

Australia's international museum body says *Sculpting a National Cultural Plan* is a first step towards meeting Australia's requirements and international standards

MEDIA STATEMENT

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The International Council of Museums (ICOM) Australia welcomes the recently released bipartisan report, *Sculpting a National Cultural Plan*, of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts, on their Inquiry into Australia's creative and cultural industries and institutions.

We also support the report's number one recommendation, that the Commonwealth Government develops a national cultural plan to assess the needs of the sector. It is the first step in what the museum and gallery sector has been calling for over many years: the development of a comprehensive national cultural policy and strategic framework for sustained investment.

ICOM Public Officer, Adjunct Professor Alex Marsden, said "The example of other nations in our region and beyond, such as Singapore, China, South Korea and New Zealand, demonstrates the opportunities that are enabled by well-considered and thought-out approaches to building creative industries economies."

She adds, "Australia also requires a new national body to deal with the needs of our great collecting institutions and allied local and regional institutions that promote creativity and knowledge of our history, heritage, environment and society. It would address a significant gap in the arts and cultural sector and bring Australia into line with other comparative economies."

The report's recommendations are also silent on the urgent need and opportunity to support a program to digitize collections across the sector, and on meeting the critical needs of local and regional museums as they support the cultural lives and resilience of their communities.

While the report makes a number of specific recommendations which we support, such as proposals for Indigenous arts and culture, and the long overdue better statistical collection of cultural data by the ABS, we are concerned by the many oversights.

ICOM Australia is ready to play our part and provide further advice, alongside the many other cultural organisations and committed individuals who made significant submissions to this Inquiry.

Background

ICOM is the largest international network of museum and heritage professionals, with more than 44,500 members around the world. In November it celebrated the 75th anniversary of its

