



EDINBURGH
INTERNATIONAL
CULTURE
SUMMIT

AUSTRALIA | UK **Cultural Leadership Dialogue** Report



AU/UK

SEASON
2021-22



Australian Government



Foreword

AUSTRALIA | UK CULTURAL LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE REPORT

In August and October 2022, the Edinburgh International Culture Summit piloted a new bilateral initiative in partnership with the Australia Council for the Arts, the Australian High Commission, London, the British Council, the Scottish Parliament and the University of Melbourne. The programme, titled Cultural Leadership Dialogue, celebrated the strong relationship between two nations – built on a robust foundation of shared values, history, and language – while also offering a practical opportunity to reimagine and reaffirm an important partnership through the perspectives of Culture Ministers, artists, and arts leaders.

This Cultural Leadership Dialogue was presented as part of the Australian Government and British Council's extensive and ambitious bilateral season of cultural exchange in 2021 and 2022 and centred around the Season theme of **Who Are We Now?** with twin events hosted at the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh on 29 August 2022 and the University of Melbourne on 6 & 7 October 2022. The Edinburgh dialogue was generously hosted by Clare Adamson MSP, Convener, Constitution Europe External Affairs and Culture Committee.

The central theme of the programme was collaboration – an exploration of ways in which the two countries can work together, learn from each other, and share experiences to grow and enrich our cultural landscape and partnerships. The dialogue brought together key cultural practitioners with extensive experience of working in both countries, alongside parliamentarians representing the

governments of Australia and the devolved nations of the United Kingdom; together representing a unique opportunity to rethink cultural policy for our mutual benefit and offer practical suggestions that enable us to better share and maximise the resources of our respective cultural sectors.

The Edinburgh International Culture Summit seeks to emphasise the importance of artistic exchange in a world that is increasingly complex and multi-lateral, exploring global cultural exchange with an agenda that is deliberately non-partisan and pluralistic and ensuring that no country, continent, or cultural perspective, comes to dominate proceedings. A key benefit of the intensively focussed bilateral model is the mitigation of diplomatic concerns and considerations that necessarily affect the organisation and programming of the broad and cosmopolitan dialogue typical of the Edinburgh International Culture Summit. However, both models remain vital in our exploration of the critical issues facing culture today and in helping us discover practical solutions and effective responses to the problems of funding, sustainability, and inequality.

[The Programme brochures and selected interviews are available on the Edinburgh International Culture Summit website.](#)

Strategic Forum

Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh

Hon Tony Burke, MP, Leader of the House; Minister for Arts and Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Australian Government

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Arts), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, UK Government

The Rt Hon Angus Robertson, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, Scottish Government

Moderator: Fergus Linehan, Director, Edinburgh International Festival Director 2015–2022

The Cultural Leadership Dialogue in Edinburgh opened with a Strategic Forum, which brought together in person The Rt Hon Angus Robertson, MSP and Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay, while the Hon Tony Burke, MP joined via a digital feed. The Ministers' set out the following key points:

Hon Tony Burke, MP affirmed that culture defines who we are now, how we see ourselves, and how the world perceives us. The Australian Labor Government's is working to deliver a landmark National Cultural Policy based around 5 pillars. These are:

- 1 First Nations first – through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities, Australia is home to the longest continuing human culture on the planet. All cultural policy must begin with that rich ancestral heritage, with art that has existed since the first sunrise, and find ways of supporting new generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island artists.
- 2 A place for every story – in a word, this is a stated aim to diversify the culture sector and to ensure that the arts reflect the cosmopolitan nature of the modern state.
- 3 The centrality of the artist – a key job facing Culture Ministers is to professionalise the sector, ensuring that workers receive

adequate working rights and financial support mechanisms, that career routes can be established, along with safe and stable working environments.

- 4 Strong institutions – providing support across the spectrum of institutions – funded, philanthropic and commercial – which sustain our arts and culture.
- 5 Reaching the audience – ensuring our stories reach the people at home and abroad.

Lord Parkinson spoke of the relationship between the governments of the United Kingdom and Australia, including a recent memorandum of understanding on cultural infrastructure and development that aims to stimulate further cooperation and offer clean reliable and transparent finances for investment infrastructure. Other successful initiatives include the renegotiation of a production agreement that facilitates collaboration between UK and Australian filmmakers and strengthens commitments to making more skilled jobs and opportunities within our creative industries and the UK | AUSTRALIA Season of Culture 2021–2022 designed to celebrate, and enhance, trust, exchange, and collaboration between the two nations.

“If we get Cultural policy right, it doesn’t simply effect arts policy – it ricochets through the way we engage in foreign affairs, the way we deliver our health systems, the way we set up social security, the way we run our education system.”

Hon Tony Burke, MP

Despite the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the season delivered 190 arts and education works and collaborations from every part of the UK, reaching every state and territory in Australia.

Lord Parkinson noted that during the Pandemic the UK Government recognised the need to protect the Cultural Sector through the Cultural Recovery Fund. Despite the pressures and stresses placed upon the arts, the high level of cultural engagement during this period demonstrated that culture is an essential expression of our humanity.

Lord Parkinson finished his address by echoing the sentiment that creative work is work, and by stating that the importance of creative skills must be emphasised as we emerge from the pandemic – both for those forging careers in the arts, and for those that will take creative skills into other sectors and avenues of life.

The Rt Hon Angus Robertson, MSP, acknowledged that the Cultural Leadership Dialogue brought into sharp relief the many formal and informal connections between the Australian and UK culture sectors. Scotland is proud to host a rich variety of culture during the Edinburgh festival season, and the Scottish Government has supported the festivals during the pandemic by providing 14.1 million pounds.

With seven Australian productions in the 2022 programme, the Season of Culture helped assemble the largest presence of Australian artists in the 75-year history of the Edinburgh International Festival, including Macro, the spectacular show that raised the curtain on the festival. The cultural relationship between Scotland and Australia was reciprocated through programmes such as the Year of Scotland in Australia 2020.

Fergus Linehan then moderated a discussion around the intrinsic value of the arts while acknowledging that this understanding of value must be combined with an economic understanding of value, and that effective advocacy must now evoke both simultaneously.

The city of Edinburgh offers a powerful platform from which to make this essential case. This year the city celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of summer festivals established with the intrinsic value of the Arts at their core. Its success, and the success of the Festival Fringe and the many other festivals that have flowered in their wake, have almost come to define modern Edinburgh. In pre-pandemic days, the Edinburgh festivals regularly attracted over 4 million visitors and performers to the city.

In other words, culture should not be understood as a charity case and a drain on the public purse strings, it can be nothing short of transformational.

University of Melbourne

Hon Tara Cheyne MLA, Minister for the Arts and Multicultural Affairs, Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly

Hon Leeanne Enoch MP, Minister for Communities and Housing and Minister for the Arts and Digital Economy, Queensland Government

Fergus Linehan, Director, Edinburgh International Festival Director 2015–2022

Helen Salmon, Director, Australia, British Council

Hon David Templeman MLA, Minister for Culture and the Arts, Local Government, and Heritage, Western Australia Government

Moderator: **Robyn Archer AO**

In a wide-ranging conversation that followed a discursive format of question-and-answer, Robyn Archer asked, how, amid so many widespread urgencies, can art and culture be prioritised in terms of government policy and funding?

Minister Enoch spoke of the importance of culture among First Nations peoples as a transmitter of heritage and as a vital means of connecting us to land and nature. The narratives we forge and pass on affects all of our values, perspectives, and behaviours, this means that culture should be seen as an essential aspect of a healing process. Echoing these thoughts, Minister Templeman talked about small communities and the relative ease of sharing stories and values. He suggested three ways that would help to make art and culture a priority. Firstly, the sector must connect with populations of outer metropolitan areas; secondly, arts education programmes can increase cultural engagement in children and young adults; and thirdly, the connections made between the arts and other portfolios such as health and climate must be clearly and repeatedly stated.

In response to a question on what festivals in both nations can learn from each other, Fergus Linehan, a former director of both the Sydney and Edinburgh International Festival, reflected upon the relationship between the festival and the host city and the need for festival organisers to reflect something of the values or the identity

of the host city within the festival. This theme of coherence was key to a tenure that saw schismatic debates and referendums held in the UK between 2014–16. Culture was often neglected during these conversations. For example, during the Brexit vote in the UK both sides chose to dual with inherently fractious arguments centred around the economy and the concept of sovereignty, rather than exploring the rich heritage and history, and many shared values of the UK and Europe.

Speaking on behalf of the British Council, Helen Salmon talked about the benefits of the cultural relations organisation model which creates convening power across sectors, and through the transmission of culture, can help stimulate the economy by making a country twice as likely to “trade with, study in or travel to”. This model, combined with deeper collaborative partnerships with existing organisations, will further develop Australian culture and cultural relations internationally.

Minister Cheyne talked of increased funding for arts organisations in Canberra. A new approach to funding awards has been a requirement for arts organisations to state in detail plans for collaboration and exchange with other arts organisations in the area. This initiative was designed to not only encourage greater diversity within the arts, but also to expose artists to new audiences and audience to new artists.

Combined Cultural Approaches

Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh

Kate Fielding, Chief Executive Officer, A New Approach

Dr Georgie McClean, Executive Director for Development and Strategic Partnerships,
Australia Council for the Arts

Fran Sanderson, Director of Arts Programmes and Investments, Nesta

Julia Hales, Actor

Kath M Mainland CBE, Chief Executive, Adelaide Festival

Prof Margo Neale, Head, Centre for Indigenous Knowledges & Principal Advisor,
National Museum of Australia

Moderator: Dr Beatriz Garcia, Senior Research Fellow, Cultural Policy & Mega-Events,
University of Liverpool

University of Melbourne

Kate Fielding, Chief Executive Officer, A New Approach

Dr Georgie McClean, Executive Director for Development and Strategic Partnerships,
Australia Council for the Arts

Fran Sanderson, Director of Arts Programmes and Investments, Nesta

Moderator: Adrian Collette AM, Chief Executive Officer, Australia Council for the Arts

Showcasing research conducted by Australia Council for the Arts, A New Approach and NESTA around the impact, value, and perception of the arts, culture, and creativity within Australia and the UK, this session was designed to offer new tools and arguments for cultural advocates. Key findings, messages, and perspectives from these sessions were:

Kate Fielding, Chief Executive Officer, A New Approach

- > Australia's cultural participation rate of 98% represents a global high, a number that elevates the understanding of Australia as a culturally engaged nation.
- > The perception that "everyday people do not care about Arts and Culture" does not match the results surveys conducted by ANA or the wider experience of people working in cultural engagement.

- > Modern Australians see their country as the home of the oldest living civilisation on Earth, and this is a growing source of pride and strength for its people.
- > Research from ANA showed that "Middle Australia" – swing voters and workers outside the arts sector – considered art and culture as an essential part of being human. They value arts and culture for participation, for belonging and community, and they describe it as embedded in and inseparable from their daily lives. Importantly, they say that arts and culture help us to understand each other, increase acceptance of differences, increase connection with community and can decrease feelings of isolation.

- Young respondents suggested that: "Arts and Culture is a more inclusive and welcoming term than just The Arts, which evokes feelings of exclusivity and elitism."
- Respondents from the Baby Boomer generation said that the arts "create life-long memories," "opportunities for intergenerational dialogue," "help them to stay young and relevant," and that art "helps to test opinions, negotiate and compromise and see other's points of view and have healthy disagreements."

Dr Georgie McClean, Executive Director for Development and Strategic Partnerships, Australia Council for the Arts

- The Australia Council for the Arts conducts regular surveys with just under 9,000 Australians in a nationally weighted sample. Based on these surveys, the percentage of Australia's population engaging with Arts and Culture across music, film, literature, TV, museums, and galleries is 98%.
- 29% of respondents agreed with the statement that "the arts are not for people like me", with some still seeing the arts as a luxury or an elite activity – though even the majority of these respondents retain some perception that the Arts are important for education and that artists make an important contribution to Australian society.
- Investment in Arts and Culture is part of a vital networked ecosystem, investment in professional arts and culture enables experimentation, the development of new creative skills and long slow development of careers, creative ecologies and all-important pathways. It also allows for wild and sometimes controversial risk-taking that benefit and flow on to the broader economy.
- The purpose of this research is to understand and track changes in the ways we think about arts and culture.
- Creative skills are vital to the workforce of the future, with innovation and adaptability proving core skills for the digital age.
- Some significant barriers remain. 24% of respondents said that financial difficulties prevent them from cultural engagement following the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis. This is the highest the number has been since the inception of the survey and the rate for young respondents is double that of older respondents.
- In sharing Australian stories with the world, arts and culture are a powerful and highly influential tool for building national identity, cultural exchange, and cultural relations.
- We can take inspiration from First Nations people, who did not wait for stability and security before dancing, painting, singing, telling stories, or coming together. First Nations culture is deeply embedded and often the starting points for learning, sharing, and living together.
- Cultural participation encourages engagement, involvement, and trust. It can help create thriving and productive communities which can, in turn, innovate and do extraordinary things.
- Self-actualisation, community connection and the ability to innovate are not "nice to haves," they are the basis of a better future.

Fran Sanderson, Director of Arts & Culture Programmes and Investments, Nesta.

- Nesta has run innovation programmes, investment initiatives and research in arts and creative economy since its launch in 1998, coalescing in later years around: new funding and business models; the positive social impact of arts, culture and creativity; and structured experimentation, with a particular focus on digital innovation and adoption of new technologies.
- Current initiatives include Arts & Culture Finance, which provides repayable finance to arts, cultural and creative industries organisations that have a clear social benefit, known as social impact investment, and CI PEC which provides independent research and policy recommendations for the UK's creative industries.
- England offers a successful example of how a mixed funding model – where private investment supplements income from local authorities and Government – can create and sustain a world-leading cultural sector. While public funding is an essential foundation for culture in England, the ambition and innovation displayed by many organisations in raising funds from other sources has allowed the sector to dream and to amplify the impact of public investment, achieving much more than would be possible with public funding alone.
- In 2019, showed that arts and culture contributed £10.47 billion to the UK economy. This corresponds to 0.5% of total UK economic output. Of the 226,000 jobs in the arts and culture sector in 2019, 40% were based in London, a geographic inequality that the Arts Council's ten-year strategy, Let's Create, intends to address.
- The PEC was commissioned by the intellectual property office to investigate our cultural content consumption habits in the first lockdown of 2020, and immediately afterwards. The results revealed what became obvious – that the pandemic proved to us all how vital cultural content is to our individual and population wellbeing,
- Like any investor or allocator of capital, the government/treasury has to think about risk and return. With the notable exception of CRF, the govt as commissioner or investor can fall into the trap of trading execution predictability for agile innovation in distribution models and therefore, critically, for scaling and collaboration potential. Blended capital models can shift the dial, with structures that allow public and private risk matrices to combine to deliver a scaled up, as well as optimised and therefore more sustained, impact.
- Investees self-report a high level of satisfaction with the relationship with arts & culture finance; an ability to look beyond project funding and application cycles; and a better understanding of what they hope to achieve with their impact programmes.
- Australia shares a similar funding environment to the UK, as well as an appetite for bold thinking and financial innovation.
- Taking a long-term asset development approach to the arts sector often focus on tangible assets, predominantly physical infrastructure. However, a more expansive understanding of the sector's assets includes consideration of people and skills, business models and organisations, data and insight – all essential ingredients to generate vibrancy into the physical infrastructure, and all must be supported, strategically and with long-term initiatives, in order to deliver the sustained impact to attract the size and type of capital that can drive it into perpetuity.

Personal Perspectives and Reflections

Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh

Fiona Allan, Chief Executive Officer, Opera Australia

Kate Champion, Artistic Director, Black Swan State Theatre Company of Western Australia

Brenna Hobson, Executive Director, National Theatre of Scotland

Moderator: James Hampson, Director UK and External Relations, British Council

University of Melbourne

Fiona Allan, Chief Executive Officer, Opera Australia

Fergus Linehan, Director, Edinburgh International Festival 2015-2022

Kath M Mainland CBE, Chief Executive, Adelaide Festival

Prof Gaye Sculthorpe, Professor of Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies, Deakin University

Moderator: Sir Jonathan Mills AO, Programme Director, Edinburgh International Culture Summit

This session shared experiences and observations from contributor's extensive careers within the cultural sectors of both nations and offered valuable insights into what works and what doesn't and what could be passed on from each nation. Key messages included:

Fiona Allan, Chief Executive Officer, Opera Australia, considered the consortia model which operates in the UK culture sector to great effect, with funding and risk shared between organisations who share similar ideas and interests. This model could be replicated in Australia. Another successful UK initiative is the policy of Theatre Tax Relief – that stimulates the development of new work and innovative practice, enabling a greater appetite for risk among producing companies and venues. Fiona also explored the idea of creating a commissioning consortium between UK and Australian producers, festivals, and institutions,

to create First Nation led stories around British colonisation on Australia, which could bring work to festivals and schools in UK and Australia.

Kate Champion, Artistic Director, Black Swan State Theatre Company, Western Australia, reflected on her time with DV8, the innovative UK-based Physical Theatre founded by Australian Lloyd Newson. The energy generated by DV8 was unique and was dependant on the conflation of influences and characteristics of both cultures to flourish. This dynamic created possibilities for new artforms and artworks. In Australia, this willingness to embrace and explore other cultures is reflected in the work of the cultural entities and institutions that are pivoting away from European-derived art forms to foreground First Nation stories, a long-overdue move that will not only help develop Australia's cultural identity but also offer radical possibilities to alter and evolve Australian values and society in general.

Brenna Hobson, Executive Director, National Theatre of Scotland, talked about the importance of sustained engagement, with programmes and productions that were designed to deepen participation and turn audiences into a community, focusing in particular on The Coming Back Out Ball project made for and with LGBTI+ elders, a co-production between National Theatre of Scotland and All The Queens Men based in Australia. Delivered during lockdown online, this project gained autonomy throughout the pandemic, with weekly dance and cookery sessions and digital photography exhibitions organised by the participants of these projects. She also attested to the impact of tax relief policies that allowed theatres to maintain production and kept many arts workers employed, adding that a massive benefit of this system is that, once the mechanisms are in place, the rate of relief could be increased with immediate effect whenever it became necessary.

Reflecting on the pros and cons of devolution, **Fergus Linehan, Director, Edinburgh International Festival Director 2015–2022** noted that working with a devolved regional government, such as the Scottish Government during his time as director of the Edinburgh International Festival, afforded fantastic access to the politicians involved in the funding and organisation of culture, and that the level of engagement was, in his experience, direct and enthusiastic. However, a key difficulty was the lack of coordination with other governmental bodies operating outside the devolved system

It may seem obvious to state that resilience and adaptability are essential attributes for every cultural institution, but organisational strength, capacity for partnerships, and the quality of staff training so often proved the differentiator between the cultural institutions and organisations that were able to emerge from the COVID-19 era, and those that were not. With soaring inflation and energy costs further destabilising the sector, a key lesson for the sector moving forward is that these essential attributes of resilience and adaptability must be baked-in to the organisation and design of each venture and every project.

Kath Mainland, Chief Executive, Adelaide Festival, talked about the value of Arts and Culture in discourse, suggesting that linguistic shifts such as the move from “funding” to “investment” and from “STEM” to “STEAM” and other ways that we describe ourselves and the work we do can help to improve public perception.

Experience and training were also highlighted as a problem. Many young artists and people working in the cultural sector are inexperienced, and not given many opportunities to upskill and develop sustainable career paths. The Adelaide Festival is piloting initiatives designed to amplify underrepresented communities and First Nations People, such as the Adelaide Academy and International Academy, to remedy some of these problems and develop cultural leaders from these communities.

Professor Gaye Sculthorpe, Professor of Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies, Deakin University has worked for over ten years with museums big and small across the UK and has seen that each of them has at least some objects related to Australia, demonstrating that Australian history is shared history with the UK. Despite this, she noticed that there is an educational gap between the UK and Australia, in particular around indigeneity and so concludes that the history of Australia is not shared and is ensconced within the country.

A positive legacy of the pandemic was the unprecedented creation of digital infrastructure that maintained connections between arts organisations and their audience. Digital infrastructure can continue to play a crucial role in helping the sector in its efforts to build back better, by facilitating community participation, encouraging public interaction with cultural heritage, and making it better known. Digitisation also affords better archival access for researchers and practitioners, domestically and abroad, as they work to achieve key aims such as decolonisation and the development of carbon-neutral practices.

“Our [indigenous] knowledge systems are integrated knowledge systems, and they are not compartmentalised as in the western system into art, music, literature, etc... Our painting is not about country, it is country.” Professor Margo Neal

Many other interesting reflections and perspectives were offered by contributors throughout the course of the Cultural Leadership Dialogues.

The actor **Julia Hales** shared her experience of forging a professional pathway through the arts. With the support of organisations such as the Australia Council for the Arts, DADAA, and the Disability Insurance Scheme, Julia has become a leader in both the Down’s Syndrome community and the arts world. As a writer and performer of shows such as the critically acclaimed Edinburgh International Festival show, *You Know We Belong Together*, and a frequent participant in forums and discussion panels, the arts have created a platform to achieve meaningful social impact.

Professor Margo Neale, Head, Centre for Indigenous Knowledges, National Museum of Australia suggested that the siloed conceptions of visual art, literature, galleries, museums, inherited by Australia was unnatural and counterproductive. Reunification is an essential step in the process of decolonising the GLAM sector, one that can help re-connect human culture with the natural environment, interconnectivity, and the heritage of place in its broadest sense.

Franchesca Cublio, Executive Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts, Australia Council for the Arts spoke, during the welcome dinner in Melbourne, about the intrinsic value of arts and culture to First Nations People. Dance, song, story, and painting are

essential to the transmission of knowledge and tradition, a means of maintaining a connection to land and place, and crucial to fostering community. Art and Culture are also an essential part of the solution to Indigenous disadvantage.

The Australian Government have announced civic positions and roles for Indigenous voices, such as the new Ambassador for First Nations People. This representation at federal level will ensure that First Nations People, their perspectives, experiences and interests will now be embedded in Australia’s national and international engagement, while the embedding of Indigenous voices in the Australian Parliament will incorporate Indigenous voices, values, and thinking into policy and government.

This moment represents the possibility to do even more. Modes of engagement between First Nations People and the migrant majority population can be rethought and redefined, though this requires a deep and sincere recognition of the diversity, skill, and sophistication of First Nation Cultures, adherence and understanding of First Nation cultural protocols, respect, truth-telling, integrity, education, advocacy, improvements in data tracking of inauthentic markets for First Nation Art, and the development of legal frameworks designed to protect First Nation Cultural rights and the ancestors who hold those rights.

Breakout Discussions



A series of breakout discussions were held across the Cultural Leadership Dialogues which invited panels to lead discussions around what we could and should be achieving in the cultural relationships between Australia and the UK.

In Edinburgh these groups were themed around artistic practice with one group looking at Visual Arts and Digital Practice and a second considering Live Performance. In Melbourne we invited discussion around Culture and Education, in a session titled Relearning arts education – where next? and a second breakout, titled The Poetics and Politics of Cultural Sustainability, explored how culture can help imagine and create solutions for a sustainable future.

Visual Arts & Digital Practice, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh

Brian Baglow, Director, Scottish Games Network

Tamsin Hong, Assistant Curator, International Art (Performance), Tate Modern

Emma Nicolson, Head of Creative Programmes, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Tahlia Petrosian, Director, KLASSIK underground

Moderator: **Natalie Usher, Chief Executive, Film Access Scotland**

Rapporteur: **Dr Roddy Hunter, Head of Academic Planning, School of Fine Art, Glasgow School of Art**

- This discussion was underpinned by the notion of hybridity, with the group asking what demands the art work now makes of the museum, and how institutions and institutional frameworks can adapt to form and the specificity of hybridity of contemporary artworks. Contemporary art has a unique capacity to radically restage and re-present materiality's, knowledges, and practices.
- To make the relationship between the UK and Australia enduring, impactful, and sustainable, our shared colonial history should be reflected in the development of curators, cultural workers and artists.
- We think and talk about art, artists, and creative practices through the prism of a colonialist language and culture.
- To support emerging artists and encourage deeper and more diverse ways of collaborating, UK and Australian culture sectors can start to twin smaller and medium-sized cultural institutions within the two countries.

Live Performance, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh**Javaad Alipoor, Artistic Director, The Javaad Alipoor Company****Cameron Mackenzie, Artistic Director, Northern Ireland Opera****Lisa Whytock, Director, Active Events**Moderator: **Sam Hunt, Programme Director, Unboxed 2022**Rapporteur: **Lilian Hughes, Programme Manager, UK/Australia Season 2021–22**

- Despite group participants describing the relationship between the nations as strong, robust and fruitful, the feeling was that there could be more focus and an appetite for greater engagement between the two nations.
- The problem is not a lack of ideas or willingness from the culture sector, but the logistics of creating opportunities and funding for such projects. It is the lack of funding that creates segregates artists.
- The importance of live performance is undiminished, and the creation of a healthy and sustainable live performance ecosystem depends upon the creation of touring corridors, job opportunities for young people, and the end of exclusivity clauses in contracts.
- The group also considered how performers and performances live and interact with place, concluding that people are of the place, the place is not of the people.

The Poetics and Politics of Cultural Sustainability, University of Melbourne**Prof Paul Carter, Professor of Design (Urbanism), School of Architecture and Urban Design, RMIT University; Creative Director, Material Thinking****Inala Cooper, Director, Murrup Barak, Melbourne Institute for Indigenous Development, University of Melbourne****Prof Tiriki Onus, Senior Lecturer, Indigenous Arts and Culture, University of Melbourne**

Moderator & Rapporteur:

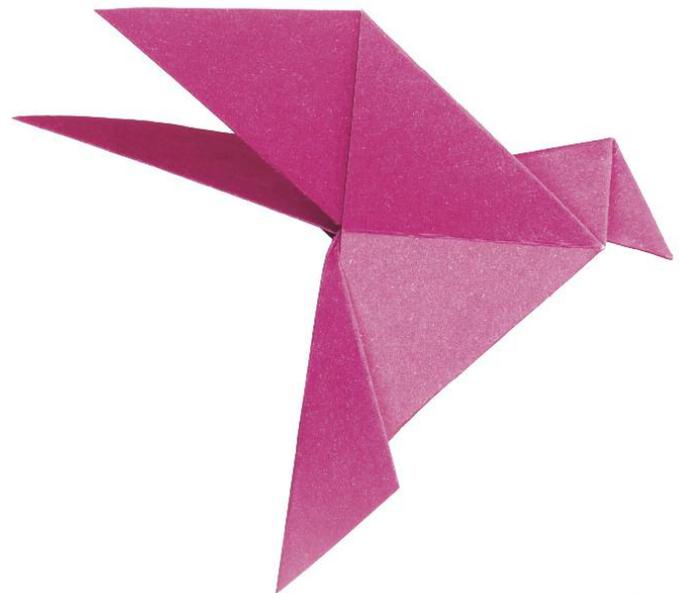
Rose Hiscock, Director, Museums and Collections, University of Melbourne

- Truth telling is within our power.
- However, how can we pass on a sense of the truth without causing serious harm to future generations?
- The group questioned the usefulness of the existing language around decolonisation, and yet agreed that museums exist to serve communities and can play an essential role in redressing imbalances and changing perceptions.
- The group also discussed the art forms that were not represented in the room. Video games, social media, and popular music were absent, yet culture is democratic, broad, and happening all around us.

Relearning Arts Education – Where Next? Breakout, University of Melbourne**Tony Ayres, Executive Producer, Tony Ayres Productions****Prof Duncan Maskell, Vice-Chancellor, University of Melbourne****Prof Emma Redding, Director, Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne****Tea Uglow, Independent Creative Director, Google Creative Lab****Moderator & Rapporteur: Helen Salmon, Director, Australia, British Council**

- Enrolment in arts subjects has declined in the UK by 50%. This lack of interest is an invariable consequence of a career path that seems ever-more precarious to tread and the sustained devaluing of culture in the public realm.
- Despite this, cultural and creative skills are the skills of the future.
- Arts educators can help to develop new languages and ways of communication that can build hope and agency.
- The arts are the essence of humanity, and a way of imagining the future while telling an honourable story of the past.

“When you know the answer to a question or know how you feel about an issue, you will write an article about it. When you don’t, you make a work of art.” Lillian Hughes



A Focus on Screen

University of Melbourne

Michael Brealey, Chief Operating Officer, Screen Australia

Isabel Davis, Executive Director, Screen Scotland

Matthew Deaner, CEO, Screen Producers Australia

Kristy Matheson, Creative Director, Edinburgh International Film Festival

The Rt Hon Angus Robertson, MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, Scottish Government

Moderator: Michael Naphthali, Director, Australia in the UK programme, UK/Australia Season 2021–22

Two distinct sessions took place during the Cultural Leadership Dialogue, in Edinburgh, A Focus on Screen brought together contributors from Screen Scotland; Screen Australia, Edinburgh International Film Festival; Screen Producers Australia and the Scottish Government, in a wide-ranging discussion that touched on collaboration, distribution, diversity, regional inclusiveness and Audience Engagement. Key themes that emerged from this session include:

- The UK is one of the most significant co-production partners for Australia, but this key relationship still feels underdeveloped.
- International streaming giants are dominating the world of screen. The challenge facing both countries is to ensure that their national narratives and identities are preserved and transmitted.
- Cinema can coexist with streaming platforms, but there needs to be a greater sense of unity within the film sector, with less competition and siloed thinking from producers.
- A healthy screen industry must consider more than just what is on the screen, it needs to nurture careers of those working in the industry, striving to achieve diversity and ensuring that indigenous and regional identities and voices are represented and heard without appropriation.
- Positive representation programmes and initiatives have been successful in helping to amplify regional voices and underrepresented voices. For example, the Festival Expo Fund helped develop the careers of Scottish curators and Scottish filmmakers within the UK.
- Small and diverse companies that feed into large, globally-operational, companies have proven to be a successful model for film production, a model that gives space for new talent and voices to emerge.

Who Are We Now? A Dialogue about Histories and Futures

University of Melbourne

Prof Paul Carter, Professor of Design (Urbanism), School of Architecture and Urban Design, RMIT University; Creative Director, Material Thinking

Delia Falconer, Author

Dr Rory Hyde, Associate Professor in Architecture (Curatorial Design and Practice), University of Melbourne

Prof, Dr Marcia Langton AO, Associate Provost; Foundation Chair, Australian Indigenous Studies, University of Melbourne

Tea Uglow, Independent Creative Director, Google Creative Lab

Moderator: Wesley Enoch AM, Indigenous Chair in the Creative Industries, Queensland University of Technology (QUT)

In Melbourne, *Who Are We Now? A Dialogue about Histories and Futures*, brought together leading cultural figures to examine our understanding of the past and explore how the culture sector can communicate a more contemporary view of our nations. Key themes and messages from this session include:

- The longest continuous culture on Earth is rooted in a shared story of land.
- Collecting agencies conceive of value in terms of economic value. Indigenous people place value on process and creation. Does the undoing of an object, followed by a remaking of the object, lower the value? Or does this process increase it by reconnecting us with the processes and methods of creation?
- The colonial system has been based on extraction. Feeding, fuelling and the generation of wealth has been based on extracting resources from the planet, while creating a culture of ownership.
- What are the regenerative processes? How can we begin to 'add back' to the thing that you are taking from rather than just diminishing the source of extraction? The hope is to find ways of connecting in ways that are economically, culturally, and socially regenerative.
- Australia has emerged too slowly from its "cultural amnesia" regarding colonialism and treatment of aboriginal people and continues to progress slowly. Unless cultural institutions work with reputable historians that are willing to tell forgotten histories, and employ cultural warriors with integrity, they will continue to contribute to this cultural amnesia.

"We are searching for an honourable story to pass on to the future."

Wesley Enoch, AM, Indigenous Chair in the Creative Industries, Queensland University of Technology

Observations

The Cultural Leadership Dialogue was judged by our partners to be extremely useful, and feedback was positive. The programme offered a new format and new dimensions to explore core ideas and themes of the Edinburgh International Culture Summit.

The many commonalities between discussions across both events attest to our shared history, interests, and values. Another key commonality between the UK and Australia is the similarity of our funding model. Unlike the highly subsidised European model or the privately funded model dependant largely on philanthropic and corporate interest found in the USA, the UK and Australian model has successfully funded projects, festivals, and institutions through a blend of public and private revenue streams. The financial implications of the COVID-19 pandemic have challenged this practice. While generous public provisions were made to the cultural sector throughout the pandemic, these protective measures were removed too quickly for the continued healing of the sector, and the closure of theatres, cinemas, festivals, and museums have become sadly recurrent headlines throughout the year.

The conversations also diverged, reflecting regionally specific concerns. In Melbourne, greater emphasis was placed on domestic and indigenous issues, with many programme contributors reflecting on the emergence of the modern state from its colonial history, the renegotiation of shared land and culture, and the lessons that First Nations People can offer with regards to the preservation of culture and sustainable living.

Conversations in Edinburgh reflected the internationalism of the UK and the methods and models that allow the UK to punch above its weight culturally and reach a substantial global audience. Australian expatriates living in the UK

made up many attendees and contributors that day, including the Programme Director of the Edinburgh International Culture Summit, Sir Jonathan Mills. Many of our speakers expressed their pleasure in contributing to culture internationally and bilaterally and welcomed further initiatives such as this Cultural Leadership Dialogue.

“The hope is not just that we understand each other’s art better, but that we generate work that is only possible because our friendship and because of the relationship.” Hon Tony Burke MP

A positive example of an Australian story reaching an international audience was cited several times throughout the programme. *Counting and Cracking*, which featured this year in the programme of the Edinburgh International Festival, blended the personal with the political throughout an epic and multigenerational story of the experiences of a Sri Lankan-Australian family living between 1956–2004. The play celebrated Australia’s status as the world’s first majority-migrant population and was received with rapturous acclaim both in Australia and the UK. The story of how and why it came to the International Festival was one of chance encounters and the perseverance and generosity of enterprising individuals with unwavering belief in the project.

This story invites us to consider what would be possible if we work to create the conditions for deep and co-ordinated collaboration and cultural exchange. Through doing so, cultural institutions, entities, and organisations can help develop and enhance our understanding of who we are now, while simultaneously offering new platforms and audiences for our artists and enabling the creation of exciting new art that could not otherwise exist.

Reflections

It was a privilege to be able to host the Cultural Leadership Dialogue here in the Scottish Parliament; and to learn more about the cultural links between ourselves in Scotland and the UK with our Australian counterparts. Whether we're politicians, administrators or artists, there was so much in the way of ideas, expertise, and best practice to share and be inspired by.

Culture is, after all, an essential ingredient of what makes us human and a wonderful way to bring us together whatever the differences we might have in our national identities or political sensibilities. Plus the opportunities for collaboration between visual artists, digital practitioners, and live performers played a big part in what made this event unique and exciting. In the words of the inspiring Julia Hales "you know we belong together".

Clare Adamson MSP, Convener, Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee

After nearly two years of pandemic lockdowns, it was inspiring to be part of a Cultural Leadership Dialogue that spotlighted both the unique value of the arts, and the untapped power of the constant exchange of people between Britain and Australia.

Many of us survived the isolation of lockdowns because of the connectivity and, frankly, the sanity afforded by the arts – especially, in my case and I know for many others, through music.

It was great then, through this Dialogue, to help re-frame the narrative around the importance of arts and culture in society, with practitioners and policy-makers from Australia and the UK talking together face-to-face.

Speaking as a Briton now living in Australia, it was also great to be reminded about how strong our mutual cohort is – Britons in Australia and Australians in Britain – and how much we can all contribute in both our countries, through support and advocacy of the arts.

This is particularly important at this time in history, and especially in Australia where the values of a

'settler' society living on land long owned and cared for by Indigenous Australians – the oldest living culture on the planet – are being scrutinised anew.

There are many important issues to be resolved, and the arts and artists will be crucial in addressing them. The Cultural Leadership Dialogue has been a positive step in encouraging this.

Duncan Maskell, Vice-Chancellor, University of Melbourne

The Cultural Leadership Dialogues between Australia and the UK enabled open, reflexive and direct exchange. They deepened relationships between dynamic contemporary cultural sectors: relationships which were variously described as strong, robust, fruitful and important but deserving of more focus and critical engagement.

The big themes that emerged from our conversations in both Edinburgh and Melbourne were: collaboration, coordination and decolonisation. So, a pulling together, a strengthening of ties, a commitment to mutual learning and exchange even as we pull things apart to reimagine, reconceive and rebuild.

There is much to achieve from a clear-eyed look at our respective societies and their many creative connections through the framing question of the Australia-UK season: 'Who are we now?' The answer is – in both settings – diverse, complex and multi-layered, with much to unpack from the legacies of empire.

As Minister Tony Burke said, opening the Edinburgh session in conversation with his UK counterparts: 'the exchange of ideas between cultural ministers represents the one portfolio where we have nothing to fear from sharing – as each idea builds on the last one.'

Australia Council for the Arts was pleased to partner in the generous sharing of perspectives at the Cultural Leadership Dialogues that will help us build on our best ideas through creative and conscious cultural exchange.

Dr Georgie McClean, Executive Director for Development and Strategic Partnerships, Australia Council for the Arts

This Cultural Leadership Dialogue was presented as part of the ambitious AUSTRALIA | UK Season of cultural exchange. The programme celebrated both the largest presence of Australian artists ever assembled at the Edinburgh International Festival in its 75 years strong and the diverse presence of British artists throughout Australia since 2021.

It was also a timely acknowledgement of the deep historical and contemporary cultural bonds between the Australia and the United Kingdom – connections that best retain their vitality and importance through reaffirmation and reimagination.

The bilateral format was a new initiative for the Edinburgh International Culture Summit, allowing us to expand and enhance the many ways that we continue to develop global cultural relations and inspire positive change through cultural policy and investment.

**Sir Jonathan Mills, AO, Programme Director,
Edinburgh International Culture Summit**

The inaugural UK/Australia Season is a celebration of the creative spirit in material form. With hundreds of works on display and in performance, audiences have seen and explored how artists have responded to the Season theme “who are we now?” Similarly, cultural industry professionals — those who curate and programme the work, along with those who make the work — have come together for an enriching symposium of two halves to participate in discussions from practitioners’ and policymakers’ perspectives regarding the issues and opportunities animated by the UK/Australia Season.

As Director of the Australian programme in the Season I wish to acknowledge the tremendous effort of the whole EICS team at such a challenging time for the arts to produce two such invaluable and thought-provoking symposia, the beneficiaries of which are the sector and — herefore, ultimately — audiences.

**Michael Naphali, Director, Australia in the UK
programme, UK/Australia Season 2021–22**

We created the UK Australia Season as a catalyst for deeper collaboration between the artists and educators in our two countries. This landmark cultural exchange captured the imagination of audiences and press with the provocation *Who Are We Now?*, but much of the most impactful work was behind the scenes. Exchange of skills and best practice, new access to international markets, research collaboration and responding to global challenges.

Key to this legacy were the Cultural Leadership Dialogues. Drawing on the expertise of those working across both countries, artists and policy makers explored the conditions for collaboration to flourish, and the vital role of cultural relations in an evolving understanding of ourselves and each other.

**Helen Salmon, Director, Australia,
British Council**

“Long may
such gatherings
continue!”

Michael Naphali, Director, Australia in the UK
programme, UK/Australia Season 2021–22



Acknowledgements



Summit 2022, in conjunction with the Edinburgh International Culture Summit Foundation, acknowledges the significant support of:

Founding Partners



Programme Partners



Philanthropic Supporters



Corporate Supporters



Individual Supporters

James and Morag Anderson, Sir Ewan and Lady Brown, The Late Sir Angus Grossart CBE, QC, DL and Lady Grossart, Alan McFarlane, Chris van der Kuyl, Scobie Ward, and other donors who wish to remain anonymous.

For more information about Edinburgh International Culture Summit on our website www.culturesummit.com or follow us on our social media accounts:

 twitter.com/CultureSummit

 www.linkedin.com/company/edinburgh-international-culture-summit

 www.facebook.com/EdIntCultureSummit

 www.instagram.com/edintculturesummit



EDINBURGH
INTERNATIONAL
CULTURE
SUMMIT