

Submission to the National Cultural Policy Consultation

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The 2011 National Cultural Policy consultation presents a timely opportunity to integrate advanced thinking on sustainability and culture in Australia.

It is an opportunity to begin down a road that enables us to understand and achieve more than the default setting in cultural policy-making – valorisation of art forms and creative arts practice within existing governmental structures.

1. 'Sustainability is the story of our time, of our future.'¹
2. Environment is the most readily understood element of sustainability.
3. The triple bottom line approach to managing sustainability incorporates economic, social and ecological pillars of wisdom.
4. The triple bottom line is nevertheless attempting to succeed within the limits of a traditional capitalist economic paradigm.
5. Policies developed within this paradigm are not likely to yield coordinated, long-term and ultimately successful results.
6. Like sustainability, culture is pervasive.
7. In universities sustainability is recognised as a framework of knowledge - sustainability studies are dispersed across university curricula.
8. To be truly understood now and effectively managed for the future, culture must also be treated as a knowledge framework that informs all government policy-making.

9. To paraphrase former Federal Treasurer Lindsay Tanner, we must overhaul our system of representation and government and integrate cultural factors into all our decision-making.ⁱⁱ
10. Elements of a revised system demand better definition of less readily understood human concepts like sustainability and culture.
11. In the short-term and for reporting purposes, the explicit expression of culture as a fourth pillar of wisdom – the quadruple bottom line – should be considered afresh.
12. Australia's dormant Sustainability Charter must be recast in light of the above points, in order to provide the foundation for our prosperous and ethical future. To be successful it must explore new forms of governance and service delivery, and establish clear relationships between human values, like sustainability and culture.

ⁱ James Cook University television advertisement 2011.

ⁱⁱ Quoted in D. Yencken and D. Wilkinson 2000 *Resetting the Compass: Australia's Journey Towards Sustainability* CSIRO Publishing p 363.