Custodians for the future: media, art and cultural policy in Australia

Toija Cinque

The arts and culture are inextricably linked to each other in the sense that culture includes the arts, whether these arts are traditional, folk or contemporary. Culture also comprises human physical, intellectual and spiritual activities, experiences, and forms. According to Chris Smith, former Secretary-of-State for Culture, Media and Sport in the UK, people’s creative activities in the future will increasingly be the key to a country’s cultural identity, to its economic success, and to an individual’s well-being and sense of fulfillment.\footnote{Encouraging and fostering the creative spirit and cultural activity is thus imperative to successful societies. But so too is each nation recognising that there is no single notion of ‘the public’, but rather diverse cultures that need attention. As Chief Emeka Anyaoku, former Commonwealth Secretary-General, effectively puts it: ‘the challenge [for cultural policy] is to devise a “vision” of the way in which people can live together harmoniously in the larger society, while at the same time being able to maintain, rather than dilute or lose, a strong sense of belonging to their particular cultural, ethnic, religious or other community’\footnote{In order to establish the context for a later critical analysis of the current challenges to cultural policy, this article will initially provide an historical overview of patronage of the arts and culture in Australia. It will describe the evolution of an arts policy, through the more inclusive activities of cultural policies, to current understandings of creative industries with us today. This evolution}}

In order to establish the context for a later critical analysis of the current challenges to cultural policy, this article will initially provide an historical overview of patronage of the arts and culture in Australia. It will describe the evolution of an arts policy, through the more inclusive activities of cultural policies, to current understandings of creative industries with us today. This evolution
may be seen to have moved through four broad phases. The first phase stretching over nearly one hundred years (roughly 1818–1908) was really a period of inactivity that saw little actual government support or recognition of Australian artistic endeavors. This phase eventually gave way to a second phase beginning in the early part of the twentieth century in Australia (from 1908 on a limited scale, but increasing until the early 1940s) and was based on government support for ‘high’ art. A third phase beginning in the early 1950s and marked by strong economic growth, saw the gradual shift to cultural policies focused on the arts in a broader sense. This third phase featured substantial government activity and funding, and reached its peak in the 1970s. A more recent, fourth phase, arising from the social and economic philosophies of the 1980s, has seen a shift in thinking from notions of ‘the arts’ to ‘the creative industries’, and it takes in a much broader range of cultural activity. This range of cultural activity includes, for example, the design and arrangement of urban environments including offices and retail outlets; as well as the design of clothing, telephones, transportation, software and hardware. This fourth phase has been marked by less government and more commercial funding, or a mix of the two.

Recent challenges to cultural policy have had much to do with new media (digital) technologies and communications infrastructures which are characteristic of globalisation and the ‘new economy’ of growth nations. These current events and technologies have both positive and negative implications for national initiatives in an international context. What needs to be kept in mind is that recognition of cultural diversity is not an end in itself, as it does not automatically equate with harmony. In order to evolve the process of creative cultural policy making, an appreciation of the need to take steps toward universal social responsibility or global ethics in partnerships between governments, corporations and communities is needed.

**From the arts to creative industries**

**Phase one: 1818–1908**

It has been claimed that the first recorded instance of government support for the arts in Australia was in 1818, when Governor Macquarie gave Michael Massey Robinson two cows for his services to poetry. The ensuing 100 years in Australia indicate little interest...
in the arts by successive governments. Most artistic practitioners, mainly painters and writers, struggled to keep their various art forms alive. Frequently, their creative endeavours were wasted in an intellectual and social environment which perceived culture to be in the realm of European society, and the efforts of colonial Australians in these fields as unworthy of recognition. Concurrently in this early period, the works of Aboriginal peoples were regarded with little more than contempt, and have only come to be viewed as works of art more recently.

Phase two: 1908 to the early 1940s

The second phase saw an arts policy arguably begin to emerge during the early part of the twentieth century in Australia. The elements traditionally included in what societies, their governments and key cultural custodians have come to term the 'cultural policy area' were fairly restricted to the 'high arts'. In this early phase of cultural development, '[c]ulture meant here the creative arts and what a cultivated person possessed—the capacity to discriminate so as to appreciate the best that has been thought and written'. The Commonwealth Government began to support the arts and culture on a limited scale through the establishment in 1908 of the Commonwealth Literary Fund (CLF), which later, with the establishment of the Australia Council in 1975, became the Literature Board. The CLF's aim was to award grants to writers and their dependents. Then, in 1912, the Commonwealth Art Advisory Board was founded comprising a purchase fund for the establishment of a national art collection. The CLF's role was later extended in 1939 to award fellowships to writers, to sponsor lectures on Australian literature, and to aid the publication of literary Journals. Two early journals in receipt of assistance were Southerly, the Magazine of the English Association in Sydney, whose purpose was to maintain the health of the English language in Australia, and Meanjin, which was aimed at a wider, informed, general readership interested in the social, political and philosophical issues of the day.

A highly significant development during this second phase saw the government authorise the creation of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) in 1932 which assisted the development of music, particularly by the emerging new orchestras in all the capital cities. Local and state governments contributed to
the livelihood of such orchestras and collaborated in the provision of facilities for concerts.\textsuperscript{6} It had become mandatory by 1942 for these orchestras to perform regular concerts.\textsuperscript{7} The Council for Education through Music and the Arts (CEMA) was based on the model of the United Kingdom's Council for Education through Music and the Arts. CEMA campaigned for the arts and culture in Australia and, in 1943, toured performances and exhibitions nationally.\textsuperscript{8}

The official culture during this second phase of the arts in Australia was essentially elitist, and largely ignored the creative endeavours of most sections of the population including women, migrants from non-English speaking backgrounds, and Aboriginal communities. Hull argues that crafts were seen [by the white male dominated boards] to be in the realm of women's leisure-time activities and consequently marginalised.\textsuperscript{9} Further, Aboriginal culture was little valued at an artistic or spiritual level, and was not financially supported.

**Phase three: the early 1950s to the 1970s**

A new way of thinking about homeland and the arts came during the more economically prosperous post-war years. This reconceptualisation of the arts can be attributed to Australians developing a sense of their own independence, aware that they had proven their capacity to support their nation. This self awareness and greater assurance was reflected in this third phase and was played out in the increased activity and government support for the arts sector. Painters such as Russell Drysdale, Sidney Nolan, Arthur Boyd, Margaret Preston and many others were providing fresh visions of the Australian landscape. Poets such as Judith Wright, James MacAuley and Alec Hope were coming to the fore with a body of poetry that was assured in its quality while also being distinctively Australian. At the same time, the novels of Patrick White and Christina Stead were gaining recognition, although more so overseas than in Australia.\textsuperscript{10}

A culturally important proposal came from Sydney businessman O D Bisset, who approached the New South Wales Government in the early 1950s. He suggested that the government seek the funds necessary to establish a National Theatre with the help of industry and commerce. The then-Premier Robert Heffron stipulated that
any backing his government provided would be conditional on the endorsement of the Commonwealth Government.\textsuperscript{11}

The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust (AETT), with the initial capital of £120 obtained from the public (primarily from wealthy individuals and business corporations), and the endorsement of the federal government, was established to coincide with the first visit to Australia by Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth, in 1954.\textsuperscript{12} In the ensuing ten years, the AETT founded various cultural institutions including the Australian Opera, the Australian Ballet, two orchestras and several drama companies. In collaboration with the University of New South Wales and the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), it established the now widely acclaimed National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA). The AETT both managed and subsidised theatres.\textsuperscript{13} Because the AETT was located in Sydney, Victoria and other states felt that they were being deprived of many activities. National tours unfortunately incurred substantial losses, so were offered to fewer locations less often. It was, therefore, claimed (and with some truth) to be a national theatre in theory only.\textsuperscript{14} For example, an opera trust venture was created during 1956, and being formed from the AETT was called the Elizabethan Trust Opera Company. Initially, it was able to tour every year, including country areas, up until 1962. Due to financial considerations it only toured the national capital cities in collaboration with commercial enterprises from 1963 onwards.\textsuperscript{15}

With the economic boom period continuing through the 1960s and early 1970s, many artistic activities flourished primarily due to government funding. In 1967, the Liberal Prime Minister, Harold Holt, responded to pressure from the Fellowship of Australian Composers and established a fund with an introductory grant of $10,000 to assist musicians. Simultaneously, the AETT itself suggested that a new ruling body be established by the Commonwealth Government to advise and administer funding to the arts.\textsuperscript{16} Thus, Harold Holt announced in November 1967 his government’s intention to create an Australia Council for the Arts to be lead by Dr H C Coombs, chairman of the AETT (1954–1968). Government funding would continue to pass through existing agencies and, in addition, the new Council would focus on drama, opera, ballet and film-making. The Council would also advise on requests for aid in cultural activities not already covered by the ABC or the bodies for art, music and literature.\textsuperscript{17}
After the disappearance of Harold Holt at sea, John Gorton became Prime Minister in 1968. Like Holt, Gorton believed the arts to be important, but whereas Holt personally enjoyed attending arts performances, Gorton appeared more influenced by the political value of aligning himself and his party with the arts sector. More specifically, support for artists would mean votes for his government. Rather than allowing the Australia Council significant autonomy and statutory powers, Gorton saw it as an extension of his own ministerial responsibility. Moreover, he insisted that he be given any political benefits derived from awarding grants. It was in relation to film, however, that Gorton is best remembered. Gorton believed that film and television were the characteristic art forms of the age and consequently stimulated development in this area. His newly appointed Council included such notable supporters of the arts as writer and commentator Phillip Adams, author and politician Barry Jones, and writer Peter Coleman. All shared the belief in Australian film as a creative and financially viable art form. They established a film committee to implement a National Film and Television School, a Film and Television Development Corporation, and an experimental Film and Television Fund that would provide small scale funding to low budget film ventures. The Film and Television Development Corporation was implemented in early 1970 via new legislation and was activated with initial funds of $1 million. This amount was to be supplemented annually so it could be invested and a rotating fund established in the order of $10–12 million to be used for the facilitation of films with viable commercial prospects.

The cultural initiatives of the 1960s owe much to the belief that Australia as an English speaking nation was at risk of becoming overwhelmed—albeit in the English language—by foreign content in all artistic areas, more particularly, in the film and television sphere and especially by productions from America. At the same time, the Australia Council’s activities alienated many Australians who felt that a single, white Australian identity was pervasive in the development of an official culture. Consequently, the Aboriginal Arts Board, comprising Aboriginals from traditional and urban backgrounds, was established in the 1960s by the Australia Council for the Arts. The Board’s primary objective was the promotion and restoration of Aboriginal culture, which was to be accomplished by inspiring both traditional and non-traditional art activity in
Aboriginal communities, and by making the cultural heritage a living force in the lives of Aboriginal people and a unique and respected element in Australian culture.  

Queensland and New South Wales established new organisations in the late 1960s to deal with art and cultural activities. Generally, the states continued their traditional activities of maintaining libraries, museums and galleries while assisting the ABC orchestras. Subsidies to the AETT were often accompanied by grants to other bodies, but the majority of their expenditure was in infrastructure.

The Whitlam Labor Government came to office in 1972 with intentions of increased assistance to the arts to be administered by a single statutory authority. The Crafts Board was appointed and the Music Board was established, primarily to subsidise the Australian Opera, in 1973. The government also approved Jerzy Toeplitz, a distinguished Polish film maker with an international reputation, as the foundation Director of the Australian Film and Television School, an approval which was immediately followed by the decision to proceed with the establishment of the school by legislation and the appointment of its board under the chairmanship of Barry Jones.

The Whitlam government also increased the functions of the Australia Council for the Arts. The Council would comprise art, literary and composers’s funds and include a structure of seven specialist boards for the various art forms. ‘Artists for Whitlam’ committees were formed in some States. Whitlam emphasised increased opportunities and better awards for professional artists; democratisation of the arts sector, including lower prices on admission tickets; and increased support for community based activities. Whitlam’s arts policy drew criticism from many who believed that too great a share of funding was going to the national opera and ballet companies and also to what Coombs calls, ‘establishment dominated agencies concerned with the administration of government maintenance’.  

The Whitlam government asked the Australia Council for the Arts to evaluate how the proposed legal ruling authority should be formed, and after much public discussion, legislation established the Australia Council in 1975.  

The Australia Council made (and continues to make) grants directly to arts bodies and individuals and one of its continuing roles is to encourage the States and Territories of Australia to support the arts. The Film and Television Development
Corporation was superseded by the Australian Film Commission in the first year of the Liberal Fraser Government in 1975.25

Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser (1975–1983) tried to increase the involvement of state, territory and local governments and other regional arts organisations. In his first important statement on the arts, he announced that the Australia Council would work collaboratively with arts organisations to begin a series of changes to grant-giving activities. This did not take place, however, and the Council retained full control of Commonwealth programs for the arts. Funding thus continued to be channelled directly from the Australia Council to the states and other bodies.

With the inception of the Australia Council in 1975 came the development of the Literature Board. Its aim was to encourage the publication of work which might, in time, be regarded as successful.26 It was to the Literature Board that the Australian Society of Authors petitioned for a plan to be implemented that would reward writers and publishers for the use of their books available in libraries. This development came to fruition in 1975 and became known as the Public Lending Right.27

During this third phase of cultural policy evolution, from the 1950s to the 1970s, various Australian governments set about establishing funding sources and creating cultural institutions as a way for the population to have wider access to the arts and culture.28 Through thinking about the arts and arts policy in different ways, the arts became part of a wider cultural policy from the incorporation of government initiatives supporting not only ‘high art’ but the popular mediums of television and film as well. That is, ‘culture was being conceived as more than aesthetic culture. It was about our way of life’.29 As such, cultural policy formation was considered a shared activity between the broadcasting, film and arts policy-making institutions.30

**Phase four: the 1980s and projections for the 2000s**

Australia experienced changing economic, political and social circumstances in the 1980s, which saw the emergence of a fourth phase of Australian arts and culture. The changes to the philosophy surrounding cultural policy-making began as new challenges arose. Lisanne Gibson and Tom O’Regan define the key issues as being changes to direct government funding arrangements, globalisation
of the cultural market resulting in increased pressure on local cultural markets for audience attraction, and changes to the audience base and practices. Various authors such as Terry Flew and Manuel Castells point to the additional impact of the increased importance of knowledge on all aspects of economic production, distribution, and consumption as well as the increasing significance of the service sector in growth nations. These aspects are connected to the ‘new economy’ which, for Castells, is based upon occupations with high information and knowledge content in their activity on a globally networked scale. Against this background, Flew acknowledges that culture is being reconceived from being a distinct sphere of life concerned primarily with ‘art for art’s sake’ to being an entity permeating everything from the design of urban spaces, office and retail outlets, to the design of cars, phones, software and clothing. According to Flew, creativity does not lie with the arts or media industries alone, ‘but is a central—increasingly important—input into all sectors where design and content form the basis of competitive advantage in global economic markets’.

Australia during this fourth phase has seen frequent turnover in arts ministers and the arts being incorporated in a variety of portfolios (see Appendix 1, p 326). The Labor government under Bob Hawke (1983–1991) treated the arts portfolio as a minor one. There was, however, one notable project during this period: the Australian National Maritime Museum in Sydney. This project attracted the support of successive New South Wales governments and initiated the first federally funded museum outside the ACT.

Paul Keating succeeded Bob Hawke in 1991. Keating (1991–1996) had a personal love of architecture and classical music which made him a strong advocate of the arts. Don Watson recounts in his biography of Keating that the Prime Minister believed a country to be ‘healthier when the arts flourish’ and that ‘they tell us who we are’. To his advantage, Keating seemed to have rediscovered the psychology of using the arts in electioneering; an approach pioneered by Gorton’s personal commitment to the arts. Keating mustered the support of the arts sector when his government was challenged by the Liberal Party, led by John Hewson, in the Federal election of 1993. Recalling the ‘Arts for Labor’ event at the State Theatre in Sydney on 28 February 1993, Collins explains that:
When Paul Keating arrived at the State Theatre, his political fuel gauge was on empty. He arrived at the lowest psychological point he had experienced as Prime Minister and verging on physical exhaustion. When he left, he left reinvigorated, recharged and clawed his way back to one of the narrowest wins in federal political history. Not only was a political star reborn, but—more importantly—a seismic shift had occurred in the way Australian politicians perceive the arts.\(^37\)

The Labor government’s cultural policy document *Creative Nation* (1994), and the arts communities’ reward for supporting Keating’s re-election, were put forward in an attempt to provide direction for Australia’s cultural future and to address the many issues of multiculturalism.\(^38\) It is interesting to note here that the Liberal/National Coalition Party’s cultural policy document entitled *The Cultural Frontier: Coalition Priorities for the Arts* (1994) was almost identical in content to that of *Creative Nation*.\(^39\)

In 1998, coming up to elections in 1999, the Liberal Party managed to compile a tenuous arts and cultural policy. It included $10 million being allocated to the Victorian College of the Arts so that they could build a new drama school, extend their library, and refurbish the cafe. In general however, the Liberal Party’s priorities were toward festivals and contemporary music.

The Labor Party under Kim Beazley released their sixteen page arts policy in July 1998. Peter Timms of Melbourne’s *Age* newspaper noted that it seemed to have been put together ‘in a hurry’ and was mostly reactive.\(^40\) It strenuously argued against a goods and services tax being introduced, as proposed by Prime Minister Howard, but did not attempt to address the inequities of present tax systems that affected those working in the arts. Beazley endorsed the arts as an industry that generated employment for approximately 800,000 thousand people directly. As such, he proposed Status of the Artist legislation, which would have full-time practising artists recognised as working men and women and thus eligible for benefits such as unemployment payments and health care concessions. Nevertheless, the Labor Party lost the election to the Liberal Party in 1999.

Prior to the elections of 2001, Labor released their arts platform entitled *Enjoying Life: Arts, Culture and Heritage*.\(^41\) Labor’s arts policy declared the party’s commitment to the media and broadcasting, recognising the impact of globalisation driven by digitisation and convergence of technology. Labor emphasised diversity of
ownership and plurality of content while simultaneously retaining cross-media ownership laws. It would seem, however, that this dual purpose would be futile in a globally networked and competitive new media environment. The only direction for meeting this agenda was offered vaguely as 'a range of measures'. While Labor's previous arts policy document included a pledge to boost arts funding by $60 million, no figures were quoted in the new platform, only a statement that 'Labor will continue to give priority to the Australia Council'.

The 1998 Liberal policy document *For Art's Sake* was revamped for the upcoming 2001 elections and entitled *Arts for Australia's Sake* (2000). It included a little under $16 million for the Australia Council over three years (considerably less than Labor's pledge) and additional funding directed to the Cultural Development Program that supports the Opera Conference, Symphony Australia, the National Australia Day Council, the Public Lending Right scheme and the national training institutions. Ten million dollars was allocated to Australian contemporary music, with funding for touring programs to rural and regional areas maintained at then current levels. Assistance was pledged to the film and television industry and for copyright protection.

In 2002, Carmen Lawrence (the then-Shadow Minister for Reconciliation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, the Arts, and the Status of Women; now a backbencher in the House of Representatives for Fremantle) declared that most of the funds only provided for the continuation of existing programs, many of which were significantly reduced soon after the 1998 election. Her opinion was that the Howard government lacked new ideas and an agenda for stimulating and supporting Australia's cultural life. Symptomatically, the 1996–2003 Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator Richard Alston, rarely mentioned the arts, preferring to focus on the importance of information technology in delivering Australia's 'rich' information economy.

In order to adjust to the challenges of the new 'information economy', the expectations of various cultural custodians and their cultural policies have become more entrepreneurial. More specifically, they are focusing on developing and sustaining partnerships between corporate, government and philanthropic sectors. Here Gibson and O'Regan point out that two distinct but
related terms, 'cultural development' and 'cultural industries', have resulted from this refocusing. Cultural development is about developing strategic relationships and partnerships, as well as cultural procedures, and stimulating growth in the cultural industries. As well as generating private investment, the aim is to stimulate innovation and to generate new products and services. The cultural industries, while also taking account of the traditional arts, media and heritage, include fashion, sport, leisure, the environment, design, advertising, new media publishing and software.

For O'Regan, culture and the arts have become too important a field socially, culturally and economically to be administered by the traditional arts/cultural policy institutions alone (including, for example, the Australia Council, the Film Finance Corporation, the Australian Film Commission, the Australian Broadcasting Authority, the Australian Communications Authority and other groups of importance to culture). As a result, key decisions about cultural initiatives are being made in government departments of trade, foreign affairs, and economics, with the traditional arts/cultural policy institutions often removed entirely from the consultation process or referred to after the fact. In this context, these cultural institutions are becoming subsidiary in the need to serve broad and more specific interests and agendas. Moreover, O'Regan argues that the cultural policy frameworks and cultural practices, if left static, run the risk of marginalisation due to these present challenges.

Current cultural policy formation considers society as being made up of multiple publics. In the report of the Commission on Culture and Development, Our Creative Diversity, former UN Secretary General Pérez de Cuéllar noted that as the future (culturally, socially, economically and environmentally) is increasingly shaped by global interdependence or networking, cultural sociability becomes essential. The Commission pointed out that it is not simply the role of governments to promote shared values and respect between cultures, but increasingly a global set of ethics requiring influence and action from transnational corporations, international organisations, and the global civil society.

Cultural policy may be seen in this fourth phase to have the dual purpose of attending, on the one hand, to cultural diversity and, on the other, to economic sustainability. Total Australian Government commitment to culture is now approximately $4 billion annually.
Appendix 2, p 327), and has much to do with the added contribution of cultural industries to the economy as a whole. The percentage of total turnover in the cultural industries is currently estimated to be over $19 billion annually\textsuperscript{50}, with the greatest turnover, profit, and added value being produced by the commercial cultural industries.\textsuperscript{51}

In contemporary nations such as Australia, economic growth is often inspired by developments at a community level and cultural industries at this level are accordingly playing a key role in this 'new economy'. The new economy is facilitated by industrial convergence between the previously separate sectors of: (1) media; (2) information technology; and (3) telecommunications; as well as globalisation.\textsuperscript{52} In the new economy, knowledge and information are the major sources for productivity and growth.

'Creative industries' is a new term that emphasises the economic contribution that can be achieved through cultural industries. According to Australian media and culture theorist Stuart Cunningham, creative industries 'can claim to capture significant "new economy" enterprise dynamics that such terms as "the arts", "media" and "cultural industries" do not'.\textsuperscript{53}

**Global social responsibility**

One of the challenges for traditional arts/cultural policy making institutions since the 1980s in Australia has been the rethinking of cultural policy. Cultural policy is now arguably seen as the bridge between the profit and efficiency considerations of economic policy and human development objectives on the one hand, and access and participation considerations of social policy on the other.\textsuperscript{54} This notion has been recently discussed by cultural policy theorist Lisanne Gibson who argues that cultural development policy straddles: (1) social or cultural objectives (which aim to bring about cultural diversity and offer local communities potential for cultural expression); and (2) economic objectives (that encourage cross-sectoral partnerships as tools for encouraging sustainable cultural activity), with cultural policies playing a role in bringing agreements between these two sets of objectives.\textsuperscript{55}

For Australia and other nations around the globe in an increasingly new media environment, the traditional rules, regulations and policies no longer apply because the rules by which
economic activity occurs are increasingly defined by international organisations rather than by singular governments. The future for Australian cultural policy—indeed any nation's cultural policy—in a new economy may require refocusing on community and social considerations (among other issues, the intellectual property rights of digital material, censorship, electronic fraud) which rely far more on either ethics or technology than on regulation.

In developing these ethical standards, it would be reasonable to consider upon what platform we base these decisions. It seems clear that arguments concerning the public good or the public interest should be useful. Or, we could look to wider notions of global ethics. Of course, achieving global consensus (and indeed legislation) is problematic when we consider that values are not internationally uniform. Nations do, however, have to take steps toward international ethical standards (not a single overarching cultural policy) because, as Frederico Mayor, UNESCO's former Director-General, emphasises: 'the world cannot be founded on economic and political arrangements alone, but requires the intellectual and moral solidarity of humankind. This forms the basis of our ethical mandate to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms'. J Mohan Rao stresses that globalisation marks the beginning of a search for a range of developmental models based on local differences and not a uniform model being forced on particular countries or cultural situations. He argues that forcing a uniform model could be detrimental to the future economic prosperity of these nations and of the world at large.

For creative industries in Australia and in other countries, the public good may act as a base for wider ethical standards, thus representing key freedoms in the interest of humankind. By definition, the public good fulfils specific needs to the general benefit of particular societies (for example, national health schemes or education). The public good operating in the interest of various publics includes:

(1) a commitment to editorial freedom, diversity of view, consumer access and choice, and the absence of state political or editorial control

(2) commitment to fairness in general political debate and news coverage
(3) protection of audiences, particularly children, from broadcasting certain themes such as violence and pornography

(4) protection of national and regional cultural identities, and the stimulation of innovative, artistic, creative, educational and productive activity.\(^5\)

The public good standard accordingly needs to be nurtured and developed by governments so that the less well-off are not excluded from the general benefits outlined above. Arguably, commercial interests are often less likely to have equality, access, education, cultural development—core aspects of the public good standard—as their central tenet for continuance.\(^6\) In this context, maintaining the public good standard fundamentally recognises a public (general), communal good as more important than personal goals.

In *Our Creative Diversity*, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar outlines five ethical pillars which he believes are shared values for all people regardless of nation, and thus obligations for which governments, as well as corporations, international organisations and ‘global civil society’ must be responsible. These pillars include:

(1) human rights and responsibilities

(2) democracy and the elements of civil society

(3) the protection of minorities

(4) commitment to peaceful conflict resolution and fair negotiation

(5) intergenerational equity.\(^6\)

In accordance with the ideal of ethical principles for all people and the public good standard outlined above, Tony Bennett outlined his criteria for global ethics:

The first consists in the *entitlement to equal opportunity* to participate in the full range of activities that constitute the field of culture in the society in question. The second consists in the entitlement of all members of society to be *provided with the cultural means of functioning effectively* within that society without being required to change their cultural allegiances, affiliations or identities. The third consists in the obligations of governments and other authorities to *nurture the sources of diversity* through imaginative mechanisms,
arrived at through consultation, for sustaining and developing the
different cultures that are active within the populations for which
they are responsible. The fourth concerns the obligations for the
promotion of diversity to aim at establishing ongoing interactions
between differentiated cultures, rather than their development as
separated enclaves, as the best means of transforming the ground
on which cultural identities are formed in ways that will favour a
continuing dynamic for diversity.62

The promotion of these ethical principles has the potential to
enhance democracy, citizenship and cultural diversity (which
involves supporting the right to be different), for the common
good.63 These principles may be established by a global body but
tailored for national contexts whereby cultural variety is recognised,
and so long as this variety reflects the boundaries of these shared
values, then we can fully appreciate cultural diversity.

Using the work of John Synott, there is a number of specific
social responsibilities that could be used to promote the public good
standard at the organisational, governmental and individual levels.64
This is not to say that some of these attributes are not now present;
many of them are, but the list constitutes a comprehensive
framework for promoting the public good standard in various
cultural activities. These include, at the organisational level:

(1) becoming decentralised and able to respond flexibly,
    efficiently, and being aware of various contexts

(2) being change-oriented rather than conserving the status-quo

(3) being team-based and including culturally diverse teams

(4) being structured around open processes and systems
    rather than pyramidal structures

(5) being participatory

(6) maintaining awareness, and system-wide incorporation of
    the social responsibilities, that is, the public good standard
    in various cultural enterprises.

At the governmental level there are the requirements of:
(1) continuous training for global skills and awareness, working cross-culturally, and being aware of various contexts

(2) recognition of global skills in personnel appointments, promotions and responsibilities

(3) having a policy ethic that support human rights

(4) supporting gender equality.

Finally, at the individual level, employees would be able to demonstrate:

(1) flexibility

(2) cultural openness and experience

(3) the capacity to work with people in ambiguous contexts

(4) an awareness of global issues and their interconnections

(5) communication skills in oral communication and electronic media.

Conclusion

This article has argued that the arts in Australia have moved through four broad phases. The first phase occurred in the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century and was primarily characterised by little formal recognition of new Australian and Indigenous artists by the government. As such, there was a lack of government involvement in artistic activities. A second phase came in the early twentieth century (roughly 1908 to the late 1940s) as successive Australian governments came to recognise artistic activity, but with an emphasis on ‘high’ art forms for a cultivated (White) audience. With greater self assurance in the postwar years, Australian arts/cultural policy entered a third phase (the 1950s to the 1970s). Thinking about the arts was gradually evolving from the mono-cultural objectives in arts policy to include various cultural and Indigenous creative productions and the domains of popular culture such as film and television. As a result of these extensions, arts policy came to be incorporated in a broader definition of
culture within cultural policy, taking into consideration not only arts policy but public policy, broadcasting policy and communications policy as well.

A fourth phase of arts/cultural policy now focuses on culture as an industry with economic significance. This has much to do with developed nations pegging their future prosperity on service delivery rather than goods production. New digital technologies that allow for immediate, interactive and global communication, such as the internet, have facilitated this trend. Currently, cultural policy is being expressed as the need to develop ‘creative industries’ and recognise cultural diversity. This, according to Smith, is because industries, many of them new, which rely on creativity and imaginative intellectual property, are becoming the fastest growing and important aspects of national ‘growth’ economies. It is not sufficient, however, to simply state that diversity in the creative industries positively impacts on economies. Rather, we now need to establish how diversity contributes to economic success, benefits various social groups, and offers political stability aside from the aesthetic elements intrinsic to creative industries. Similarly, we must consider that decisions made by various organisations previously unconnected to culture and the arts are now affecting the traditional cultural organisations. As such, these cultural organisations need to continually evolve their activities, or become, as O’Regan fears, marginalised. Against this background, global cultural policy theorist Néstor García Canclini has proposed that cultural policy must not resist change but needs to manage it in the context of global and cultural transformation. This is so that local and national cultures and the creativity that sustains them are not damaged but rather preserved and enhanced.

An emphasis on the economic contribution of culture as an industry raises a number of issues. For O’Regan, current cultural policy is fundamentally important not only to traditional arts/cultural policy making organisations (in Australia these include, for example, the Australia Council, the Film Finance Corporation, the Australian Film Commission, the Australian Broadcasting Authority, the Australian Communications Authority and other groups of importance to culture), but to a wide variety of government departments as well, with the result that the traditional institutions are becoming marginalised. O’Regan sees the way forward for cultural policy as developing more differential strategies,
interpretations and understandings, sites and outcomes, if it is to be effective in the future.\textsuperscript{69} Gibson believes that custodians for our cultural future must not place more weight on the cultural practices that have commercial relevance (and are therefore favoured) over and above those forms that are useful for social or cultural reasons.\textsuperscript{70} Flew argues that it is highly problematic to define the exact conditions that either support or impede creativity.\textsuperscript{71} For many in the cultural policy field the way forward for cultural policy development is via a framework based on global ethical principles or having recourse to standards of the public good for the benefit of multiple publics.

This article acknowledges the role for government at all levels (local, regional, and national) in representing the collective interests of all citizens, including women, Indigenous people, migrants and the young, and the need to protect and reward their creativity for the future. Incorporating cultural sociability and responsibility in differential cultural policies and partnership development is imperative to ensure human dignity. Cultural diversity does not automatically equate with harmony. However, steps toward universal social responsibility or global ethics in partnerships between governments, corporations and communities will develop the process in creative cultural policy making. Appreciating the need to establish a core set of values is crucial to this future.