



## **2007 State Election Cultural Development Policy Platform**

### **Executive Summary:**

This platform raises cultural development issues affecting Local Government, calling for a three-sphere intergovernmental partnership approach. NSW Government action is recommended.

### **Background:**

LGSA's *Policy Platform for the 2007 State Election* emphasises that culture is important to both the *Community Well-being* theme and the *Resourcing and Supporting Communities* theme.

In particular, the platform advocates the NSW Government:

- Work in partnership with the Associations to help councils promote citizenship and cultural diversity through the implementation of cultural plans. (Projected cost to the State Government: \$500,000 per year).
- Promote diverse and vibrant communities by establishing a cultural infrastructure investment pilot (including Commonwealth and private sector funding). (Projected cost to the State Government: \$5M per year).
- Ensure that young people in regional and rural areas get the same access to cultural services and programs offered by the major NSW cultural institutions to children in metropolitan areas. (Projected cost to the State Government: Nil).

The ABS released the *2004-05 Cultural Funding by Government* paper, with the figures showing over one third of total national Local Government cultural funding is provided by NSW and that this is above the national per person Local Government average.

The LGSA 2005 research shows that despite a growing uptake of cultural planning, there are still many councils who have not yet undertaken a strategic approach to local cultural development<sup>1</sup>.

With the majority of NSW cultural spending allocated to the major Sydney based cultural institutions, regional and rural young people continue to require specific access programs to facilitate exposure to the major NSW cultural organisations.

### **Current Position:**

The Associations have led development of an inter-governmental partnership approach to cultural development, with the establishment of the Cultural Accord process in 1997. This remains unique in Australia. The *Cultural Accord 3* between Arts NSW and the LGSA recognises the strong commitment councils have to the development of local cultural activity and identity.

Under the *Cultural Accord 3*, Arts NSW and LGSA are working towards establishment of a funding program for Local Government that recognises councils making a sustained commitment to the arts and culture through a cultural planning framework. Often councils must apply to numerous different NSW and Australian Government cultural grant programs and categories, resulting in onerous bureaucratic duplication.

Programs such as Arts NSW ConnectED have advanced regional youth arts access, and provide valuable models for wider uptake.

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<sup>1</sup> LGSA NSW *Local Government Cultural Survey 2005*, LGSA Sydney 2005

**Comment:**

With an increasing emphasis on longer term community strategic planning, many councils are considering how they can provide effective community cultural development. Other councils have not yet benefited from a local cultural policy perspective, and require NSW Government support, so as not to be left behind.

There are several current examples of council cultural infrastructure projects that integrate facilities such as libraries, museums and galleries. Where there are distinct council supported cultural institutions and entities, there is often unrealised potential for joint operational activities, such as audience development and marketing.

Councils developing and operating cultural infrastructure would be greatly assisted by the research and development of methodologies and procedural guidelines, to ensure local cultural infrastructure development best serve local communities. Several pilot programs are recommended, so that guidelines cater to the wide variety of council circumstances.

Local Government cultural infrastructure development and operation which best supports local communities requires streamlined and cooperative support from all levels of government.

**Recommendation:**

That the Government, Opposition and other candidates standing for election support and commit to:

- Working in partnership with the Associations and funding a statewide process to assist councils which have yet to undertake cultural planning to do so. (Projected cost to the State Government: \$500,000 per year).
- Establishing a cultural infrastructure investment pilot (including possible partners such as the Australia Council for the Arts, the Collections Councils of Australia and the Australian Business Arts Foundation) to develop and test methodologies and procedural guidelines for the planning, building and operation of cultural infrastructure. (Projected cost to the State Government: \$5 million per year).
- Ensuring that young people in regional and rural areas get the same access to cultural services and programs offered by the major NSW cultural institutions to those in metropolitan areas, by continuing successful programs such as ConnectED and ensuring agreements between NSW Government and major cultural institutions require regional youth access programs. (Projected cost to the State Government: Nil).

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