

# 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.

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