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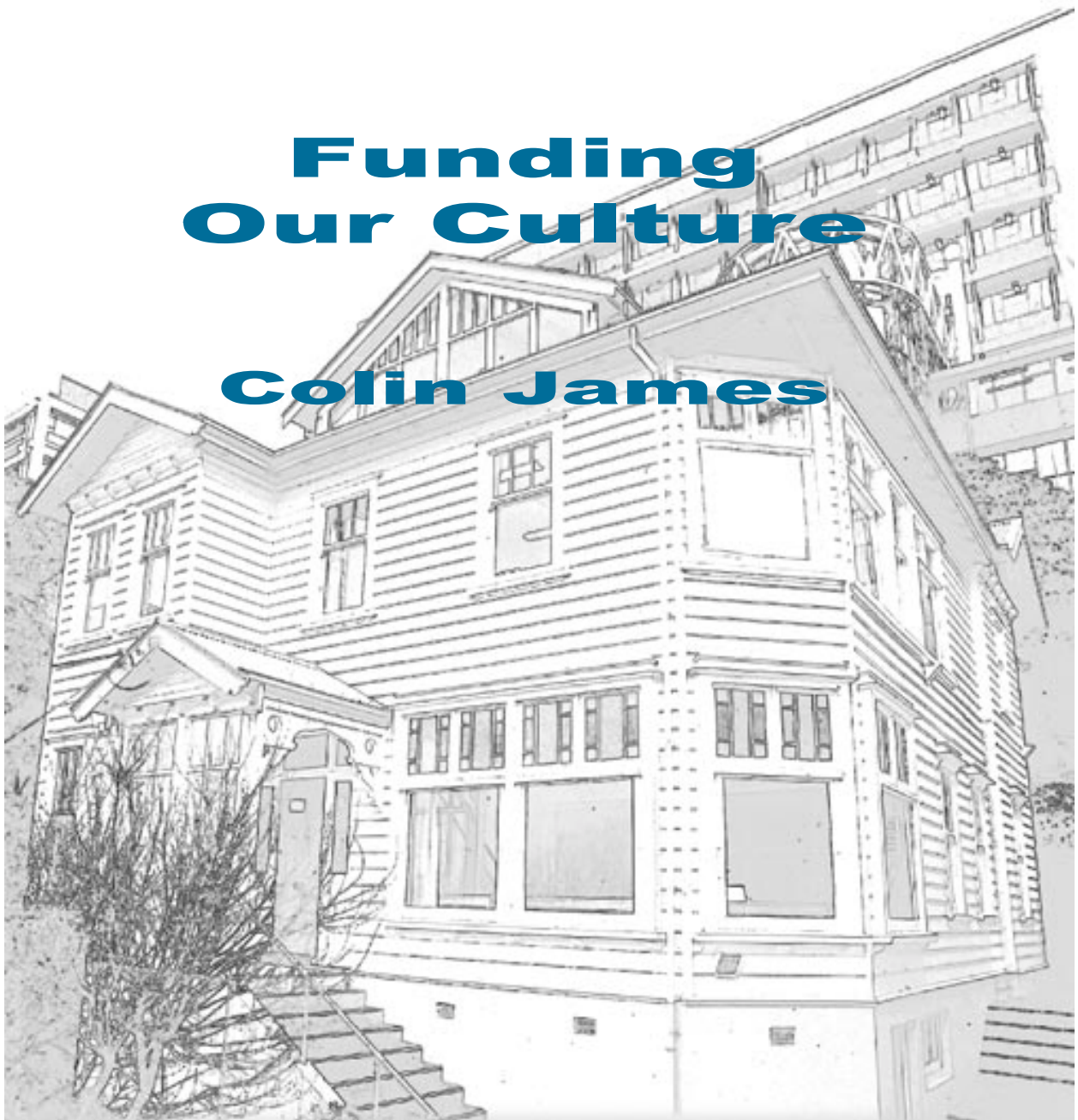
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Funding Our Culture

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Many successive governments have funded the arts, cultural activities and heritage. Every now and then someone asks why or says it is not governments' business. But their voices evaporate into the ether. The questions are not whether there should be state funding but what taxpayers should fund, how much, how and on what criteria. Governments have answered the 'what' and the 'how much' with their chequebooks and have de facto answered the 'how'. But on each count there has been much criticism. And the criteria are murky: sometimes funding is on thinly disguised pork-barrel principles.

Shouldn't it be more rigorous? The Public Finance Act is more than 10 years old. These are the days of fiscal prudence, value for money and attention to outcomes. Departments are supposed to tie their spending to a specified goal. Isn't it time clear rules were stated by which arts, culture and heritage funding is allocated?

Moreover, the range of activities to which funding is directed is very wide: national and cultural identity, heritage and preservation, access to and participation in cultural activities, community development, quality of life and artistic productions. Each is treated separately, with no discernible overall strategy. Funding often follows the 'fly-paper' principle: what was funded last year or 10 years ago will be funded again this year.

To discuss these issues and look for ways forward, the Institute of Policy Studies convened on 24 and 31 March 2000 four half-day roundtable forums with invited specialists. The forums were sponsored principally by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage and also by Creative New Zealand, the New Zealand Film Commission and the Museum of New Zealand/Te Papa Tongarewa. They were not intended to produce definitive recommendations; rather, to explore ideas.

The forums adopted as a basis for their discussions

a restricted definition of culture, the one used by the Ministry in its 1999 publication, *The Government's Role in the Cultural Sector: A Survey of the Issue*: "celebrating, promoting or preserving our cultural heritage and the arts". Though the forums also kept in the back of the mind the wider sense the Ministry also used of "every kind of phenomenon which gives a significance and integrity to our way of life" and occasionally referred to this wider concept of culture, the business end of the discussion was on the narrower definition. This did not, however, restrict discussion to 'high culture'.

The themes that emerged from the forums are outlined in this brief. They are a report by the programme director of wide-ranging and at times vigorous conversations, including their salient points. In this report are also recorded many expressions of opinion, some by individuals, some by several participants, often contested. No opinion or statement should be taken as a conclusion or position of the forums or any individual participant but only as ideas for debate.¹

Nevertheless, as a background against which to set these distillations, perhaps two baselines might be suggested:

- Funding policy should have the whole population in mind, not just those involved in or particularly interested in arts, culture and heritage.
- Funding should be only for 'externalities', the benefits to society of an artistic, cultural or heritage activity.

These two baselines presume that governments act on behalf of all the people and that any funds directed to an individual or a sector of society must in some way benefit the whole of society. If the benefit to the whole of society is low, the funding would logically also be low, and if no benefit to the whole of society can be identified then a government logically would not fund that activity. A third, operational, guideline might be that there should be no direct funding of individuals or performing arts companies.

To say that, however, is not to say much. Assessing and quantifying 'externalities' is a complex exercise of judgment, unavoidably highly inexact and open to challenge on economic, sociological and political grounds, all of which are constantly shifting as society changes.

The Treaty Dimension

Greatest among those changes in the past 15 years has been the resurrection of the Treaty of Waitangi as an operational document, its incorporation into some legislation and government activities, and its investment with the notion of ‘partnership’ by the Appeal Court.

In cultural terms, partnership implies two parallel cultures, each respecting the other and not presuming to speak for the other, though also bound to the other in a common space. This has important implications for arts, culture and heritage policy and funding. Are rules developed by and for the numerical-majority culture appropriate for the numerical-minority culture? If the rules for each culture are different, under what rules can the partnership be conducted and how are they to be devised – given that the political system is majoritarian and is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future?

Majoritarian political systems can and do accommodate minority cultures. This is multiculturalism. Minority cultures are tolerated or even encouraged with public money. This has characterised much of the approach to Maori culture over the past three decades or so. But if partnership is to be taken seriously, a multicultural approach is inadequate. Partnership requires a bicultural approach.

A bicultural approach implies equality, that each culture is of equal status. In a crude way this point was made in 1998 when Tuariki Delamere, a junior Minister in the National-led government, refused to agree to a rescue package for the Royal New Zealand Ballet unless there was also funding for kapa haka, traditional Maori performing arts. Delamere won his point, which in essence was that there was not a superior claim by European-derived arts over Maori arts.

The lesson from that episode is that if arts, culture and heritage funding policy is to be bicultural it must in some way be even-handed. Those whose primary culture is European-derived cannot decide how to fund the arts, culture and heritage of those whose primary culture is Maori. Even if they are themselves bicultural, which is very rare among the majority culture, Maori may argue that they may do more than offer an opinion.

But what is Maori and what is European-derived? Where, for example, do Ralph Hotere’s paintings fit? Or Witi Ihimaera’s writings? Or Bic Runga’s songs? There are no simple rules for deciding these issues. What about

the role of the landscape and Maori language and culture in indigenising European-derived culture and heritage? Even dyed-in-the-wool Eurocentrics distinguish themselves abroad from other nationalities, partly by reference to Maori culture. In a bicultural society, each culture influences the other and becomes part of the other. There is no simple calculus.

The Treaty, nevertheless, poses an anterior question in any discussion of funding of arts, culture and heritage – even if only to be dismissed, though that is no longer politically practicable. Even those who wish to wish away the Treaty cannot wish away Maori culture and aspirations.

This was recognised in the structure of the Institute of Policy Studies’ forums. The topic posed for forum 1 was:

The Treaty dimension – how a partnership process can be incorporated into the discussion at subsequent forums and into the government’s objectives and decision-making.

This forum will work from the assumption that there are two important cultures which have developed independently of each other, though with some limited cross-fertilisation. Each not only expresses the cultural heritage of the main race whose culture it is but also contributes to the cultural heritage of the other main race and is integral to and indispensable in the development of the future cultural expression of the nation.

We are not talking about *a* national culture but about *two* cultures contributing to the cultural definition of the nation. No amount of cross-fertilisation will produce a single, smoothly blended culture. This distinctiveness requires recognition in the conduct of the forums of some dimension of ‘partnership’.

That does not mean, however, submerging the undeniable numerical facts of the balance between the two races. These forums are about *government* funding and support and *government* objectives and processes. The forums are to feed usefully into *government* policy-making and so must work within the norms of current and likely short-term and medium-term future *government* practice. Those norms are dominated by the majority principle.

The discussion was led by Charles Royal and Darcy Nicholas.²

Charles Royal advanced the ‘three-house’ schema devised by Professor Whata Winiata: a tikanga Maori house and a Crown house, each developing independently of the other, designing its own institutions and quality assurance, taking responsibility for its actions and making its own mistakes, and both feeding into a Treaty house where differences are resolved by consensus. The principle is that each house is responsible for the model as a whole and neither culture can run into its own house and pull down the shutters; both have an obligation to meet in the Treaty house. The principle is not separatism but partnership.

This model was used by participants in the forums as a convenient basis for discussion (though was not formally adopted). The model is deliberately simple and cannot yet resolve detailed questions, as some elements of the discussion showed.³ The reference to the ‘Crown’ is as the other partner with Maori in the Treaty, though in practical fact it is the government (in which Maori sit and which includes Te Puni Kokiri, the Ministry of Maori Development).

A number of themes developed during the discussion.

Maori Independence

Maori must stop looking to the government and take full charge of their affairs. Applying the Crown’s machinery of government is inappropriate. Maori must develop their own management and accountability systems and the Crown must accept them.

Maori are increasingly taking charge, but generally Maori culture is still in disarray; retention of traditional knowledge is in grave trouble; traditional values are being challenged in a rapidly changing world; many young Maori are comfortable with the new but afraid of the old. This is partly because Maori have been ripped off and fooled by politicians and bureaucrats. But it is also an issue of leadership and much of the leadership of the past has been limited and naïve; many present elders are not skilled or experienced in leadership.

Maori must make the psychological jump from operating in a marginalised position within the Crown house to standing in the tikanga Maori house. Maori knowledge (maatauranga) must be developed. Maori must set their own goals and own vision and move along that path, must develop a new and dynamic vision for the future.

To enable Maori to do this, the government needs to help build management capacity among Maori.

Maori interests are now dealt with through and in management systems designed by the Crown, and Maori interests are thus marginalised (Te Waka Toi within Creative New Zealand is an example). When policy filters down to Maori, it has become irrelevant and Maori have to set up systems alongside what is being demanded from a Eurocentric viewpoint. That doesn’t work.

The challenges to the Crown are to

- i. accept that Maori design the institutions;
- ii. accept that mistakes will be made;
- iii. accept that in time Maori will have a greater understanding of the requirements of managing Maori initiatives and institutions than the government; and
- iv. inject Treaty policy into the budgeting system.

Can the Public Finance Act accommodate Maori operating institutions that Maori have designed in ways Maori have designed? There was no clarity on this point in discussion beyond a general exhortation that there be a discussion about the Treaty and the Public Finance Act. Detailed thinking has yet to be done. Two pointers:

- The government could ask Maori to quantify the annual cost of Maori art and culture, negotiate with Maori as a partner to establish a total assistance figure, which would then need to rise commensurately with the rise of Maori capacity (\$10-\$15 million was suggested as a starting point).
- In science a pool of funds has been made available for Maori-driven research, with quality to be defined by an advisory group specific to that research, and this is consistent with the Public Finance Act.

Entitlements, Not Grants

For as long as assistance to Maori remains in the form of a grant from the state, Maori and their institutions are in effect a ward of the state. The flow of funds from the Treasury to Maori must instead be to meet a Treaty-originated entitlement that Maori have to resources. An entitlement is something the state must respond to; a grant is something the state might choose or like to do. The Treaty imposes a duty on the Crown to protect Maori

and Maori culture – pushed to the limit of the argument, this is not just to Maori as citizens, which is the Westminster inheritance, but as Maori.

What is the Maori entitlement? To develop as Maori and to be assisted in that as of right.

Taking entitlement as the basis for government funding implies Maori devising their own accountability mechanisms for how the funds are used. Otherwise the state can turn the tap on and off and it becomes a grant, not an entitlement.

To whom are Maori accountable? The tenor of the entitlements argument was that accountability is to Maori and the form of that accountability is for Maori to work out. One focus would be on assurance of quality in Maori terms, remaining relevant to the iwi. The flow of funds is agreed as an act of partnership, not as a decision by the state as to how it will treat a minority, a decision on which Maori may make submissions but do not have an equal voice.

But the *government's role is not confined to funding*. It is about educating, about fostering understanding, among those who give the Crown legitimacy, of how Maori culture interacts with their lives. There is a range of instruments to promote that understanding. The challenge to the government is to increase understanding of all cultures. “Unless we do that, we are never going to get this model working.” This ties in with what is becoming a core function of governments in a globalised world: linking communities together.

The Majoritarian Counter-factual

But it remains a fact of political life that a government must maintain the support of a majority of voters. There is not a ‘bucket of resource’ existing independently of the political system. Funds have to be raised by taxes. This implies an accountability back to voters for the funds, even if the funds are supplied to meet a Treaty entitlement – and that accountability is direct. (“If we went out now and said the entitlement is 50-50 we wouldn’t be there, there wouldn’t be a Crown. There wouldn’t be a Crown if we said the entitlement is 90-10.”). But accountability in that sense negates the notion of entitlement in the Treaty sense as something overarching the political system. Accountability to the majority implies that the majority defines the entitlement, not the Treaty, and it thereby becomes a grant from the majority, not an entitlement.

So there needs to be a discussion not just of the end, as sketched in the three-house model, but also how to get there. A great deal of detail has to be filled in.

A counter-argument is that Pakeha may be more tolerant in the arts than in other fields on matters of accountability.

Subsidiarity

No one actually used this ungainly term, but the concept threaded through some of the discussion. This is the principle that decisions are taken and governance exercised at the lowest possible – perhaps in this context we should say most distant – level of government. Local government has delegated power of legislation, administration and revenue-raising. The same principle could be applied to devolving governance to Maori organisations.

Does this still leave the central government in charge? And does that cut across the entitlements v. grants distinction? Yes and yes. But it is one way of quarantining the rights of Maori from the will of the majority, which is a recognition of entitlement.

There is another partial parallel with local government: that some things done at the local level have national importance and/or are part of national action.

Valuing Maori Arts and Culture

“My culture is more dependent on your valuing it than what I can do for it.”

Valuing Maori culture is in three senses:

- appreciating works of art in the same way that European works are appreciated, that is, applying European criteria of excellence;
- valuing Maori culture’s contribution to national identity (“I don’t like this but I appreciate having it as part of my culture”); and
- seeing Maori art and culture as Maori do (that is, for example, a carving is not a symbol of an ancestor; it is the ancestor).

Is the difficulty of understanding opera an example? It takes application to understand opera; likewise to fully understand kapa haka takes application.

This leads to a suggestion that the government’s role is to *foster all cultures as they wish to be seen and to facilitate understanding by each of each*.

Going Beyond the Treaty

Might this process eventually lead to the point where Maori do not have to use the Treaty in order to be heard? On the other side there needs to be a recognition, regardless of the Treaty, of the value of all elements of our diverse culture and the particular value of the indigenous culture because that is what makes us unique in the world. “The Treaty is there; we have to recognise that; but the importance would exist even if there were no treaty.”

What is in the Treaty house?

Opera belongs in the Crown house and pounamu in the tikanga Maori house. But what belongs in the Treaty house? Answer: everything the two houses choose to bring to the Treaty house belongs in the Treaty house. Kiri te Kanawa might not belong in the Crown house. Were the two plays in the Arts Festival, *Blue Smoke* and *Woman Far Walking*, in the tikanga Maori house or the Treaty house? They used the bureaucratic structure of the festival to get themselves put on, but the festival has been trying to develop a Maori dimension. They used the mutual knowledge of the two cultures.

What is in the Crown house? What is Pakeha culture? Most Pakeha cannot say – though, taking the building of Te Papa Tongarewa as an example, people knew what a museum is and the argument was only about the funding; this illustrates that in each house what fits that house is known by those in that house.

Is Maori film in the Crown house, as an art form dominated by the United States and needing the funding of people outside one’s own culture? Maori can participate but in doing so will meet an American definition of what that art form is. The three-house concept requires that Maori, not the Film Commission, decide whether some resources should be available for Maori making films; the issue then is how Maori engage with the Crown over this. The tools are not yet developed for this and are complicated by fear on one side and grievance on the other.

From this discussion flows the argument that the issue is one of power, money and responsibility rather than culture. At the moment the Crown has taken over the Treaty house and has divided the cultural world into institutions which are essentially defined by Pakeha culture. It is then within those institutions that we negotiate some kind of Maori enclave. But the three-

house model challenges more than that: it says to Maori that “if you really want to have a so-called sovereign position or a tangata whenua position in the country, that means responsibility, organising yourself, examining the fundamentals of your culture and arranging it properly and having the creative desire and will to do that”.

So it is not the cultural content that defines what is in each house; it is bigger than that. The *challenge for Maori* is to organise themselves. The *challenge for the country* is to develop the tools and mechanisms, the tikanga, that is appropriate to the Treaty house.

And people can move in and out of the tikanga Maori house. People can have places in both that and the Crown house. They occupy each house not by virtue of race but by virtue of tikanga.

Biculturalism and Biculturality

Biculturalism is backward-looking; biculturality is living with the two cultures in a creative way. Biculturality belongs in the Treaty house because both partners take responsibility. Contemporary Maori art necessarily belongs in the Treaty house: it has Maori roots but it could not have occurred in Maori society had there not been contact with the European.

“There are some things that exist between night and day.” “You can put it in the Treaty house, it will be understood there; you can put it in the tikanga Maori house and it will be understood there; you can put it in the Crown house and it will be understood there. Recognising that in some way our cultural diversity is an asset, a resource for the future, there needs to be a policy that recognises the promise of biculturality as well as the promise of biculturalism.”

Three Other Points

- *Legitimacy*: In terms of the three-house model, legitimacy is defined in cultural terms. The model challenges the legitimacy of existing institutions.
- *Closing the gaps* socioeconomically is possible only if Maori culture is advanced. “The nation won’t prosper [economically] without Maori prospering.”
- And (from the discussion in forum 3), reconstitution of the relationship between the two major cultures naturally occasions a reconstitution of the *relationship between the arts and the humanities*.

Strategy and Objectives

In all, 11 Ministries have some sort of role in the cultural sector and 16 Ministers have cultural responsibilities of one sort or another if one includes tourism and sport.

In Europe a lot of work has been done in the past eight to 10 years by the Council of Europe and other Europe-wide agencies, to get some uniformity into country statements of cultural policy and cultural purpose, recognising that in some ways economic union is a cultural threat to the integrity of the member nations. These were outlined by Michael Volkerling, in leading off discussion in forum 2, in this way (see also Figure 1):

They [the Europeans] start with a view of the importance of culture. Generally, they emphasise that cultural diversity is a cultural and social asset, the primary thing that drives perceptions of identity and identity drives culture. So at a high level there is recognition that culture and identity are principal assets that can be capitalised on by an arts and culture policy.

[Pointing to the centre left of the diagram] The sorts of programmes that are being used to drive policy are programmes that support infrastructure, meaning institutions of one sort or another, programmes which support creativity and cultural development, product development of one sort or another, whether a heritage product or a commercial product, and innovation largely achieved through product development.

These are initiatives of both central government and local government. That feeds into dynamic regional and urban cultural economies [centre of diagram] – in the New Zealand context that would include dynamic iwi-based cultural economies. Once that activity level is stimulated, the expression tends to be both domestic and international in the sense that you get a range of cultural and heritage services provided for local markets, and you get a range of trade and cultural services with deep attraction for exporters and as tourism services. But you also get an inter-relationship with other sources of products and other sources of investment internationally; you get projects, which may be

sourced internationally, underlining the cultural positioning of urban or regional cultural economies (cf. the Wellington Festival of the Arts now; Porirua might promote itself as a South Pacific festival city, to reinforce its identity which is very much Maori and Polynesian). [The filming of] *Lord of the Rings* is a perfect example of international investment but there are others, such as the import of international design which is then re-exported as products to international markets. That produces reinvestment which goes back into the economy, but there is also a social and cultural return which in turn feeds back into cultural diversity and identity. In other countries having powerful publicly-owned electronic media is helpful to sell into international markets; the same isn't true here.

[He then outlined the points on the diagram where public policy is involved.] Our involvement is partial and there is a variety of ways in which we could do it better.

[Asked where education fitted, he indicated that took place to the left of the four boxes on the left side of the diagram.]

So, what can the government do? The discussion threw up these ideas.

Cultural Capital

One way of stating an overarching objective for government arts, culture and heritage funding is to enhance *cultural capital* – developing cultural assets. There was some difficulty with defining 'capital' in this sense but, if left undefined, it was felt to be a workable phrase. It was felt that we can invest in culture – for instance, by investing in Maori culture we also invest in the broader culture.

In this connection it was argued that the 'bottom line' is not just a number. There may well be a cultural bottom line. Government institutional arrangements fail to acknowledge the centrality of culture. The Commerce Ministry (now the Ministry of Economic Development) habitually crossed out anything that came through from the arts – "but now we are not allowed to cross it out". The Ministry is now finding out what the institutions in the cultural sector do; before it did not have to know. That

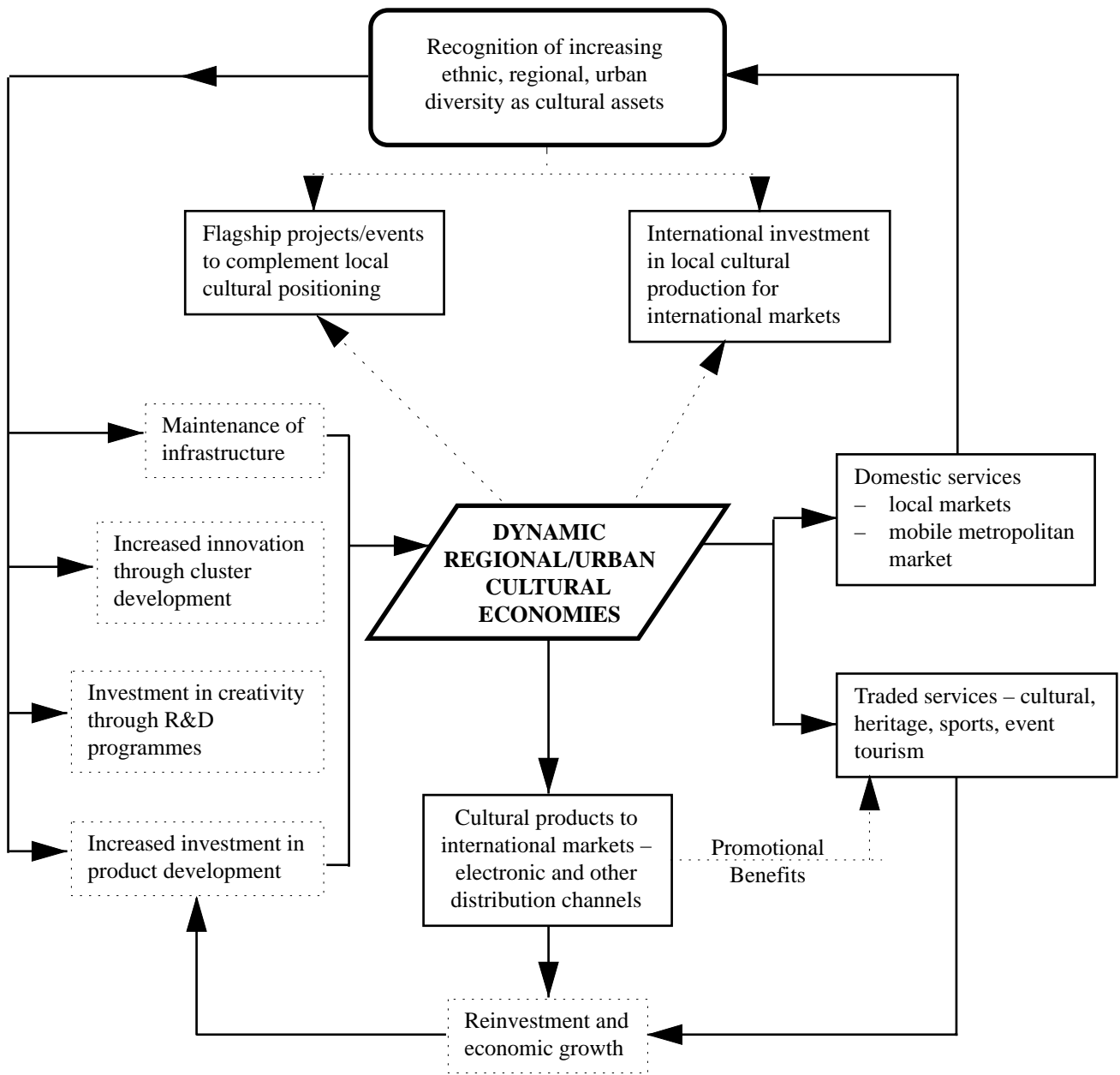


Figure 1. Cultural Industry Model

suggests there is a fundamental policy shift, requiring the bureaucracy to know something about the cultural sector.

Elements in discussion of this point highlighted leadership (paralleled by one participant with equal pay legislation which nudged the private sector towards equal pay). This leads to the idea of government as catalyst.

Government as Catalyst

The government can:

- help create experiences; this evokes the issue of access by citizens to cultural forms;
- help develop art forms; this is about underpinning cultural activity and ensuring resources;
- enable ‘mobility’, so people can get opportunities at home and abroad they might not have without some relatively modest initial support;
- provide an appropriate legislative framework (for example, to enable iwi to manage their affairs); this is as much removing barriers as facilitating activity; the aim of this is to *allow people to dream*;
- through all of these, enhance (build) cultural capital.

Promote Diversity

The government can promote diversity, not just diversity as between the two major cultures (and evinced in other cultures) but also diversity as ‘the limits of the individual’, which requires the government to think in terms of ‘soul’ as well as groups and products. For diversity to be perceived as an asset there must be *communication* – Pakeha might think of culture as a specific activity (“let’s be artistic today”), whereas Maori live their culture. Diversity is also a factor of what, in a culture, is the focus of government policy: originally government-funding policy focused on access to opera, ballet and music and institutions, which are still around, built up around these art forms.

Diversity is already recognised as a specific objective by New Zealand On Air.

Diversity is an *economic asset* as well as a cultural asset. But pushing diversity too hard can be socially divisive and counterproductive. ‘Integrity’ might be a more useful formulation of the objective than ‘diversity’. ‘Integrity’ evokes concepts of diverging and in diverging being more readily able to converge.

Another way of approaching the potentially

disunifying influence of diversity is to develop a unity of appreciation of the diverse cultures and elements in culture. We would all recognise kapa haka as a distinguishing New Zealand feature if we were overseas, even if some think it divisive in the New Zealand context.

Maori often feel that mainstream New Zealand sees diversity as a liability. There is a stream of petty objections to too much attention to aspects of Maori culture, viz hostile letters to the editor about the presence of kapa haka in the Edinburgh tattoo at the 2000 Wellington Festival of the Arts. It is often portrayed as ‘separatism’.

There may be a class issue: quotas may play to an elite’s preferences, as would the idea of sequestering the national collection in the sort of museum the specialists would argue for.

Is there a difference between diversity in Europe, with distinct state and regional boundaries, and New Zealand, where Maori and other cultures live in the same geographical space?

Identity and Nation-building

Identity and nation-building might be argued as overarching objectives of government policy, occupying on Figure 1 a box above the one at the top, fed by and feeding diversity. Note that the Labour Party manifesto in 1999 talked of nurturing and sustaining vibrant cultural and arts activities which all New Zealanders can enjoy and through which a strong and confident cultural identity can emerge. In speeches, explicit reference had been made to nation-building.⁴

National identity was a strong theme through the forums, threading through the discussion in various guises.

Identity is a mainstream policy issue, affecting a number of portfolio areas besides cultural policy, for example, crime policy (developing different responses), foreign policy (cultural expression of our nation abroad) and education policy (it shapes our understanding of the choices we have).

The related concept of nation-building was also a recurring theme. It was noted in forum 3 that films such as *The Piano* and *Heavenly Creatures* and the international acclaim for Te Papa Tongarewa make us proud of our country in a similar way to winning the America’s Cup.

Identity can be both a *distinguishing factor* and a

unifying one. In part it is defined from the outside: European funding of film is to counter American ‘colonisation’ through domination of the film industry.

But a warning about identity: if the government focuses on supporting what distinguishes New Zealand culture from others, that may run counter to other desirable objectives. For example, letting the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra fall over might not have any (significant) effect on our distinctive culture but might diminish the nation’s cultural richness: focusing on what makes us distinctive is not enough to maintain a culture.

A question: what is intended by the quota system proposed by the government? Is it that national identity will be attended to by way of quotas of quality items and all the rest will be left with the ‘commercials’?

Related to this is the issue of *what sort of country we want*. New Zealand is post-colonial, with “an imperial white settler community that privileges its European heritage and the things that it has brought with it and sustained here (New Zealand has more Scottish pipe bands than Scotland)”, and also bicultural. What sort of country we want has to be defined politically, which requires majority support. This raises questions of *legitimacy* – for example, in extraordinary support for the ballet by the National-led government in 1998 and the Symphony Orchestra by the Labour-led government in 2000. Is artistic activity a matter of promoting nation-building and values, or fostering a particular sort of values?

Equity

“Don’t just put Maori in the diversity box.” “It is not adequate to say that, now some money has gone to kapa haka, we can get on and fund the ballet.” There is increasing activity that creates focuses that are outside the funding system.

At one level this is about *communication*: conveying the beauty and strength of Maori performing arts to the whole nation. A publicly-owned television channel might do that; but not necessarily – publicly-owned radio has not. A change of mindset is needed at government level. What will mainstream kapa haka is mainstream funding.

There is an issue of identity in equity. How many people are truly bicultural? Only one around the forum table. If there is no place in the cultural economy for being Maori, Maori cannot live as Maori. In this context

mana might be another name for equity – that is, two autonomous streams of culture, not with Maori culture as an ‘adjunct’ to mainstream Pakeha culture.

And identity is iwi identity as well as Maori identity. Ngai Tahu is especially vigorously developing its own distinctive culture.

There is also an issue of participation. Taking part in a multi-media dual-culture event at the age of 10 was for one Pakeha participant at the forum a more effective lesson than all the rest of Maori studies at school.

It was noted that the duty under the Treaty to a tribe is not discharged by the article 2 settlement of claims. There remains a duty to Maori as Maori and as citizens.

Economic Development

The Labour party in its 1990 manifesto specifically referred to developing a strong industry sector which provides sustainable employment and contributes to economic growth and prosperity. Though some at the forums were uncomfortable with talk of a ‘sector’ that might under-rate the non-economic, intrinsic value of arts, culture and heritage activities, most were not.

However, there was little discussion of this aspect as an objective of funding.

General

Three objectives stated by Brian Opie in his lead-in to the discussion in forum 3⁵ were *conservation*, *education* and *innovation*. Applying these, it was suggested, focuses on what we as a society have in common and the conditions needed for affirming identity in a world of “apparently irresistible change”.

Postscript

A *warning*: the government’s ability to influence the dynamic process described in Figure 1 is limited and sometimes “trivial” (in the word of one participant). And an *opportunity*: the new government’s policy is full of fine sentiment (a sense that governments elsewhere do better) but does not provide a robust framework for action; those in the sector have the chance to help develop that framework.

Broad Routes Towards the Objectives

What approaches can guide a government’s actions in pursuing these objectives? The forums offered the following ideas.

The Importance of Success

The government can *reflect success*. What is the government's role in the Ngai Tahu cultural development and similar developments? It is to reflect the leadership that has taken place at grass roots level. It is not to pick winners. The Treaty guides us to examine what Maori aspirations are in this area. Thinking in commercial terms, New Zealand has a 'market edge' in Maori that the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra cannot offer. One government role is to reflect back to the whole community the potential that exists in Maori culture.

This picks up the recurring theme of *communication*. Reflecting success is not confined to Maori. References to the failure to cover the Ngai Tahu settlement as an event of major national significance (it was not carried live on television or radio, only as a news item) and to the fact that a German television channel covered opera in the past at Rotorua but not local television led to the observation that the "power culture" does not have institutions capable of reflecting success, developing and explaining the "power culture". There is no television channel with a cultural mandate. The new government intends to develop such a mandate for TV1 by way of a charter.

Doing this will destroy shareholder value in Television New Zealand. But the cultural value of Television New Zealand may thereby go up. Even so, is this the most effective tradeoff in terms of achieving the government's objectives?

The discussion led to a brief reference to culture as consisting of 'intangibles' that are difficult to value. This causes them to be marginalised in policy because it is too hard.

Adding Value

The trick is to work out what the government can do to *add value* with limited resources. Beware of the 'fly-paper effect', the ability of some organisations to first attract and then hang on to government support through inertia. (Is the Symphony Orchestra in this category?)

Another process issue is the dollar one: just because the Symphony Orchestra gets \$10 million and Maori culture all up \$2 million, that does not mean symphonies are valued at five times Maori culture. Or does it? Is there in a sense an intrinsic cost that must be paid to obtain equal value – if there is to be an opera, it will cost much more money than helping some writers, but that says

nothing about relative values put on the two forms of cultural expression.

There is also an issue of scale. New Zealand is small and Maori within New Zealand are even smaller. If government did not play a role, there would not be enough freed-up resources – particularly in the modern economy, which requires more resources to produce an art form than in the past and to bring it to an audience.

Education

Education may enable and encourage more to participate in arts, culture and heritage activities. This can change the 'who' in 'who benefits?'. This raises the issue of the 'stupid public', those who don't take part in high culture.

There are two dimensions: consumers and producers. In both senses, the role of education might be said to be to "improve the skills or the wherewithal of people to take advantage of opportunities for access".

The consumer dimension: Russia appears from outside not to have the same differentiation between high and low culture. Education is a key element in that. In this country, arts and culture is an 'add-on' at the third and fourth form and, "if you feel like wasting a subject you might take it up later on but it is certainly not going to make you any money".

Film subsidies are heavily geared to 'bums on seats', aimed at reaching the widest possible audience. It is not support of the artist's right to expression but the producer's responsibility to reach a wide audience and meet an audience need. (Obviously, if it was commercially viable, a subsidy would not be needed. *Heavenly Creatures* has not gone into profit. All countries, including the United States, subsidise film.) Both financial and cultural criteria are used (critical acclaim is a measure of success, as well as tickets sold and video hires).

The producer dimension: Education also plays a role in educating producers and this does produce an externality. Funding of people to learn cultural activities should look towards the end-result and the benefits to consumers from that end-result. Some of the training in polytechnics is substandard.

Government involvement pre-supposes that there are greater benefits in subsidising producers than in individual transactions.

It can be said that supporting producers automatically supports consumers (by reducing the cost of

consumption). An issue then is: which consumers? In the case of high art (opera, theatre, etc.), Australian research quoted by Brian Opie in leading forum 3 suggested producer subsidies deliver mainly to the haves. Perhaps instead the have-not would-be attenders could be assisted directly. It was suggested that if prices were reduced to zero, many more people would attend – but this was disputed because not all horses drink just because there is water. Education is needed on the value of water.

This is perhaps illustrated by the fact that in Britain the “furiously fantasy Catherine Cookson type” is the sort of book mostly taken out of subsidised public libraries. Arguably this does not promote ‘national culture’.

This turned the forum’s attention to the presumption in much arts, culture and heritage that there is a ‘*stupid public*’ which needs educating for its own good. This, one participant said, “has run like a dark pool under much of what we have been saying”. A lot of science debate has been on this basis, that if the ‘stupid public’ just understood more about what is going on they would not get upset about new technologies, etc. What is wanted is a public that values creativity and understands why the government might be taking risks in certain areas and sees the agencies that are doing this as legitimate. (See ‘*Risk-taking*’ below.)

We must be careful to avoid an assumption that there are people who do not have a culture. “They do have a culture. There is no empty space.” What people choose to do is often a matter of cost – do you buy a book or take it from the library (or steal it or borrow from a friend)? Films are affordable; the opera is not. There are *limits to education*.

Affordability can be improved by *subsidies*. They can also be given on the basis that the recipient raises some specified amount by succeeding commercially, which gives an *incentive* to add value. But such requirements change priorities.

This butts on to the desirability of *arm’s-length funding*. Authors are funded indirectly through Creative New Zealand and the individuals to be funded are selected by peer review. Specific funding picks winners: is that the state’s role? Is it (see next section) the state’s role to select innovations or is it to structure its funding to encourage institutions to innovate (e.g., the Chamber Music Society).

Risk-taking and Innovation

One focus of government support could be on people who are going to take risks. The existing audience does not like people who take risks. The cultural elite likes to have the conservation dimension looked after – but surely it will be kept alive anyway in that event (if the Symphony Orchestra went bust, surely there would still be symphonic concerts, though by smaller, local orchestras). “Let’s put our money where the externalities are for future generations. Future generations don’t have a way of saying now that some risk was worth taking.” The “who should be funded” in this case is future generations.

This does not have to be black and white. The government can build a requirement for an element of experimentation in the funding formula. That would answer those who stick to safe material on the principle that safe material gets bigger audiences and keeps government funding.

But this may vary with medium. It might work with chamber music but can you apply it to a museum? Kapa haka is traditionally based but there is “colossal” innovation now — yet government support is grudging. “You have to be one of the acceptable media. If you step outside the boundaries – not interested.” A view expressed at the table was that the innovative energy evident in Maori and Pacific Island societies is seen by the Pakeha arts community as “their thing”, not related to Pakeha cultural experience.

Innovation is not just someone doing something somewhere. It is a complex fusion of people and ideas and sectors. We need to set up arrangements that allow this to happen. “You could have arts away in its bubble thinking about nation-building or you could see where all these other sectors come in.” There are examples overseas of attempts to fuse arts and science funding, to bring together two different sorts of people who are thinking differently, pushing paradigms, taking risks.

To take an analogy with the America’s Cup: that was an example of consistent high-end innovation, not ‘No. 8 fencing wire’ but under a ‘baked beans’ pretence that it was just ‘kiwi ingenuity’. Is that the innovation we are looking for in the arts when we fund the arts?

But you cannot divorce risk-taking and tradition. Risk-taking comes off a base of tradition (kapa haka is a good example). You need a strong base in tradition if you are to innovate, otherwise your efforts will be thin.

And innovation results in some failures – in fact, almost requires that some projects will fail.

Tradition as the Glue in Society

There is intrinsic merit in *conserving* tradition. That is where museums, historical writing and oral history come in. Tradition is of the very essence of psychological health.

One participant's view:

It is entirely legitimate for the state to encourage a sense of the common values, the common traditions of its society. Indeed, the definition of the state is about defining that community, that group. It is in the interests of its own preservation to encourage a sense of common values and a common culture. That is the reason why people arguing for cultural funding have always wrapped themselves in the flag of national identity. That is seen as a legitimate expenditure of public funds. The problem is that the tradition of individual creativity since the eighteenth century has essentially been a romantic one, of the individual against the community ... speaking from a point of alienation [from common culture and common values]. This creates real problems [and suggests] that the only areas of spending the state should do are those which do create a sense of common values, of traditions ... things that give people a sense of membership of the collectivity of our society.

Tradition is not something fixed and immutable but a living part of society. Tradition is constantly renewing itself.

But is our tradition healthy? Are our traditions strong? Do they cohere society? There are gaps. So we cannot sit still on tradition. And is not one of the core values of New Zealanders 'kiwi ingenuity', that is, innovation? Innovation can be a cohering value. But there are also times when we want to be small-c conservative and not change much.

Exchanging Experiences

A role of the government is to help cultural experiences be exchanged and transmitted, creating new experiences

from other things. It is not just about market failure (the tickets being too highly priced; the cost of producing a book with a small readership being too high for a publisher). "What is the government doing there? It is either encouraging people to define culture as they see it and to experience it – that's quite an individual thing – or it's about cross-cultural communication, it's about new concepts of New Zealand cultures from the culture that is there, it is about a special responsibility to the indigenous culture." *Externalities* can be both in production and consumption.

Room to Dream

Arts funding is also about opportunity, about creating the space for ordinary people to 'dream'. This requires the sort of wide definition that is in the 1994 Act.

Another dimension to providing space to dream is an argument for retaining the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra (even though it is a repository of second-rate Americans, subsidising whom seems an inappropriate role for the state): that it provides a focus for budding young musicians to dream they might be in the Orchestra. (Cf. the All Blacks are a focus for ambition of every young boy, but it would be a futile dream if the All Blacks were the 15 best footballers in the world.)

Some Principles for Funding

In leading the discussion in forum 4, Jane Wrightson suggested some funding guidelines:

Public funding is about *complementing market activity*. The unattractive economic term for this is market failure. The more positive description is extending range and diversity and, perhaps, quality.

The influences are the *squeaky wheels*. Funded activities are perhaps mostly spun from effective lobbying, loud choruses of support, an old boys network (supplemented by some old girls) and very occasionally when there has been a major public groundswell. This can be viewed negatively as undue influence or positively as leadership by opinion-leaders. That means policy often follows the wheels of the cart, not the horse. That is not a good element if you are trying to do something strategically.

The actual funding processes once the lump

sums are decided are varied: there are boards which are often politically appointed, with the pluses and minuses that brings; there are committees, often based on practitioners of the particular art form; there is straight flicking off of responsibilities, like Lotto; and there is ministerial influence which we rarely acknowledge publicly but which we know is alive and well. Some processes have strict governing or statutory criteria – particularly the extremely clear and focused Broadcasting Act provisions that govern New Zealand On Air. The Film Commission Act, by comparison, is nearly 30 years old and is focused in essence on policies of a different time. There are more devolved structures such as the Creative Film and Video Fund, which is a partnership between the old Arts Council, the Film Commission and for a little while Television New Zealand: the criteria there were always subjective and often ignored. There are relatively few goals, except for ‘how much can you make for how much money’, which is output-focused.

A good funding process should be *transparent, logical, follow a pattern and be rigorous*. It also should be *competitive*. But each of these has drawbacks as well as advantages. Transparency can lead to over-consultation, can stifle innovation and can lead to avoidance of the left field ideas, the high-risk, never-been-done-before material. Following logic can make the best pitches the best projects because some people talk better than they create. Rigour – for instance, requiring other sources of finance to be explored first – is tough and exhausting for an applicant. Competitive sounds good but that, too, does not take into account that there is never enough funding.

Also, by its very nature *innovation requires that several projects will fail*. Failure is often the death-knell for applicants or art forms coming behind. If something hams up horribly, there is a vicious ‘told you so’ mentality in the cultural sector.

The issue of funding Maori might never be resolved. Sometimes it boils down to this, that those who get the money are happy and those

who do not get the money are not. I don’t reckon a lot of the funding outcomes would change much with devolution. Most agencies bend over backwards to encourage Maori projects, sometimes bending the criteria. Maybe handing over the cash directly is the only way to go. Maori need to make their own mistakes. *Funding alone isn’t enough*. The remarkable narrowing of the gates to local production during the 1990s has been partly to do with deregulation and competition, partly to do with the commercial imperative. It is also something to do with the heterogeneity of audiences. We have smaller and smaller niches which are harder and harder to satisfy and we have increasing querulousness about the spending of public money.

Funding has to be supported with both carrots and sticks. The carrots of funding are always the association of creativity, the fostering of innovation and the spinoff in other sectors. If you allow people to experiment and innovate in the cultural sector, the work they produce, the thinking and the learning they do, may well flow across to the science sector, commerce, society as a whole. The main carrot is – this goes without saying – the *enhancement of national identity*.

Some of the sticks are Treaty obligations, the need for effective monitoring, the creation of charters, local content quotas.

Funding needs to be according to shared objectives. Perhaps we need to return to the idea of *excellence* and be clear when funding is being applied to emerging artists, producers and projects and when it is being allocated to support projects of excellence. The former is more a kind of training ground; the latter is to try and enhance our understanding of and participation in this thing called New Zealand society.

Some Specific Suggestions for Action

Forum 4 sought to throw up specific actions the government could take, drawing on the previous forums. The discussion threw up these suggestions and guidelines.

Desired Outcomes

It is important to find out what the people want/will bear – *to identify the outcomes ‘we’ want.*

This was the dominant reply to a question posed of all participants as to the one thing they would do if they were Minister.

Various methods were offered, including more forums such as these ones, as well as structured forums with a wider reach and wide use of focus groups. There could be a process equivalent to the Foresight programme developed by the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology.

Any findings must be fed back to the public.

Most participants gave more than one answer to the question of what they would do if they were Minister. Few were specific. That this group by and large went for this high-level and general answer rather than the specific may illustrate a difficulty of developing a strategy for the sector. Nonetheless, there was a general injunction to the Ministry and the government, to develop a strategy.

Develop a Strategy

The government is not getting the biggest bang for its bucks. That is because assistance to the arts and of culture is ad hoc (Jane Wrightson’s “squeaky wheels”).

What should be the strategic goal? Identity was the general winner. “Take a high-level objective such as national identity and then work out a whole-of-government approach to it.”

One problem is that the Ministry for Culture and Heritage is very small. It cannot undertake detailed research, it lacks weight in the bureaucracy. Is it time to fold it back into the Education Ministry?

An alternative might be to build a ministerial and departmental ‘team’ and develop a strategy through a top-down approach. This runs counter to the ‘democratic’ approach in the previous section.

There was a strong view that the government should *stop ad hoc funding.*

The lack of strategy is not confined to central government. Local government takes widely varying approaches to supporting culture and the arts and often without properly thought-through strategies.

Developing a strategy needs a political change. There was little confidence around the table in the Heart of the Nation project.

Get Out of the Silos

It was thought important to recognise connections between art forms and other sectors (especially science and the economy).

This is in two senses. The first is to *push culture into other areas of government policy development* (culture was not in National’s enterprise and innovation ministerial team). The second is to *reduce barriers to communication between the art form segments and their funding mechanisms*, maybe with different forms of organisation.

Funding, too, would benefit from being de-siloed. But there are difficulties in switching funding from one activity to another. One is that comparative assessment of the value of different art forms is very difficult. This, however, is not confined to culture: the science sector has this problem; the health sector likewise (as between secondary and primary care). They manage.

Biodiversity policy (saving species for future generations) was offered as a parallel: goals were determined, with their costs, and then it was established which goals could be met, related back to available funding.

It might help if there were fewer agencies in the sector. And also if the Ministry, far from being disbanded or absorbed into another Ministry, had more clout and was able to be the ‘monkey on the shoulder’ of the system.

Focus on Outcomes, Not Outputs

Discussion over the four forums touched from time to time on what was felt to be a too narrow focus on outputs and not enough on outcomes, that is, on big picture goals which cultural activity can generate beyond the intrinsic value of the actual work itself.

Focus on Innovation

The value of heritage (conservation) was not ignored in discussion nor the value of maintaining living tradition. But it was felt generally that in funding a particular cultural activity (other than specifically archival projects), it is more appropriate for the government to be funding innovation than the tried and true (though see the argument above).

How to do this is not rocket science. In the science field, blue skies research can be funded; the National Provident Fund is managed with constant risk-taking.

So it can be done if the Minister sets the framework and then contracts to someone else (trustees in the case of the NatProv) and ultimately, according to some broad objectives, innovation is encouraged. The framework logically would include peer review of some sort, as in science.

Focus on Excellence

Several participants were keen not to allow the celebration of diversity to dilute excellence.

A quality framework was needed to guide funding, one participant suggested.

But there are difficulties establishing what is excellent and what is not. New Zealand does not have well developed critical capabilities which would help (see below).

Build Biculturalism

This was not a feature of forum 4 discussion but it was a strong element of earlier forums.

One participant returned to the forum 1 theme and urged the appointment of two devolved funding bodies, one for Maori and one a sort of reconstituted Creative New Zealand, which would operate on zero-based budgeting.

Dissolve the Sticky on the Fly Paper

A strategy might provide the basis for reviewing funding and removing or reducing funding of some organisations instead of just doing next year what we do this year.

One suggestion was to quarantine 20% of funding for new projects. This brings us to the next topic.

Remove Barriers

Ensure the general regulatory environment does not get in the way of cultural activity and creation of public awareness of the availability of a cultural activity.

Parallel importing was seen as one barrier (though it was challenged). The government is in fact proposing to reintroduce bans on some parallel importing.

Another issue is whether you can be unemployed and an actor.

Educate

The education system was seen as critical in

i. generating among children an appreciation of

quality culture that will encourage more participation in cultural activities or as audiences at them – “inculcate cultural values, experiences and understandings”, one participant put it; – and

ii. lifting skills levels and training practitioners. More attention to cultural education might overcome a *dearth of good critics* important to achieving and maintaining excellence.

So, arts and culture education should be mainstreamed within the curriculum.

Build Infrastructure

This can be done at the local government level (e.g., refurbishing theatres; creating spaces for artists and performing artists or just offering rates relief) as well as at national level (e.g., Te Papa). Both the national and local governments can create conditions that will, for example, attract film companies. The heritage trail established by the Hurunui council has generated not just a better appreciation of the area’s heritage – local identity-building – but has also boosted the local economy.

Partnership With Local Government

A *partnership with local government* should be developed to boost local arts and culture activity. Local councils could be given a statutory duty to look after the cultural interests of their districts and more revenue flexibility to fund it, feeding into both economic and social objectives. Central government could help local government in relatively inexpensive ways. The Nelson arts network could be more effective if there was a ‘hub’ at its centre funded by central government.

Other Alternatives to Subsidies

- *Tax incentives* for producers (deferral or income-spreading) and tax breaks for private patrons and supporters.
- *Regulatory instruments*: e.g., in environmental policy, farmers might be given tax or other incentives to maintain biodiversity or might simply be ordered to take certain actions, with sanctions if they do not. In cultural policy quotas might be a form of this.
- Ensure access to *venture capital*.
- *Bulk purchasing* for schools of New Zealand books, videos.

- *Vary purchase agreements*, which are the means of funding a considerable proportion of the cultural sector (e.g. National Library, Te Papa).
- Possibly *replace the contract model* of funding. It has, one participant noted, created “havoc” with the way the voluntary sector operates.
- Get traction with a *‘big bang’ event or events* each year (on a one-off basis). This is the America’s Cup approach, galvanising public attention and enthusiasm. (The Wellington Festival of the Arts may provide something of this effect.) Similar to this might be to hold open-air free concerts.

Afterthought

The forums seemed generally to accept that government funding should be directed at benefits to society as a whole and not to individuals or groups – that is, on the externalities of a producer’s work or institution’s function. Whatever the intrinsic merit of an institution or activity (a museum or the opera or pipe bands or novel writing), intrinsic merit establishes no claim on public funds. Perhaps arts funding policy could take a leaf out of the Fiscal Responsibility Act and require the government and institutions, including intermediary funding agencies, to specify the externality in each grant or subsidy.

The specifications would necessarily be woolly, at least initially, but even so would provide a focus for argument over who should get what. The arguments might be over the weighting that should be given to different sorts of externalities, the mechanisms for quantifying externalities and the actual quantifications. This would be a more transparent process than the present one seems to be and would provide a basis for developing and changing policy.

There would still be an anterior question, as posed in forum 1. Should there be a Treaty-based negotiation of some description to establish the share of the pot – or an absolute amount – that should be handed over to Maori organisations, which would then define their own processes? Or should Maori be part of the process of assessment of externalities? But that question need not affect the application of an externalities process to arts and culture funding generally.

Participants in one or more of the four forums:
 Martin Durrant, Ministry for Culture and Heritage
 Anne Else, independent scholar and writer, Creative NZ literature committee member
 Catherine Fitzgerald, Film Commission
 Derek Gill, State Services Commission
 Arthur Grimes, Institute of Policy Studies
 Ruth Harley, Film Commission
 Les Holborow, Trustee of the NZ String Quartet, former convenor of advisory committee for Concert FM
 Mark Lindsay, Ministry for Culture and Heritage
 Parekawhia McLean, Prime Minister’s Department
 Jonathan Mané-Wheoki, School of Fine Arts, Canterbury University
 Martin Matthews, Ministry for Culture and Heritage
 Lesley Middleton, Ministry of Research, Science and Technology
 Riki Moeau, Creative New Zealand
 Darcy Nicholas, general manager cultural services, Porirua City
 Brian Opie, Humanities Society of New Zealand
 Claudia Orange, acting chief historian and editor of the Dictionary of NZ Biography
 Jock Phillips, heritage group, Internal Affairs
 James Te Puni, Te Papa Tongarewa
 Mike Reid, Local Government New Zealand
 Charles Royal, Te Waananga o Raukawa
 Piri Sciascia, Te Puni Kokiri
 Claudia Scott, Victoria University
 Peter Scott, Creative New Zealand
 Craig Sengelow, Artists Roundtable
 Heather Simpson, Prime Minister’s Office
 Dame Cheryl Sotheran, Te Papa Tongarewa
 Carol Stigley, Local Government New Zealand
 Jo Tyndall, New Zealand on Air
 Michael Volkerling, Victoria University
 Ian Wedde, Te Papa Tongarewa
 Jane Wrightson, Screen Producers and Directors Association
 Ralph Pettman, International Relations, and Paul Morris, Religious Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, came briefly to one session

Colin James, programme director, Institute of Policy Studies, chair

Endnotes

- ¹ It should also be noted that the Institute of Policy Studies and the programme director hold no positions on any of the matters discussed. The Institute’s role is to facilitate debate and research as contributions to the background against which policy decisions might subsequently be taken.
- ² Their papers are not reproduced here, though their comments are incorporated into the thematic summary which follows. They are available on request from the Institute of Policy Studies.
- ³ It has been applied in the Anglican Church, where reports of its effectiveness, efficiency and acceptance vary.
- ⁴ A down-payment on this was made in May 2000

with a generous package of extra funding, capital funding of new organisations and recapitalisation of some major performing arts organisations.

- ⁵ Brian Opie presented a paper, a summary of the Humanities Association's presentation to the Foresight Project in October 1998 and two pages of charts from Australian research referred to in his paper. These are not included here but notes of part of his paper, the Foresight presentation and the charts are available on request from the Institute of Policy Studies.

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