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The full statement of the restructure from the Australia Council's website

AUSTRALIA COUNCIL PLANS FOR GROWTH

The governing body of the Australia Council has resolved to reorganise the Council's structures and processes to make it a stronger catalyst for arts growth and development in Australia.

The Australia Council's CEO, Ms Jennifer Bott, said today the planned changes would position the Council, as the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body, to take a greater leadership role in the sector.

'The Australia Council has to drive improvements in the arts sector, by building the capabilities of artists and arts organisations, and by looking for ways to increase support for the arts from all sources,' Ms Bott said. 'In 2004 we have been reviewing our role and our organisation to ensure we are a catalyst for greater impact.'

The reorganisation plans were formulated by a Council task force which considered a wide range of options and consulted with staff over the past six months. The task force, headed by the Council's Deputy Chair, Terrey Arcus, included Council members Michael Snelling (then Chair, New Media Arts Board and then Acting Chair, Visual Arts/Craft Board), Adam Lewis, (Community Interest Representative), Ian McRae (Chair, Theatre Board) and Jennifer Bott, Australia Council CEO.

At its meeting in Sydney yesterday, the Council formally endorsed the task force's recommendations. Ms Bott said Australia Council staff would offer feedback on the plan over the coming weeks.

'We need to focus on supporting excellent, innovative and distinctly Australian artistic creation,' Ms Bott said, 'by building a vital and more viable art sector, and ensuring that all Australians are engaged with and enriched by the arts.'

Among organisational changes, the existing Community Cultural Development Board would be dissolved and its activities integrated into all artform boards.

'Rather than being focused in one operational area, the Council's long-standing commitment to arts in the community would be embraced across the entire organisation, with CCD outcomes continuing to be a vital component of what we do,' Ms Bott said. 'We would be giving increased support to this area, but with stronger emphasis on arts activity.'

The existing Audience and Market Development Division would become the Community Partnerships and Market Development Division, with a head of Community Partnerships to coordinate all-of-Council strategic support for CCD and other arts activity in the community, along with youth and seniors, education and regional arts activities.

Under the plan, the New Media Arts Board would also be dissolved and a new Inter-Arts Office would support hybrid practice, as well as directing artists working across hybrid artforms to relevant Boards for peer assessment.

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'This cross-arts section will allow artists working across multiple artforms to connect with the best people for their needs,' said Ms Bott. 'It broadens the scope of what they can do, and what we can do for them.' Digital media arts would be handled by an enhanced Visual Arts/Craft Board, and by the Music Board.

The Council also plans to create a separate section--Key Organisations--to handle its relationships with 120 small-to-medium arts organisations receiving triennial grants, led by the new role of Director of Key Organisations. This would move the Council's support for these organisations increasingly towards a business plan assessment, reviewed by peers, aided by regular analyses of each sector and business development programs.

In the Council's Arts Development Division, the current roles of Artform Managers would be elevated to Artform Directors, to drive artform overview across all areas of the Council--and to give a stronger external focus, engaging with Australian artists, companies and interest groups, and representing the artform in the public arena.

The Council Chair, Mr David Gonski AO, said the Australia Council was aiming for greater operational and strategic flexibility.

'Under this plan, the Council will decide the most critical areas that need to be addressed and apply its resources accordingly,' Mr Gonski said. 'The reorganisation will more effectively bring artform, sector and other stakeholder issues to the Council table.'

The Council last undertook a major review in 1996, which resulted in greater emphasis on audience and market development and paved the way for wider acceptance of Australian arts at home and overseas.

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SUMMARY OF REORGANISATION:

The Future Planning Taskforce

The reorganisation is the outcome of a Future Planning Taskforce, formed by the Council to advise:
how the Australia Council should best organise itself to effectively and efficiently support disparate art practices and develop strategies to advance art in Australia
what the strategic focus for the Australia Council should be over the next 5+ years to ensure maximum positive impact in the sector.

The Taskforce was headed by the Council's Deputy Chair, Terrey Arcus, with Council members Michael Snelling (Former Chair of the New Media Arts Board and Visual Arts/Craft Board), Adam Lewis, (Community Interest Representative), Ian McRae (Chair of the Theatre Board) and Jennifer Bott, Council CEO.

The Taskforce met regularly over six months, considering possible options, studying previous Council reviews, looking at models used by arts funding bodies worldwide, and consulting directly with over half the Council's staff. At its meeting in Sydney on 7 December, the Council formally endorsed the reorganisation.

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Enhancing artform leadership

The current roles of artform Managers in the Council's Arts Development Division will be elevated to Artform Directors. These roles will be deeply involved with their respective artform sectors, with a strong external focus--engaging with artists, companies and interest groups, attending exhibitions and performances, and representing the artform in the public sphere.

Requiring extensive artform knowledge and experience, the Artform Directors will have primary authority over program grants and relevant key organisations as is the case in the current structure, but they will also have a vital role in setting strategic priorities for their artforms across the entire organisation, including within Major Performing Arts, and Community Partnerships and Market Development.

Supporting arts infrastructure

To increase the vitality and viability of key arts organisations, the Council plans to create a separate section within the Arts Development Division to handle relationships with Key Organisations, led by the new role of Director of Key Organisations. To date, key organisation clients of the Council have been treated in a different way to grants administered via regular funding rounds. Key arts organisations supported by the Council will increasingly move towards a business plan assessment which will be reviewed by peers. As always, peer artistic assessment remains critical to how the Council operates.

A commitment to arts in the community

The Council has had a Community Cultural Development Board for over 10 years but now believes it can deliver better outcomes for arts in the community through a different approach -- an approach that will see community engagement in the arts at the core of the activities of all parts of the Council. The Council wants to support the full range of arts activities in the community -- the creation, performance and appreciation of the arts.

The reorganisation will see the Community Cultural Development Board dissolved and replaced by increased Council-wide commitment to arts in the community, with CCD outcomes continuing to be a vital component.

The Council's Audience and Market Development Division will be renamed Community Partnerships and Market Development (CPMD), with a head of Community Partnerships appointed to coordinate and integrate--across the organisation--strategic support of CCD and other arts activity in the community, along with youth and seniors, education and regional arts activities.

This broad framework will range from partnerships with CCD networks, to professional artists working in communities, to participation and education programs, to market development. Some programs will be supported as strategic initiatives directly by the newly formed CPMD, and others by Council artform boards with overview by CPMD.

Artists and organisations working in arts in the community will continue to have opportunities to apply for grants through the artform boards, with applications assessed on their artistic and community engagement merits.

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Built-in flexibility for hybrid arts

The arts in Australia are increasingly varied and multifaceted. To give the Council greater flexibility in supporting emerging arts practice, an Inter-Arts Office will be created. This Office will handle hybrid arts (where artists combine conventional artforms to create new forms of artistic expression). As well as identifying and funding hybrid arts applications, it will triage new media applications, directing them to relevant artform boards of the Australia Council--in most cases to a reshaped Visual Arts/Craft Board or to the Music Board.

To underpin its new responsibilities, membership of the Visual Arts/Craft Board will reflect new media practice. The New Media Arts Board will be dissolved. With this reorganisation the Council bolsters its commitment to supporting arts practice that goes beyond conventional, single artform areas.

A tighter focus

Existing policy development and research activities will become the responsibility of a new Strategy Department, responding to the needs of the Artform Directors and serving the executives and boards. Reporting to the Executive Director of Arts Development, a Director of Strategy will manage the development of strategies, maintaining a constant dialogue with Artform Directors, the Inter-Arts office, the Director of Key Organisations, and the Executive Director of Community Partnerships and Market Development and the current Major Performing Arts Board.

An important shift in the way the Council adopts strategies will be the CEO's role in championing strategies--working with executives to develop priorities, and adopting responsibility for taking them to the Council for approval and annual review--and in the way those Council-approved strategies will then direct board initiatives. The Council's strategic priorities will be debated as part of the process for developing the 2005-06 corporate plan.

They may include arts in education, Indigenous arts, community initiatives, increasing the vitality and viability of key organisations, building markets for Australian art internationally, and better alignment of priorities and funding through all levels of Government. The objective is to concentrate the Council's limited resources on a smaller number of critical initiatives, and demonstrate substantial impact in these areas.

Revising the governing body

Members of the Australia Council's governing body are appointed by the Minister for the Arts and Sport with a view to achieving a balance of regional, gender, ethnic and Indigenous community representation with relevant expertise in the arts, skills in business, corporate governance and administration. It currently consists of nine artform appointments (the chairs of the Council's artform boards) and three community interest representatives, plus a chair, deputy chair and the Council's CEO.

The Taskforce has proposed that an additional community representative be appointed; in addition, the number of board Chairs on the Council be reduced to seven, in line with the different makeup of artform boards outlined above. As with the changes to the boards, the Council changes will require ministerial involvement.

This revision of the governing body will allow the Council to tap further into the

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expertise of community interest representatives with skills in areas such as fund raising and marketing, whether from arts or non-arts backgrounds.

Moving into 2005

To minimise disruption to the arts sector and staff, the Australia Council intends to implement its reorganisation before mid 2005. Staff consultations on the planned reorganisation will take place through December 2004 and January 2005.

In the first half of 2005, the Council will hold briefing sessions in capital cities to explain further its new structure and implications for how clients and stakeholders deal with the Council. The Council's *Support for the Arts Handbook* will be produced in the New Year, detailing each of the Council's grant programs and how to apply.

ATTACHMENT 2

Katrina Strickland "Arts body to shed limbs as new funding dries up" *The Australian*, 08 Dec 2004.



Arts body to shed limbs as new funding dries up

Katrina Strickland

08 Dec 04

THE federal Government's main arts funding body, the Australia Council, is to be significantly restructured in a move designed to make it more effective and less bureaucratic.

The restructure, to be announced today, will cut across the entire organisation and will involve some staff having to reapply for their jobs.

On the chopping block are the council's new media and community cultural development boards, which give grants respectively to artists working in new media, and with communities such as disadvantaged youth, prison inmates and the homeless. It is believed some of the operations of those boards will be handled elsewhere in the organisation.

The restructure is the outcome of a six-month review of the council's operations led by its deputy chair Terrey Arcus, whose management consultancy Port Jackson Partners has handled major company restructures. It was signed off yesterday by the council board, which met at its premises in Surry Hills, Sydney.

It comes at the end of a year in which the council's base triennial funding of \$398million has remained relatively static. Following the May budget, chief executive Jennifer Bott flagged that the council would have to reorganise its priorities in light of its static funding.

Reports into the dance and small to medium theatre sectors, commissioned by the council over the past couple of years, warned that companies in those areas were in dire need of extra funding and would begin to collapse if it were not forthcoming.

A report about the health of the major performing arts companies, released last week, similarly warned that without extra funding the large companies such as Opera Australia, the Australian Ballet and the state theatres, symphony and dance companies would begin to hit financial troubles.

People working in the community cultural development area yesterday expressed alarm at the thought that the board that funds community projects could be killed off. They argued that Australia was a leader in the use of arts to build self-esteem among disadvantaged groups, and that the ability to apply for separate funding of such projects was critical to their success.

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Attachment 3 - Clare Morgan, "Australia Council's makeover 'step backwards'", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 09 December 2004

Sydney Morning Herald

Australia Council's makeover 'step backwards'

By Clare Morgan, December 9, 2004

Key elements of the Australia Council's structural makeover have been greeted with anger and bemusement.

Following a six-month review, the Federal Government's arts funding and advisory body announced yesterday that, among other measures, it would abolish its Community Cultural Development Board (CCD Board) and New Media Arts Board.

Under the plan, the activities of the cultural board - one of nine that make decisions about grants - will be taken up by existing artform boards, and the duties of the new media board assumed by the visual arts and music boards and a new Inter-Arts Office.

Lex Marinos, a former deputy chairman of the Australia Council, was scathing of the decision to axe the cultural board, saying it was yet more evidence of the council's old-fashioned notion of the arts.

"It's a fairly appalling decision made by people who clearly have very little comprehension of what contemporary arts is all about," he said. "They have shown a complete disregard for any idea of progress."

Marinos said the decision robbed communities of any way to express themselves, particularly non-Anglo and indigenous arts communities.

"The CCD Board was the only fund that did anything like represent them, help them to play a part in cultural life. Now [the council has] basically said stuff them, they have no part to play in the cultural life of Australia. They can take part in a passive way but they have no actual role to play in contemporary Australian identity."

The decision reinforced the idea that "if it's not based on the seven muses, then it's not art", he said. He was equally caustic about the loss of the New Media Arts Board. "Well, if you really want to use new media, let's try beaming a few projections into the opera - that's enough new media for you."

Donald Horne, a former Australia Council chairman, was concerned about the loss of expertise that would result from the abolition of the CCD Board.

"It's a backward step right off the map and into a different country," he said. "To use a technical term, it's destroying a knowledge and experience base that's been around for 20 years. Not many people realise this but we are a world leader in cultural and community development. Only recently I was reading about Canada referring to Australia's expertise, so we need to be careful what we do with it."

He said that the expertise would not be found elsewhere within the Australia Council.

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"The very important thing with community and cultural development is that community is the active word. It's not just artists - it's meant to be trying to find out from people what they are trying to say, as it were. To lose this board is not fully recognising the specialty of community arts."

With a growing feeling that local government should become more active in promoting community and cultural development, he hoped some innovative councils might get involved in the period of discussion.

Recipients of grants awarded by the cultural board this year have included the Powerhouse Youth Theatre for a performance exploring different faiths, a project by the Bankstown Area Multicultural Network Inc called Documentation of a Dobaiti, collecting poetry by Afghani Australian women, and a performance by artists with disabilities by Shopfront Theatre for Young People.