

ACCD* SUBMISSION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY

The Australian Coalition for Cultural Diversity (ACCD) appreciates the opportunity to make a submission in response to the Government's call for comment on the development of a cultural policy for Australia.

In 2009, the ACCD applauded the Federal Government's decision to accede to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions 2005 (Cultural Diversity Convention).

The ACCD considers that the articles of the Cultural Diversity Convention provide a useful framework within which the development of a national cultural policy can be considered. Importantly, it recognizes: *"that cultural activities, goods and service have both an economic and a cultural nature, because they convey identities, values and meanings, and must therefore not be treated as solely having commercial value"*.

(i) Consistent with the objectives of the Cultural Diversity Convention *"to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions"*, the ACCD considers that the Government must retain its unfettered right to quarantine cultural industries in all free trade agreements. This position has enjoyed bipartisan support since the negotiation of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. [That principle has been offended only twice – in the Closer Economic Agreement between Australia and New Zealand and in the Australia United States Free Trade Agreement.] The ACCD appreciates the Government's current commitment to the protection of cultural industries in the context of free trade agreements and considers it should remain a fundamental tenet of any national cultural policy.

(ii) Consistent with the objective of creating *"the conditions for cultures to flourish and to freely interact in a mutual beneficial manner"*, the ACCD considers that crucial to the flourishing of cultural industries in a digital environment will be:

- ongoing support for Australia's audiovisual and cultural industries by way of direct and indirect subsidy;
- appropriation to adequately support public broadcasting (the ABC, SBS and NITV);
- regulatory mechanisms, including content quotas in a multi-channel environment and in the digital landscape following the switch-off of the analogue signal in 2013;
- the development and construction of the National Broadband Network to ensure Australians continue to have access to stories and news and information created by Australians, for Australians.

(iii) The ACCD also supports Australia facilitating the entry to Australia of cultural practitioners from around the world in a manner that strengthens and develops the opportunities for Australian practitioners to work in their own country.

(iv) Crucial to the integrity and economic viability of cultural industries is an effective copyright regime that facilitates the monetizing of cultural output where appropriate to underpin income generation and enable cultural practitioners to live in dignity. The ACCD supports freedom of access, not access for free.

(v) The ACCD also supports the Government's decision to reverse the position of the previous government and endorse the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 13 September 2007. Consistent with this decision, the ACCD supports Australia working collaboratively with the United Nations in safeguarding endangered languages, important because of the 273 languages spoken at the time of white settlement, 111 are extinct. Of the 162 living languages, 111 are spoken by only a handful of people. With the death of languages, especially where the language has not been recorded, the death of cultures follow.

(vi) It follows that the ACCD considers Australia should accede to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted on 17 October 2003, and support the work of the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore.

* SIGNED

APRA | AMCOS

Arts Law Centre of Australia

Australian Copyright Council (ACC)

Australian Directors Guild (ADG)

Australian Guild of Screen Composers (AGSC)

Australian Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG)

Australian Screen Directors Authorship Collection Society (ASDACS)

Copyright Agency Ltd (CAL)

Music Council of Australia

Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA)

National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA)

Screen Producers Association of Australia (SPAA)

Screenrights

