on the APY lands in recognition of their knowledge and skills.
- It would be great to have more opportunities for Aboriginal people through traineeships to work in APY art centres. Peter asked the group to consider ways to unlock these opportunities?

Any Other Business

- Jared asked Peter how he feels about the RAP suggestion? Peter noted that we need to make sure it aligns with the departments existing RAP but it is notably missing from Arts South Australia and we need a sector specific one. We need to set the example regarding employment, too. Some of our organisations are very good in this regard but others need work. We need to plug into traineeships well and plan to exceed the Governments targets in areas of employment. Jared noted that Reconciliation should be more about tangible outcomes than symbolic gestures. In relation to Country Arts SA, the benefits of bridging trust at all levels through training using the RAP was noted.

Next meeting

- September (TBC)
- Survey feedback by 21st July.