

Arts for a Multicultural Australia: Policy principles 1996 – 99

Australia Council for the Arts Arts for a Multicultural Australia: Policy principles 1996-99 Sydney, Australia Council for the Arts, 1996.

1996 - 1999

1. The Australia Council's Arts for a Multicultural Australia Policy declares that:

1.1. The Australia Council accepts the demographic and social reality of Australia as a culturally diverse nation and interprets its role and functions in servicing the **Australia Council Act 1975** in these terms. To this effect the Australia Council accepts, upholds and promotes the principles as set out in the report of **The National Multicultural Advisory Council 1994-1997**.

In addressing these principles the Australia Council upholds and promotes:

1.1.1 The right of all Australians to equality of life chances, treatment and opportunity including participation in decisions which directly affect them, in all areas of the Arts; and

1.1.2 The right of all Australians to have access to and an equitable share of government resources, where these resources are distributed in all areas of the Arts.

1.2. The Australia Council upholds and promotes the obligation of all Arts institutions to acknowledge, respect and respond to:

1.2.1 Australia's cultural diversity; and

1.2.2 The need to maintain, develop and utilise effectively the skills and talents of all Australians, regardless of background.

1.3. The Australia Council upholds and promotes:

1.3.1 Cultural understanding as a key competency in the development of proficiency in expression through the arts, and in the administration, facilitation and promotion of the arts; and

1.3.2 The opportunity for all Australians to acquire cultural understanding as a key competency in all areas of the arts.

1.4. The Australia Council upholds and promotes the engagement of all Australians in cultural maintenance through the promotion and practice of the arts, and promotes broad definitions of cultural maintenance that are not restricted to the continuance of traditions, but include the development of new and evolving cultural practices.

Policy Statement

The promotion of cultural diversity is recognised by Council as integral to all Australia Council priorities, and policy and program initiatives. The Arts for a Multicultural Australia policy is addressed across Council, as a fundamental consideration, borne out by appropriate performance indicators.

Provided by the Australia Council, the Federal Government's arts funding and advisory body.

Arts for a Multicultural Australia, 1998

Australia Council for the Arts Arts for a Multicultural Australia: Australia Council Policy on Australian Arts and Cultural Diversity Sydney, Australia Council for the Arts, 1998.

Arts for a Multicultural Australia

Australia Council Policy on Australian Arts and Cultural Diversity

The objectives of AMA are:

- to advocate for and support all Australians to participate in and develop an understanding and appreciation of arts which explore, promote and utilise Australia's cultural diversity.
- to recognise, support and advocate for the participation of artists and communities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in the arts. (The AMA policy focus is on people from non-English speaking backgrounds and Australian South Sea Islanders. The Australia Council's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Policy promotes the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures as integral to Australia's national identity.)
- to promote cultural understanding as a key competency in the development of proficiency in expression through the arts, and in the administration, facilitation and promotion of the arts.

These objectives relate directly to the Australia Council's corporate goals, in particular, to recognise cultural diversity in the arts. The Australia Council's Arts for a Multicultural Australia policy was introduced in 1989 and is based on principles of access, diversity and participation in the arts.

Australia Council & AMA

The Australia Council recognises Arts for a Multicultural Australia (AMA) objectives and is committed to them.

Arts funding programs: grant categories

The Australia Council's Funds and Board support artists and communities to do work which progresses AMA objectives through their grant categories. All grant applicants are assessed against the same criteria and selected exclusively on the basis of merit.

Council staff can provide assistance to applicants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The Council implements Federal Government recommended best practice Access and Equity strategies to ensure that cultural or language barriers that may be faced by applicants of non-English speaking and Australian South Sea Islander backgrounds are overcome.

These include:

Information

Advertisements about grant programs are regularly placed in the English language and ethnic media.

The Australia Council Grants Handbook provides information translated into 12 languages about accessing the free translator/interpreter service. This service is available to NESB applicants who wish to speak to the Council staff in a language other than English. Australia Council staff will provide information or refer applicants to existing support networks.

Assistance

The Australia Council actively encourages arts and non-arts organisations to assist people from NESB or anyone seeking to undertake activities which have AMA objectives.

Some organisations receive assistance to employ specialist staff such as multicultural arts officers or multicultural marketing staff.

Advocacy

The Council provides advocacy about the AMA policy to Fund members and the public through its publications and by drawing on specialist expertise and the advice of the Australia Council Multicultural Advisory Committee (ACMAC).

To stimulate and inform discussion about AMA objectives, the Australia Council has produced a number of research publications, an AMA information kit and a slide kit.

Council attempts to ensure that members of the Funds and Council itself are of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and enabled to make well-informed funding decisions and recommendations. The Funds are provided with additional culturally specific information and expertise by specialists (from a Council database called the Register of Peers), to assist them to take these perspectives into account when considering the artistic merits of applicants.

ACMAC was established in 1989 to advise the Council and its Funds on matters relating to multiculturalism and the arts. The committee consists of Fund members with expertise in advising on cultural diversity.

Australia Council Initiatives

The Australia Council undertakes a number of initiatives which are coordinated through the AMA Action Plan within the Council's Corporate Plan.

AMA action plan

The Arts for a Multicultural Australia action plan (1996-99) currently focuses on:

- providing the Council, Government and public with information.
- providing the Council's Funds with AMA advocacy, and supporting ACMAC.
- ensuring ongoing AMA policy integration, development and evaluation across all sections of the Council.
- increasing the opportunities for unique Australian art which explores, promotes and utilises our cultural diversity, to be presented to national and international audiences.
- increasing audiences for this work.
- encouraging the development of audiences from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- identifying the Council's staff requirements for implementation of the AMA policy and coordinating training.
- ensuring the effective implementation of access and equity strategies.

Some of the Council's recent AMA activities are:

- All Council's Funds and Board have included strategic initiatives which address key developmental issues for AMA in 1997-1998.
- The Council, through its Audience Development and Advocacy Division, assisted four arts organisations to employ specialised audience development or marketing staff to develop a greater audience among ethnic communities.
- The Council's Strategy and Policy Division undertook a number of specific research projects for AMA such as the documentation of best practice case studies in audience development in the book [The World is Your Audience](#).

- An AMA policy training module was developed and implemented by the Council's Corporate Services Division to help staff provide information to all applicants and to plan targeted strategic initiatives.

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