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Privilege or Problem: The distinct role of government in arts development in South Australia

South Australia as a location

South Australians like to assert that they have had a different history than other states in Australia. South Australia was the only state in Australia that was settled by free European settlers in the 19th century, without the presence of convicts transported from Great Britain. Whether this gives South Australia a higher moral ground 200 years later, particularly in the context of European treatment of the indigenous population already in situ in Australia at the time of European settlement, is a moot point. Nevertheless given the planned nature of the state and its different history apropos of European settlement in the Australian context, it could be concluded that South Australia's different history may have had some impact on the cultural and artistic development of the state.

Many of the first European settlers of South Australia were non-conformists and the State's major early influence were the views of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, a Quaker. His philosophy was founded on the principles of high moral endeavour, religious freedom and the bringing of the best culture from the motherland of the immigrants (Whitelock 1980:10). The British settlers founded a South Australian Literary Society before the settlement commenced in 1836 (which became the foundation of the State Library) while the German immigrants of the 1840s brought to the colony a strong musical tradition (Szuster 2002). Many of the settlers bought a parcel of land in South Australia before they had even arrived (Prest ed. 2001:352). The city of Adelaide was planned by Colonel Light with wide boulevards interspersed with squares and surrounded on all sides by parkland (Prest ed. 2001: 227). South Australia's nonconformist and liberal tradition is illustrated by the fact that in 1894 South Australia was one of the first places in the world to give women the vote and to allow women to be elected to parliament (Prest ed.2001: 313).

South Australia also provides an interesting environment for a study about government intervention in the arts. From the early seventies, it has been seen as a leader in the Australian context, for innovation and support of the arts (Stretton 1989, McCreadie 1988, Ward 1992, Baker et al 1998). In 1970 a state premier called Don

Dunstan was elected. Although he had been premier from 1967 to 1968, his real period of influence occurred from 1970 to 1979. It is observed in the *Wakefield Companion to South Australian History* that Dunstan,

...would become the key figure in the state's late 20th-century arts development (Prest ed. 2001: 51).

Dunstan certainly had a particular commitment to building a vision of the state as the 'Athens of the South', and creating a cultural infrastructure, that could not be destroyed easily (Ward 1992: 33). Peter Ward notes that Don Dunstan made the arts a 'major plank of policy' as Premier (Ward 1992:37). He quotes Dunstan before his election in 1970, saying that,

The Government ...will set up a South Australia Council on the performing arts with a permanent Director-General which will recommend to the government grants should be made the performing arts <and> will establish a permanent theatrical company (Ward 1992: 33).

So establishing a mechanism for direct government arts funding, albeit for the performing arts, was a key aspect of Dunstan's election policy. From another perspective, Stretton notes,

Dunstan had a personal interest in the arts and in the urbanity of the city centre, as well as the political interest in the goodwill of art lovers and city traders (Stretton 1989: 179).

Stretton suggests that Dunstan saw the arts as a way of improving the economic situation of the State, as well as a means of improving its cultural life. In this respect, he was ahead of his time, given more recent examples of Glasgow, Chicago and Bilbao, where arts activity and infrastructure has been seen as playing a dramatic role in revitalising these cities (Landry and Bianchini 1995). Stretton also notes that the South Australian model was known interstate as the 'Israeli' model, given the large-scale government intervention in planning and structures (Stretton 1989: 203). There is no doubt however that under this interventionist model, the arts in South Australia grew dramatically in the seventies and eighties (Stretton 1989: 203). The arts became a flagship for the state, particularly through the profile of the International Adelaide Festival of Arts (Sloan 1988). By the eighties, car numberplates had 'SA the Festival State' emblazoned on them, demonstrating the importance attached by the state to the Adelaide Festival itself. This concept also embraced a series of other, mostly cultural festivals, that developed in Adelaide, from the mid seventies on (Baker et al 1998, McCredie 1988).

Certainly Adelaide is most associated from a cultural perspective nationally and internationally, by the Adelaide Festival of Arts. The first Adelaide Festival of Arts took place in March 1960. The Adelaide Festival was originally modelled on the Edinburgh Festival of Arts (Whitelock 1980: 27). Jane Sloan notes,

If Adelaide was to host a Festival of world class standing they would have to provide the atmosphere and amenities to support it (Sloan 1988: 141).

Thus from the seventies on, new venues were built, licensing hours were extended, restaurants flourished and community expectations increased. While the Adelaide Festival became the flagship for Adelaide as the cultural capital of Australia, Adelaide, as a virtual city-state¹, became known as the ‘Athens of the South’. Rob Brookman, both a former director and administrator of the Adelaide Festival, asserts that,

...the Festival remains one of the greatest festivals anywhere in the world. We don't have to say it's the best in Australia or the southern hemisphere, it's simply one of the best in the world (Brookman quoted in Baker et al 1998: 142).

While this may be interpreted as a parochial view, there is no doubt that most cultural commentators have seen the Adelaide Festival as the leading arts festival in Australia (McCredie 1988, Shmith 2002). It has also been observed that the impact of the festival as an international cultural event, has produced other outcomes in terms of the way Adelaide people feel about themselves as cultural consumers. Derek Whitelock noted in 1980 that,

Adelaide people take themselves, their city and their festival rather seriously. Many of them feel themselves to be experts on the arts, or at least on the Festival (Whitelock 1980: 173).

Generally the arts sector in South Australia has enjoyed bi-partisan support since Dunstan's intervention in the seventies.

The arts in South Australia are as much an abiding part of the place as the landscape itself (Baker et al 1998: 139).

However Ward notes that in the mid-eighties the then leader of the Liberal Party² opposition, John Olsen (who later became premier of South Australia in the nineties)

¹ The majority of the population of South Australia lives in Adelaide.

² In Australia, the Liberal/National Party Coalition is the conservative party and the Labour Party is the party of the middle and left.

put forward a view of privatising cultural entities (Ward 1992: 123). This was not acted upon. In fact Dunstan's legacy resulted in the establishment, from 1970 to 1980, of several cultural entities as statutory authorities, giving them their own acts of parliament which governed their activities (Ward 1992: 45). These included a state performing arts centre, a state theatre company, a state opera company and a state film corporation in addition to the state library, museum and art gallery already in existence. Dunstan did this, it would appear, to ensure their survival under possibly less sympathetic political masters (Ward 1992). In addition other arts organisations were established, which while not statutory authorities, still had ministerial nominees on their boards in return for fairly generous state support. Ward notes that in,

...early 1971 Don Dunstan moved to have government representatives sit on all cultural boards and committees in receipt of government funding...(Ward 1992: 45).

South Australia also witnessed several other pioneer cultural initiatives. In 1970, the Australian Dance Theatre (which was established in 1965) was the first contemporary dance company in Australia to receive subsidy from a state government, when the South Australian government gave it \$15,000 (Brissenden 1988:91). In the visual arts in 1980 the Art Gallery of South Australia was the first State Art Gallery in Australia,

...to include Aboriginal art in its general display of contemporary art (Prest ed. 2001: 50).

Two other major cultural festivals were established in this period; the Fringe Festival (an alternative festival occurring at the same time as the Adelaide Festival) and the Come Out Festival (a youth arts festival). At the same time the History Trust was established, with its own legislation, and included under its umbrella, several social history museums. In the late seventies, three regional arts centres were built on the same design as the Playhouse at the Festival Centre, providing a capital base for what has now become Country Art SA, a network of medium size arts centres, galleries and smaller performing arts centres, as well as outreach arts programs throughout regional South Australia (Warburton 1992). Country Arts SA is now also a statutory authority. In the late eighties the National Aboriginal Arts Centre (Tandanya), again the first of its kind nationally, was established. While Tandanya is not a statutory authority, it has ministerial representatives on its board.

Up until the nineties therefore, South Australia's cultural intervention differed historically from the other states in the nation. Firstly, by its provision of more generous per capita support from the seventies on, and secondly by its creation of several cultural statutory authorities, resulting in more government intervention and control. In addition, many of the medium to larger arts organisations which were not statutory authorities, had either government appointed representatives or government approved representatives on their boards (e.g. Adelaide Festival of Arts, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Australian Dance Theatre, Carclew, Tandanya, Jam Factory, Come Out Festival). There were of course arts organisations in South Australia which were not statutory authorities, and which did not have ministerial representation on their boards. In the main though, these are organisations which receive a smaller amount of state funding (the Experimental Art Foundation, the Contemporary Arts Centre, Vital Statistix Theatre Company and the Writers Centre).

Government and the Arts

As noted by Raymond Williams, government subsidy for the arts after the second world war in the United Kingdom, was seen as a way for government to intervene in the marketplace, thereby ensuring that both particular acts activities occurred, as well as allowing for broader access to arts practice (Williams 1989:143). Cummings and Katz comment however,

...that government patronage of arts activities is the continuation of a tradition that fostered the flowering of Western culture (Cummings and Katz 1987:3)

They argue that the introduction of government arts funding agencies such as the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Australia Council, are therefore not new in principle. They are however different in form. This difference in form in their view, relates to the development of democratic governments in the West in the 20th century, which are concerned with the democratisation of culture (Cummings and Katz 1987:4). A key attribute of arts funding agencies such as the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Australia Council was their distancing from the direct arm of government or their 'arms length' approach. This was done to ensure arts practice was separated from the political agendas of the time. Ridley argues that this separation between government and arts funding decision making, was a tenet of Protestant-Liberal tradition:

...reflected in the principle that government should find money for the arts without directing its use and that the Arts Council, responsible for allocating that money to a host of organisations, should respond to demand rather than implement a plan of its own (Ridley 1987: 227)

This approach reflects the 'enabling' view espoused by Dr HC 'Nugget' Coombes, a critical force behind the establishment of the Australia Council and its first Chair, about the role of the Australia Council, as he interpreted it in 1969,

The Council sees itself not as a source of direction, not as a source of artistic policy, but as a kind of enabling body...(Coombes, quoted in Stevens 1998:10)

In this model of arts funding, the government delegates money to another semi-government authority (in Australia's case a statutory authority), to distribute it. The body responsible for distributing the funds, does not dictate what is going to be funded, but responds to demand. Thus the creation of the Australia Council by the then Federal government in 1972, saw an increase in government expenditure in the arts in Australia, through the seventies and into the early eighties. This significant financial investment allowed the establishment and/or professionalising of arts organisations across all artforms throughout the country.

However, in the case of the State Governments in Australia, state arts ministries of one form or another were established, often embedded in larger government departments. This state model of arts funding conforms to the Hillman-Chartrand and McCaughey (1985) 'architect' model of government intervention rather the 'patron model' exemplified by the Federal government. At state level, in addition there is a desire to control the outcomes of state government intervention, as well as get credit for the intervention, usually exemplified by the 'edifice complex'. In addition any activity in the arts that might cause political embarrassment at state level, is usually dealt with swiftly. This response could be seen as a way of protecting the incumbent government from potential embarrassment, rather than being concerned with the impact on the artform or the arts organisation concerned.

Cummings and Katz note that direct subsidy by government to the arts gives several returns:

The return to government, or more generally to society, is that some desired activity goes on, goes on more extensively, or is available to individuals more cheaply than would otherwise have been the case (Cummings and Katz 1987:11).

These are arguments for equity of access and for the arts being seen as desirable and important within a civilised society. However over the past decade, governments at both State and Federal level in Australia, have focussed most of their reasoning behind supporting the arts, within an economic and industry construct (*Arts 21, Creative Nation, Creative Capacity*). The change to the intent, language and construct at a Federal level occurred from the mid-eighties following the McLeay Report (Gardiner-Garden 1994:26). This report initiated by the then Federal government, recommended a major shift of government priorities in relation to the arts, suggesting that government support should be conditional upon the incidental benefits the arts provided, rather than the intrinsic value of the arts themselves (Parsons 1987:13). These ideas were further developed in the first national cultural policy strategy promoted by a Federal Labor Government in 1994 where it says,

...This cultural policy is also an economic policy. Culture creates wealth. Broadly defined, our cultural industries generate 13 billion dollars a year. Culture employs. Around 336,000 Australians are employed in culture-related industries (*Creative Nation* 1994: 7).

This document also saw a shift in funding priorities from the producer to the consumer (*Creative Nation* 1994: 13). Thus the rationale for government intervention in the arts in Australia at Federal level, significantly shifted from the 'enabling perspective' of the early seventies (Coombes qtd in Stevens 1998). As Ridley notes in the United Kingdom however, a change to the 'enabling' and 'arms length' approach was, to some extent, an outcome of less money being available from the beginning of the eighties and by the election of the Thatcher government (Ridley 1987: 229). Hence the largesse of the patron (government) was reduced as demand outstripped supply and different strategies were adopted by funding authorities. Stevenson notes that in Australia's case the election of Hawke's Labor government in Australia in 1982 accelerated the adoption of the 'industries' approach in Australia (Stevenson 2000:16).

A similar pattern occurred at State level. In fact the South Australian Department for the Arts commissioned a study called *Culture and Community: Economics and*

Expectations of the Arts in South Australia in 1986 (Brokensha & Tonks 1986). However the real impact of the economic paradigm in an arts funding context began in the nineties (Caust 2003). Early in 1994 with the election of new government at the end of 1993³, an Arts and Cultural Development Taskforce was convened by the Minister for the Arts to address the role of the arts and culture in the state's development. This Taskforce was chaired by the CEO of a gas company and comprised many people with no arts background. Nevertheless, this taskforce was charged by the Minister for the Arts, with the responsibility of identifying ways of supporting the arts, while developing strategies for the arts as an industry, so that it could contribute to the State's economic development (South Australian Government 1994). The Taskforce's recommendations were prefaced by the statement that their intent was to enable,

...the arts and cultural industry to make a real contribution to the Government's priority of reforming the South Australian economy to become nationally and internationally competitive and generate real growth (South Australian Government 1994: 4)

In essence the Taskforce saw the arts sector as an 'industry' and the role of 'this industry' is making a contribution to the State economy. There is no mention here of the essential nature of arts and cultural activity to society or even its broader social role. Instead it is seen as a potential economic driver.

The impact of the economic paradigm was perhaps even more evidenced in the State of Victoria. Under the leadership of a Premier⁴ who had strong views on his likes and dislikes in the arts (Freeman-Green 1997), Victoria developed an arts strategy called *Arts 21* (Jacobs 1997). Tim Jacobs, who as Director of Arts Victoria, oversaw the development of *Arts 21*, noted in a paper describing its development that,

Arts 21 is deliberately aligned to the major policy and administrative agendas of the Victorian Government (Jacobs 1997:17)

Thus Arts 21 was an attempt by a state government to promote an arts strategy that fitted into the agenda of the government of the day. The strategy was seen as an industry strategy and the language and outcomes were aligned towards an

³ After a decade of a state Labour government, a Liberal/National Party Coalition Government was elected

⁴ The Premier, Jeff Kennett was from the Liberal/National Party Coalition

industry/economic model (Jacobs 1997: 15-16). Presumably the thinking behind this approach was to, in a sense, 'mainstream' the arts. Jacobs notes that a major influence was the public sector reform agenda where the role of government was being queried and many government services were being privatised (Jacobs 1997: 17). So it could be concluded that the arts had to be contextualised as 'business' and needed to be seen as central to the government's economic agenda, if government support was to continue.

The emphasis on economic language and intent dominated government discourse about the arts and cultural sector in Australia at both Federal and State level until the late nineties (Caust 2003, Horne 2002, Stevenson 2000). Indeed over the past decade in many western countries, there has been a shift by governments to provide less public sector support for the arts, while simultaneously supporting a view that the market should determine which arts practise survives (Cowen 2000, Pick & Anderton 1999, Reis 1998; Stevenson 2000). Tyler Cowen for instance asserts that America is the leader in most contemporary art forms and that this is a clear result of a capitalist system where government funding represents a very small percentage of arts support (Cowen 2000:37). He notes in fact that,

The American government has done a good deal to support the arts, but most of the successes have come from outside of the NEA (Cowen 2000:38).

He believes that through the American system of tax deductibility for donation to arts organisations and the exemption of not-for-profit institutions from income taxation, the American government has framed an approach for arts support that is consistent with capitalist values without requiring direct government intervention (Cowen 2000:38-39). Cowen believes that,

Contemporary art is capitalist art, and the history of art has been a history of the struggle to establish markets (Cowen 2000:36).

Thus Cowen is arguing that the American approach to the arts of a free market with minimal government support, is the appropriate model for a democratic capitalist system and produces, in his view, the best art (Cowen 2000:37). Another perspective on this issue is provided by Kevin Mulcahy. He comments that,

...it must be remembered that a predominantly privatised cultural sphere is less disposed to questions of aesthetic diversity, public accessibility, and cultural representativeness. The corporate sector, whatever its concerns about social responsibility, primarily focuses on profitability (Mulcahy 2003:182)

Mulcahy is suggesting here that an arts support system which has little public sector involvement, affects both its capacity for aesthetic pluralism and generally the concept of the democratisation of culture as noted earlier by Cummings and Katz (1987). He also points out that the while there has been trend in the nineties by other capitalist states around the world to copy the American system, there are difficulties with imitating this model (Mulcahy 2003:182). Mulcahy notes that in the American case, a taxation system and different attitudes to public philanthropy, offset to some extent the reduced direct public expenditure on the arts (Mulcahy 2003:179, 182). Drawing on Fishel's research he notes how there is limited philanthropic support for the arts in Australia for instance (Mulcahy 2003:170). There is also considerable evidence that reliance on private and corporate sector support for the arts impacts on both the quality and diversity of the artistic outcomes (Mulcahy 2003, Wu 2003).

In a recent exercise in cultural mapping of the State of the Washington, Schuster notes that another outcome of the reduction in federal funding and influence in the US has been that,

Direct support for the arts at state level is now, - and has been for some time – a more important source of direct government aid to the arts in the United States than is direct government support at the federal level (Schuster 2003:4).

Similarly in the Australian example the overall proportion of arts funding support at Federal, State and Local level has witnessed a dramatic change over the past twenty years in Australia. The Federal government is no longer the senior partner in the cultural funding relationship nationally in terms of dollars. It is noted in a survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2004 that for the years 2000-2001, total national cultural funding was \$1.619.6 million from the Commonwealth Government,

\$2.215.2 million from state and territory governments and \$872.4 million from local government (ABS 2004: 4.3-7)⁵. So in this equation the states and territories are now the senior partner in the provision of cultural support.

While Cowen's market-orientated view has not been embraced in Australia to the extent of the US, nevertheless arts funding as direct subsidy has tended to decline as a percentage of an arts organisation's income. Other ways of assisting the arts sector as an industry have been consciously promoted and the linking of the arts with economic outcomes has been the major strategy of both arts funding agencies and governments in the nineties (Anderson 1992, Caust 2003, Stevenson 2000). Commentators who have critiqued this approach include two former chairs of the Australia Council, Donald Horne and Rodney Hall (Hall 2001, Horne 2002). There has been a recognition that seeing the arts only in economic terms is problematic (Throsby 2001) and using only economic indicators for measuring success, as being inappropriate for the sector (Brokensha 1996). On the other hand the industry construct has been interpreted as a positive symptom of the democratisation of culture (Bennet & Carter 2001). While the current CEO of the Australia Council has suggested that the 'industry' construct has helped to 'professionalise' the sector (Bott 2004).

As the nineties progressed into the 21st century, some arts advocates have adopted the discourse of the 'creative' industry model which incorporates the economic arguments but emphasises the concept of 'creativity'. Aside from the specific definition of 'creative industries' (Caves 2000), the terms 'creativity' and 'creative' have been used in all kinds of contexts to argue that the arts can contribute to a more creative and economically successful society (Florida 2002). This use of this terminology is illustrated by the current Premier⁶ of Victoria's introductory statement in their new arts strategy *Creative Capacity*, which replaced the previous Victorian government's *Arts 21*.

⁵ The definition of cultural funding here includes Zoos, Botanic Gardens and Parks as well as Heritage Institutions and the Arts.

⁶ Steve Bracks was elected Premier of Victoria heading up a State Labour Government in 1999.

The arts make a vital contribution to our economy, stimulating creativity and attracting tourists. We are all enriched by our engagement with a creative community (Bracks qtd. in *Creative Capacity* 2003).

Engaging with the term 'creative' has been determined as the way forward in recent cultural discourse in Australia often disappearing the term 'arts' as representing an old-fashioned and elitist approach (Bennett & Carter 2001). This approach has been extensively critiqued in the United Kingdom in relation to the 'dumbing down' and 'populist' policies of the Blair Labor Government in the late nineties (Greenhalgh 1998, McGuigan 1998, Tusa 1999). Interestingly Chris Smith, the first Minister for Culture under the Blair Government, acknowledged that his views on creativity and the state, reflected in *Creative Britain*, were influenced by Australia's Prime Minister Keating and the then Federal Government's publication *Creative Nation* (Smith qtd. in Ramsay 2003).

South Australia now

In May 2004, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) produced a report for Arts SA called *State of the Arts* (ABS 2004). With a population of 1.3 million in 2003, South Australia still has the highest per capita support of the arts in Australia, aside from the Northern Territory. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics,

...the level of South Australian government cultural funding per person (\$144.88) notably exceeded the state and territory average (\$113.02) for all Australia. This was largely due to higher levels of per person funding for arts activities (in particular, performing arts) in South Australia (\$34.11 per person, compared to \$21.13 per person or all states and territories). South Australian government funding per person for performing arts of \$12.20 was more than two and a half times the overall state and territory average of \$4.53 per person. Compared with the previous year, per person funding of culture by the South Australian government increased by 22% in 2001-02 (from \$118.58 to \$144.88 per person) (ABS 2004).

So despite the industry paradigm and a general stagnation in arts funding, South Australia is still giving a significantly higher amount towards the arts than its interstate counterparts. The ABS publication documented a range of cultural statistics specifically collated for South Australia. It was noted for instance that South Australians are active cultural consumers as,

South Australian households spend about \$800 million a year on culture; the State Government spends over \$200 million a year while local government spent about \$70 million (ABS 2004:ix).

They noted that in South Australia over 8 in 10 adults over the age of 18 attend cultural venues and events each year, which they estimate to represent around one million visitors to cultural activities every year (ABS 2004: ix). In addition they also stated that over 12,000 people living in South Australia list their main job in the cultural field and that over 5000 businesses are listed in the cultural sector in South Australia (ABS 2004:ix).

On the policy side the linking of the arts with the economic development of the State, has continued despite a change in government in 2002⁷. A new State Labour government was determined from the outset to address what they saw as wastage in arts spending. As a result they instigated two significant cuts to the overall arts budget totalling around 5 million dollars (McDonald 2003: b). At the same time, the current government established a new biennial film festival in 2003 providing \$1.5 million dollars over the first two years of its operation (Plane 2002:17). The total State arts budget for 2004-2005 is \$92 million (AIC 2004). So although arts events such as the film festival received an injection of funds, arts development, which represents middle to smaller arts organisations and individual artists, received a significant cut. While it would appear the desire to embrace and expand the state's cultural commitment is continuing, the financial support for different sectors is not necessarily consistent. The Executive Director of Arts SA Kathie Massey resigned in August 2003 within an environment of more budget cuts (McDonald 2003: a). While denying publicly that this was the reason for her resignation halfway through her contract, she did note that,

...we've been operating in a difficult financial environment and the policy context is one that is fairly fluid and has changed over time (Massey quoted in McDonald 2003: b).

The cuts to the arts funding budget, at the same time coupled with a simultaneous discourse about the Dunstan heritage by the Premier, would suggest that the State

⁷ In early 2002 a Labour Government under the Premiership of Mike Rann was elected, after nine years of a Liberal/Coalition State Government.

government was giving a mixed message about their attitude to the arts (Plane 2002:17). In mid 2002 the new government organised a one day forum to consider “Social Inclusion and the Arts”. The arts were asked by government to nominate ways that they could improve their capacity to support social inclusion. The difficulty with this exchange was the assumption that the arts were not already practicing social inclusion. In addition there seemed to be a basic premise that the arts should be playing a role in supporting government policies across the board, rather than the arts themselves being seen as a field for policy development itself. Perhaps to finally shore up more credibility in the arts sector and after some pressure from the Arts Industry Council, the government organised a State Arts Summit in mid-2003, to brainstorm ideas for the arts for the next decade. In addressing the summit, Premier Rann emphasised that,

One of my aims is to ensure that every South Australia has the opportunity to enjoy arts and cultural events (Rann in Arts Summit Communiqué 2003: 1).

In this statement however it could be concluded that he is stressing a preference for arts events and access, which does not necessarily translate into promoting arts practice or arts development. In late 2003 the government distributed a tourist brochure nationally called *The Heart of the Arts*, promoting South Australia again as a Festival State, listing all the various festivals occurring in South Australia over a twelve month period, whilst also branding the state as a home of the arts. One of Peter Sellars aims for the 2002 Adelaide Festival was to reverse the Festival/Event relationship (Lloyd 2001). He wanted Adelaide itself to produce new work and export this to the world, rather than bringing arts product from the rest of the world to Adelaide (Lloyd 2001). Sellars saw a desire to always ‘bring in’ culture as another reflection of a cultural cringe that he believed Adelaide had outgrown (Lloyd 2001). Sellars’s aims for the 2002 Festival produced a mixed result, but nevertheless the intent to convert Adelaide from a cultural destination to a cultural producer had merit (Caust 2004).

What about the artists?

When the state government cut funding to the arts in their second budget in 2003, the chair of the Arts Industry Council, Deirdre Williams commented that,

“We are extremely concerned at the current lack of balance in the arts budget expenditure”(Williams quoted in Lloyd 2004).

Williams asserted that while there was an appearance of generous funding for the arts in South Australia, the majority of the funding went towards supporting heritage activities and very little was directed towards contemporary arts and artists. In fact she asserted that out of a recurrent arts budget of around \$100 million, 80% went to heritage and only around \$300,000 went to artists for the production of new work (Williams qtd. in Lloyd 2004). She noted that the cuts of \$1.24 million to the arts budget in both 2002 and 2003 were primarily directed at funds supporting the production of new work (Williams qtd. In Lloyd 2004). Williams asserted that the arts development component of the arts budget was easier to cut politically because artists had less political influence than large institutions (Williams qtd. In Lloyd 2004). However she argued that it was also the most vulnerable area to cut as it represented the livelihoods of artists as well as providing the grass roots of arts activity (Williams qtd. In Lloyd 2004). The Arts Industry Council demanded therefore that the state government show clearly in the budget papers where monies were allocated, so that the real situation of funding for artists was exposed (Williams qtd. In Lloyd 2004).

In late 2003 the Australia Council published another survey reviewing the position of artists in Australia, titled *Don't Give up your Day Job* (Throsby and Holister 2003). Over a period of 20 years the Australia Council has published four surveys documenting the position of individual artists in Australia all primarily authored by David Throsby and other research associates. In this latest report it is noted that despite the existence in Australia of federal and state funding for artists for over 20 years, artists still remain at the very lowest end of income distribution nationally. In fact it is noted that:

“Half of the artists in the survey had an creative income of less than \$7,300 in the 2000-01 financial year” (Throsby & Holister 2003).

Jennifer Bott , CEO of the Australia Council when commenting on the survey said,

“While the incomes of other professionals and occupations have grown since the 1980s, the income of artists remain the same. Artist incomes are low and and significant number of artists earn less than the poverty line. Government support is an important part of an artist’s income, with 25 per cent of artists receiving some form of government support between 1996-2001 and about 8 per cent receiving support from the Australia Council”(Bott 2003).

Thus it appears there is a real contradiction at federal level and particularly at state level, for both funders and practising artists. While governments at both levels continue to fund the arts, the artists are still impoverished. The State of South Australia has traditionally traded on its generous support of arts activity and sees itself as the home of the arts nationally, yet it would appear the reality for contemporary artists in South Australia is somewhat different than the picture presented. Although this maybe a national and even international trend, it might be important for the state government to consider how the reality for artists can be improved if the image of South Australia as a progressive and supportive environment for artists, can be realized.

Conclusion

It would appear from the establishment of the Adelaide Festival in 1960, that Adelaide has developed a national reputation for commitment and innovation in the arts. Whatever government is in power, a funding commitment for the arts continues. Given international patterns this situation may seem enviable. The interesting question for the beginning of the 21st century is whether the organisational and funding model for government intervention in South Australia is still appropriate for encouraging contemporary artistic practice?

The South Australian example relates very much to Dunstan's belief that the legislative model provided greater long-term protection to the arts organisation involved (Ward 1992: 38). The South Australian model begs some questions however about the relationship between the arts and the state. For instance is too much government involvement, particularly at a bureaucratic and policy level, a deterrent to producing innovative art? As noted earlier the embrace of the industry and economic construct by governments of either political persuasion, suggests the arts are not currently supported for their intrinsic value, but for what they might contribute to the economy. Thus the arts have become commodified rather than be valued for themselves. In addition in more recent times the arts have been contextualised as to what they can contribute to broader government policy objectives. Is this also in the long-term interest of the arts?

While Dunstan did not resile from seeing the economic and social advantages of a rich cultural life for a place, he essentially believed in the intrinsic importance of arts practice. Perhaps the interesting question now is whether the model he created, which involves a close and integrated relationship with government, has become a disadvantage for the sector it was designed to protect? It would also seem that there is problem if the artists themselves receive so little of the funding directed towards the sector and are the first group to receive a cut in difficult times. While enjoying a relatively generous funding environment per capita nationally, the arts in South Australia are also expected to contribute to the policy priorities of whatever government is in power. This raises a basic question about the intrinsic value placed on the arts for their own sake, in this equation.

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