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# IDEAS FACTS & FUTURES

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1017 BP Amsterdam  
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## Part 2

YOUTH & THE ARTS: POLICY POSSIBILITIES & OPPORTUNITIES



AUSTRALIA COUNCIL

AUGUST 1991

Published by the Australia Council  
181 Lawson Street  
Redfern, NSW 2016  
PO Box 74  
Chippendale NSW 2008  
Tel: (02) 950 9000  
Fax: (02) 950 9111  
© Australia Council  
ISBN 1 862567 085 X

Cover design: Youth Media Australia (Melbourne)

Boekmansstichting - Bibliotheek  
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## PREFACE

*Ideas Facts & Futures* is the culmination of the Australia Council's 'Youth and the Arts' project.

It represents the work of many people, including Australia Council consultants and staff.

'Youth arts' has always been a priority of the Australia Council. Various initiatives have been taken by the Council to develop and ensure the access and participation of young Australians in arts activities.

The area of 'youth and the arts' is vast and complex. The issues go well beyond consideration of increasing young people's participation in traditional arts to also include youth attitudes to 'the arts', cultural participation patterns of young people, the nature of youth cultures and the ways in which young people already significantly contribute to Australia's cultural life.

*Ideas Facts & Futures* maintains Council's commitment to 'youth arts' and provides an opportunity for the Council to play a greater advocacy role in this area. It aims also to promote debate and encouragement throughout all levels of the youth and arts communities.

The four parts of *Ideas Facts & Futures* are 'hole-punched' to make it easy for them to be kept in the same place for convenient reference. It is recommended that they be placed in a 'lever arch' file. This can then form the basis of a set of related documents to which past and subsequent youth and arts research, policy and advocacy documents may be added.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Tony Bennett gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the staff of the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies, especially that of Sharon Clifford, Glenda Donovan and Barbara Johnstone.

Colleen Chesterman and Jane Schwager acknowledge the support of Lynden Esdaile and her staff in the Strategic Development Unit of the Australia Council, officers from the support Units of the Australia Council's artform Boards and Committees and the assistance of officers in the State Arts Ministries in organising consultation meetings with State based arts organisations and 'youth arts' workers

Mike Emmison wishes to acknowledge the help of Research Assistant Barbara Adkins and the artswomen from La Boite Theatre (Brisbane Repertory Theatre), Feral Arts and Street Arts Community Theatre for their assistance in the collection of information for *Youth Attitudes to the Arts (Ideas Facts & Futures - Part 4, Youth & the Arts: Attitudes, Participation & Recommended Reading)*

Barbara Johnstone acknowledges the assistance of Rosemary Curtis at the Australian Film Commission and George Carrington at the Federal Department of the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories for their helpful advice with regard to the collection of data for *The Arts and Cultural Participation Patterns of Australian Youth: Statistical Digest (Ideas Facts & Futures Part 4, Youth & the Arts: Attitudes, Participation & Recommended Reading)*

Gay Mason wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the many arts educators and education officers throughout Australia who assisted in the preparation of *Participation and Access for Youth in Arts Education (Ideas Facts & Futures Part 3, Youth & the Arts Agencies - Some Facts & Futures)*

## BACKGROUND

*Ideas Facts & Futures* is the culmination of Stages 1 and 2 of the Australia Council's 'Youth and the Arts' project.

The information and discussion is assembled into four parts :

- *Youth & the Arts: Discussion & Directions*
- *Youth & the Arts: Policy Possibilities & Opportunities*
- *Youth & the Arts: Agencies – Some Facts & Futures*
- *Youth & the Arts: Attitudes, Participation & Recommended Reading*

The goal was to provide a base of information to assist the development of accessible and relevant arts-based activities for young Australians.

The main aims of the Project were:

- to evaluate government arts and cultural policy and its impact on young Australians.
- to consider the potential for forging links among arts funding and other government agencies, arts organisations, key youth advocacy and support groups, community service groups, and business and commercial cultural industries to provide for future arts and cultural development relevant to youth.
- to provide a platform for discussion on developing accessible and relevant arts for young people.
- to consider opportunities for allowing young people to participate in the planning, provision and evaluation of arts for young people.

The Australia Council commissioned a variety of inputs. These ranged from detailed and extensive consultations with Federal, State and local government policy-makers, arts funding agencies and 'youth arts' workers, through to an original inquiry into youth attitudes to 'the arts'.

Stage 1 of the Project was to commission a variety of discussion papers. (See *Ideas Facts & Futures – Part 1, Youth & the Arts: Discussion and Directions*)

These discuss aspects of Australian youth cultures and the implications for arts policies, the way young people from non-English speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal youth and rural youth relate to 'the arts', the music industry, youth theatre and the significance to youth of the mass media and communications technology.

Proposals were then sought for Stage 2 – the research, consultation and evaluation phase.

This mainly examined arts activities for young people, government and private support for 'youth arts' and attitudes of young people to 'the arts'.

Two groups of consultants were engaged. Firstly, the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies in the Division of Humanities at Griffith University was commissioned to provide two briefing papers, two research reports and the final report on main findings and recommendations. Secondly, Colleen Chesterman and Jane Schwager were commissioned to write an independent briefing paper on 'youth arts' in Australia.

The key aims of publishing the various discussion papers and reports are to:

- support the development of a 'youth and the arts' policy framework to be used by the Australia Council and other arts funding agencies in defining their own youth policies;
- encourage other government agencies and departments to develop similar policy overviews in their youth and/or arts funding;
- open up community development organisations to the use of arts and more especially 'youth arts';
- recognise the nature of youth cultures in the context of 'the arts';
- develop links between 'youth arts' and other youth organisations; and
- encourage corporate sponsorship of 'youth arts'.

*Ideas Facts & Futures* offers a tremendous range of material, covering theoretical and practical considerations and offering new ideas and directions for the participation of young Australians in arts and cultural activities.

## INTRODUCTION

### Youth & the Arts: Policy Possibilities & Opportunities

(The following discussion has been adapted from the 'Draft Final Report' as presented to the Australia Council by consultant Tony Bennett of the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies, Griffith University, Brisbane.)

Apart from the following introduction, *Youth & the Arts: Policy Possibilities & Opportunities* contains a summary and analysis of the policy possibilities and opportunities arising from the eight Discussion Papers commissioned by the Australia Council and contained in Part 1 of *Ideas Facts & Futures - Youth & the Arts: Discussion & Directions*.

#### 'Youth Arts' Policies: Rationales, Objectives and Strategies

This introductory section of *Youth & the Arts: Policy Possibilities & Opportunities* considers the policy implications of the recommendations of 'Youth Arts' in *Australia* and *Participation and Access for Youth in Arts Education* (contained in Part 3 of *Ideas Facts & Futures - Youth & the Arts: Agencies - Some Facts & Futures*) and the evidence of youth attitudes to the arts and youth arts and cultural participation patterns contained in Part 4 of *Ideas Facts & Futures - Youth & the Arts: Attitudes, Participation & Recommended Reading*

The key terms are understood as follows:

- Policies: specific frameworks for support, assistance, facilitation and resource allocation directed at particular aspects of the relations between youth and the arts.
- Rationales: the reasons and justifications for public interest in the artistic and cultural activities and needs of young people.
- Objectives: the general aims to be pursued via policies concerning youth and the arts.
- Strategy: the coordination of specific policies and their rationales calculated to achieve the objectives of 'youth arts' policy.

The stress of the recommendations advanced in 'Youth Arts' in *Australia*, *Participation and Access for Youth in Arts Education* (Part 3 of *Ideas Facts & Futures - Youth & the Arts: Agencies - Some Facts & Futures*) and *Summary of Stage 1 Discussion Papers and Analysis of Policy Possibilities and Opportunities* (following this introduction) is as follows:

'Youth Arts' in *Australia* offers specific measures which may be implemented by arts policy and funding agencies at the Federal, State and local levels to provide more adequately for the artistic needs and interests of young people.

*Participation and Access for Youth in Arts Education* looks at the role of the school education system in facilitating youth access to the arts and the part to be played by arts policy and funding agencies in assisting this.

*Summary of Stage 1 Discussion Papers and Analysis of the Policy Possibilities and Opportunities* considers the policy implications of the different ways in which the terms arts, culture and youth might be defined

The discussion presented here does not repeat the recommendations from the papers mentioned above, instead it examines the role arts and cultural policy and funding agencies might play in the development of accessible and relevant arts and related cultural activities for young people including the development of a nationally coordinated 'youth arts' policy framework.



## 'Youth Arts' Policies: Rationales and Objectives

The papers in Part 3 and this, Part 2 of *Ideas Facts & Futures* and the reports in Part 4 reveal that young people have significantly different artistic tastes, interests, inclinations and involvements. Their differences in other respects - gender, ethnicity, region, education - is commented on amply throughout all Parts. In view of these considerations it is clear that 'youth arts' policies need to be diverse and plural in their aims, targets and rationales.

### *Recommendation 1*

*The development of 'youth arts' policies must recognise the diversity of youth and hence the diversity also of the artistic and cultural interests, needs, tastes and capacities of young people. This entails a commitment to policies which, in being directed at different groups of young people, will draw on different rationales and have different objectives. There can be no simple or common basis for 'youth arts' policies which address youth as such without taking account of youth's differentiation.*

It is possible to identify rationales to draw on to support a differentiated set of 'youth arts' policies. A key question is - for what reasons might modern governments legitimately and usefully concern themselves with the artistic and cultural interests and activities of young people? A number of answers to this can be considered in the following way:

### Artistic Development

A primary rationale for any 'youth arts' policy must be to maximise the opportunities available for young people to learn skills in as wide a range of artistic techniques as possible. Educating young people in the critical interpretations and reception of art has a similar role to play in enhancing the quality of the arts products, culture and institutions that will be available to future generations. Investment in 'youth arts' is an investment in the quality of the nation's future artistic and cultural life.

### Civic Benefits

'Youth arts' programs could be an effective means of investing in the creation of a 'clever country'. Experience and familiarity with the arts can contribute to the development of skills of general value. The research report *Youth Attitudes to the Arts* (Part 4 of *Ideas Facts & Futures*) shows that all young people surveyed derived a positive benefit from participating in the arts, building their confidence and developing their interpersonal and communication skills.

### Cultural Resource Development

There are compelling economic reasons why young Australians should have access to arts and cultural activities. As shown in *The Arts and Cultural Participation Patterns of Australian Youth: Statistical Digest* (Part 4 *Ideas Facts & Futures*) the involvement of young people, whether as producers or consumers, will have a vital bearing on future growth in 'the arts', culture, leisure and entertainment industries.

### Cultural Democracy

Equity and social justice arguments can be applied to the sphere of 'youth arts' in two ways. Firstly, they can support programs to facilitate youth's participation in the 'elite' or 'high' arts on the grounds that these are publicly funded and an integral part of our heritage and should be equally accessible to everyone. Secondly, they can support the view that the cultural and artistic activities preferred by youth are also worthy of public support and subsidy.

## Empowerment

*Youth Attitudes to the Arts* (Part 4 of *Ideas Facts & Futures*) suggests that arts involvement can empower specific disadvantaged communities. The Discussion Paper on urban Aboriginal youth also reaches this conclusion. 'Youth arts' can enhance the quality of Australia's democratic political culture by allowing expression of legitimate grievances and demands.

The papers and reports in Part 2, 3 and 4 of *Ideas Facts & Futures* canvassed and generally rejected two further rationales for 'youth arts' policies. The traditional view that young people should be exposed to 'high arts' for their improving or civilising influence to counteract the morally and spiritually degrading effects of mass or commercial culture found no support. Nor was the view supported that young disadvantaged people would benefit as a form of social therapy or compensation.

### *Recommendation 2*

*The rationales for 'youth arts' policies should be based on the four principles of Artistic Development, Civic Benefits, Cultural Resource Development, Promotion of Cultural Democracy and Empowerment. In the light of these principles, the primary objectives of 'youth arts' policies should be to:*

- *provide for the future artistic and cultural life of the nation.*
- *cultivate the creative, intellectual, and communications skills needed by citizens of modern societies.*
- *develop youth's artistic and cultural involvements as a means of contributing to economic growth via strategies of cultural resource development.*
- *promote a greater parity of access to and participation in publicly subsidised artforms while expanding the ambit of public support for 'the arts' to encompass a wider variety of cultural tastes and preferences.*
- *enhance young people's involvement in Australia's democratic political culture by facilitating the expression of legitimate grievances and demands.*

A clarity of policy purpose will be greatly assisted if specific programs are explicitly driven by particular rationales. Some general guidelines can be proposed that could be valid across different programs, their founding rationales and target populations.

It is clear from the available statistical data that relatively few young people are regularly or deeply involved either as producers or consumers in major publicly funded art institutions such as opera, theatre, ballet and art galleries and museums.

The various papers and reports show that 'youth arts' policies must take their bearings from the actual forms of artistic and cultural activity in which young people are actually engaged. They should recognise their existing cultural and artistic tastes and preferences rather than impose on them those of older age groups.

Yet account needs to be taken of the fact that the distinction between 'high' and 'popular' arts does not seem to be deeply ingrained in young people's consciousness. From the survey reported in *Youth Attitudes to the Arts* (Part 4 *Ideas Facts & Futures*) it was noted that young people exhibited 'no strong sense of being excluded from the realm of "high culture" or of having to choose between two strongly demarcated domains'.

Young people need not be encouraged away from the 'popular' to the 'high' arts. Rather, policies and funding priorities must acknowledge the diversity of youth's artistic and cultural interests and support the cultural and artistic activities of different taste communities in an even-handed manner.

*Recommendation 3*

*'Youth arts' policies should not reflect traditional hierarchies of the arts. Nor should they seek to establish new hierarchies of the arts. Rather, they should accord equal weight to the preferences of different taste communities in determining funding and support priorities.*

To achieve this, it will sometimes be necessary to show a conscious bias against some of the traditional ground on which public support for the arts has been justified. Three findings of the reports demonstrate this.

First, the authors of *Youth Attitudes to the Arts (Part 4 Ideas Facts & Futures)* identify peer group pressure for conformity as influencing young people not to publicly associate themselves with individualising forms of art. The paper revealed, however, that many young people were engaged in individualised artistic activities and cautioned against viewing all young people as preferring collective forms of cultural activity.

Second, this paper also suggests young people's artistic involvements are intensely practical in both motivation and orientation.

Third, *The Arts and Cultural Participation Patterns of Australian Youth: Statistical Digest (Part 4 Ideas Facts & Futures)* reveals that the formality of 'high' arts often impedes or intimidates young people because they perceive an alien and exclusive atmosphere.

*Recommendation 4*

*The criteria for funding support for 'youth arts' projects need to take account of the pressures and circumstances which incline youth to collective forms of cultural participation.*

*Recommendation 5*

*Such criteria similarly need to take account of youth's practical interest in 'the arts'. They will, accordingly, need to place less weight on judgements of excellence as if this were an end in itself and more on the practical outcomes of artistic involvement.*

*Recommendation 6*

*All major artistic and cultural institutions should be encouraged to develop more relaxed and informal atmospheres in order to appeal to a broader spectrum of youth.*

It is clear from *'Youth Arts' in Australia* and *Participation and Access for Youth in Arts Education (Part 3 Ideas Facts & Futures)* that arts policy and funding agencies have generally relied on three mechanisms for implementing 'youth arts' programs. First, they have sought to increase youth participation in those arts institutions which they fund or support in some other way. Second, they have collaborated with education departments and schools in developing 'youth arts' programs. Third, they have collaborated occasionally with other government departments or agencies - whether Federal, State or local - which have a designated responsibility for youth affairs.

The relatively small number of youth affected by the first mechanism has been noted already. The limitations of the second are that the majority of young people and those least likely to be involved in arts institutions leave school in their mid-teens. Often they have a negative view of school and possibly a jaundiced view of arts activities initiated there.

The difficulty with the third mechanism is that most of the other government departments with which arts policy and funding agencies have worked are ones with responsibility for youth who have been identified as 'at risk', in danger or disadvantaged. Some community arts programs are directed at young people where contact has been established via branches of government dealing with 'youth problems'.

A number of the Stage 1 Discussion Papers - particularly that on young urban Aboriginals - and the research report *Youth Attitudes to the Arts* (Part 4 of *Ideas Facts & Futures - Youth & the Arts: Attitudes, Participation & Recommended Reading*) reveal that young people often have an ambiguous relationship to arts programs, associating them sometimes with welfare branches of government.

While these three mechanisms are important, they have limitations. None of them is directed at those outside the formal education system, those not already involved in art institutions or those not classified as being in trouble, 'at risk' or disadvantaged.

If 'youth arts' programs are to be accessible to more young people two issues must be addressed. It will be necessary to work imaginatively with those government agencies with access to broad sectors of youth and with those commercial media and cultural industries which play such a major role in the artistic and cultural interests of Australian youth.

*Recommendation 7*

*'Youth arts' policies need to be developed in collaboration with a broad range of government agencies, especially those which affect the lives of broad sectors of youth in a largely positive manner.*

*Recommendation 8*

*Arts policy and funding agencies at all levels of government should develop 'youth arts' programs via greater consultation and collaboration with the commercial media and cultural industries.*

**'Youth Arts' Policies: Strategies**

The success of 'youth arts' policies will depend as much on the way arts funding agencies administer and coordinate them as on their individual rationales and objectives.

Both *'Youth Arts' in Australia* and *Participation and Access for Youth in Arts Education* (Part 3 *Ideas Facts & Futures*) call attention to the lack of adequate coordination at all levels of government.

*Recommendation 9*

*Better lines of communication and policy collaboration need to be developed between departments of government with youth affairs portfolios and those with arts/culture portfolios.*

Attention should also be paid to the possible benefits which might flow from connecting arts programs to other areas of government affecting the lives of young people. *'Youth Arts' in Australia* (Part 3 *Ideas Facts & Futures*) proposes that an Arts and Sporting Life program or an Arts and the Environment program might have considerable appeal for young people, especially those who currently derive little benefit from publicly funded arts programs. Arts, sport and the environment are jointly the responsibility of the Federal Department for the Arts, Sport, the Environment, Tourism and Territories (DASETT) so the establishment of appropriate inter-branch relations within DASETT could help develop collaborative programs with substantial youth appeal.

*Recommendation 10*

*The Arts and Heritage Branch of DASETT should liaise with the Branches of Sport and the Environment with a view to developing collaborative programs for young people.*

Similar recommendations can be made about the State and local levels of government.

*Recommendation 11*

*If the Australia Council is to play a an advocacy role in the national development of 'youth arts' policies, then emphasis must be placed on its catalytic, coordinating, research and monitoring functions rather than just on its role as a direct provider of funds for 'youth arts' programs. It is important that in doing so the Australia Council should be externally oriented, especially in developing relations with cultural industries and institutions and agencies which presently define the cultural horizons of most young people.*

It needs, finally to be reiterated that what happens in the sphere of 'youth arts' today will have a vital bearing on the shape of future art and arts policies and the long-term planning of arts funding and policy agencies.

*Recommendation 12*

*The development of 'youth arts' policies should play a leading role in the formation of future arts policy and planning.*

**ANALYSIS OF STAGE 1  
DISCUSSION PAPERS AND ANALYSIS  
OF POLICY POSSIBILITIES AND  
OPPORTUNITIES**

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## SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF STAGE ONE DISCUSSION PAPERS

### Preamble

This is a digest of the Discussion Papers (*Part 1 - Ideas, Facts & Futures*) for the Australia Council's 'Youth and the Arts' project. It attempts to organise the implications of the papers thematically and in the general context of formulating a policy framework. The function of this document is to draw out policy implications from the Discussion Papers' more detailed discussion of youth participation in arts and cultural activities and the patterns of provision in a number of areas. These areas are varied and are determined by significant differences in art or cultural form, ethnicity, geographical location and social expectations. Because of these differences we stress the need for a correspondingly differentiated policy framework in dealing with youth and the arts and we stress that the inherited and operational categories of both 'youth' and 'the arts' need some significant recasting in order to arrive at an appropriate policy framework.

For the present, it is enough to indicate and foreshadow, from the evidence of the Discussion Papers and from our own analyses, that the categories of 'youth' and 'arts' are sufficiently open, and the social and cultural needs sufficiently acute, to warrant an equally open policy framework. By this we mean a policy framework which is concerned with *general access to cultural resources* in which it would be possible to specify and formulate particular programs for cultural development which are responsive to a wide range of youth needs, tastes and activities in the cultural field. This sometimes entails suggesting appropriate connections with other areas of policy formation in, for example, education and training, regional and urban development, local economic strategies, the role of local government and policy coordination between arts funding agencies and major agencies concerned with youth affairs, multiculturalism and Aboriginal affairs.

With these caveats, this digest will identify the general tendencies, issues, problems and possibilities that the Discussion Papers collectively present for the development of a 'youth arts' policy framework. To begin this process of identification we deal first with some definitional issues which can influence the formation of policies and policy frameworks. We then offer some possible forms of redefinition, drawing on the arguments of the Discussion Papers. These are followed by proposals for some more specific policy initiatives and developments. Finally we situate the issues raised by the Discussion Papers in the context of a general shift in cultural policy development with specific relevance to young people and their characteristic activities and extract some broad implications for future policy development.

For ease of referencing we have used the following in-text designations for the eight discussion papers and included this code as a footer on each page:

- DP1: Louise Blazejowska and Suzanne Kenney, *Urban Aboriginal Youth: A Redfern Case Study*
- DP2: Mary Mooney *et al.*, *Marking the Landscape: Youth in Search of Identity*
- DP3: Jo Moulton, *Youth, Media and Communications: Towards 2000*
- DP4: Mark Radvan, *New Directions for Youth Theatre*
- DP5: Jane van der Stoel and Linda Freedman, *Rural Youth and the Arts: Barriers and Strengths*
- DP6: Sarina Marchi, *Non English Speaking Background Youth and the Arts*

CODE: •DP1: Blazejowska and Kenney, *Urban Aboriginal Youth*: •DP2: Mooney *et al.*, *Marking the Landscape*: •DP3: Moulton, *Youth, Media and Communications*: •DP4: Radvan, *New Directions for Youth Theatre*: •DP5: van der Stoel and Freedman, *Rural Youth and the Arts*: •DP6: Marchi, *Non English Speaking Background Youth and the Arts*: •DP7: Gillard, *Music and Young People*: •DP8: ICPS, *Youth Cultures - Arts Policies*

- DP7: Sue Gillard, *Music and Young People*
- DP8: Tony Bennett *et al.*, *Youth Cultures – Arts Policies*

A number of these Discussion Papers contain their own recommendations.

## UNDERSTANDING 'YOUTH'

The Discussion Papers use varying definitions of the category 'youth': youth as a social group, youth as a client group for arts institutions, or simply youth as an age range of particular populations. Sometimes there is a mixture of these definitions. The question of definition is not merely semantic or academic since it has implications for policy-formulation in the form of targeting clients, objectives, goals and measures of success. To understand how particular sections of the population relate to a broader social context and to discover what their relationships to the arts may be, it is important to know who and what are being addressed. In this context, we suggest from the evidence of the Discussion Papers, it is as well not to be too constrained by inherited categories.

In the Discussion Papers, there are two core definitions of 'youth' which need to be more carefully thought out for their policy implications and consequences. These are the definitions of 'youth as transition' and 'youth as opposition'.

### Youth as Transition

Approaches to 'youth' have conventionally situated the category in terms of young adulthood, a sort of transition stage where young people learn the responsibilities, competences, qualities and characteristics of identity which equip them to take up a socialised adult role. This is probably fair enough as descriptions go but because it is seen as a transitional stage – coming from somewhere and heading somewhere else – it is often overlaid with moral panics and anxieties on the part of an adult institutional world. These panics and anxieties are caused by fears that the journey or transition will not be successfully completed and that potential disorder lies close to the fairly narrow path that has to be followed. As a general *social* issue, these concerns about 'youth' are relatively modern, dating from the post WWII period and connected to increased disposable income and the consequent ability of young people to go about forging identities through clothing, activities and lifestyles at variance with those of their parents and the adult community as a whole.

What implications does this have for policy on 'youth and the arts'? This depends, in ways that we illustrate in more detail below, on what we mean by the arts. There is obviously a tendency, given this model of transition with its threat of disorder and the widely held beliefs about the effects of mass culture on this important and receptive stage of human development, to confer on the arts a fundamentally *educative and corrective* role with regard to appropriate values and forms of behaviour. Something of this mode is evident, for example, in DP5 where a concern over young people's low participation in 'cultural activities' is allied to one centering on their preferred leisure activities such as cinema-going, discos, pinball parlours and hotels. These are seen to provide 'inappropriate models' and to aid the development of 'anti-social behaviour'. One implication of this hierarchy of activities is that arts funding frameworks should be constructed around the provision of a rich and civilizing cultural context to counteract any current unacceptable tendencies of young people.

There is an operative assumption here that young people, just because they are young, are susceptible to forms of corruption and the role assigned to culture is that of a civilizing and

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regulating force persuading citizens to adopt correct forms of social behaviour. This frequently leads to forms of cultural provision which we can define as *normative* in so far as they assume, without much questioning, the intrinsic social and cultural value of certain activities which are prioritised. As the study of the Aboriginal 'youth arts' program in Redfern in DP1 shows and as is implicit in a number of the other Discussion Papers, there are distinct limitations to both this idea of youth and to this role for arts.

The idea that the arts can provide moral or spiritual uplift across the board of diverse social and ethnic groups with equally diverse tastes, preferences and forms of access to cultural resources is one that largely runs counter to the arguments, implicit or explicit, in the rest of the Discussion Papers. Here we can note their varying emphases on the need for an expanded understanding of artistic activity which aids the cultivation of cultural independence, autonomy and self-esteem through a wide range of cultural resources and activities, both traditional and modern from screen-printing to video-editing.

The model of educative provision by means of the arts which we have characterised above and which surfaces from time to time in some of the Discussion Papers ignores the important argument that conventional hierarchies and distinctions within the arts have characteristically organised opportunities for participation, patterns of taste and access to cultural resources and competences which privilege certain sectors of the community over others. Purely aesthetic definitions of the arts, it is argued, reproduce such patterns of social differentiation at the expense of youth and other social groups whose access to and investment in the arts as traditionally conceived is distinctly limited. There are other ways of thinking of the values of the arts and of creativity which are more relevant to the actual daily practices and routines of young people which are emphasised in those Discussion Papers concerned with youth 'sub-cultural' activities (DP1, DP2, DP3, DP6, DP8) and which might appropriately form the core of any policy framework concerned with youth and arts. We deal with these in more detail below but for the present we can foreshadow a *general* policy implication in the following terms:

**An expanded definition and policy ambit for arts and cultural activities are needed in order to address the needs of young people to enhance their access to a wide range of cultural resources. This would involve a revised national program of cultural education and training at primary, secondary and tertiary levels which recognises the major contemporary sites of cultural production, diffusion and consumption.**

### Youth as Opposition

Located elsewhere, but on the same spectrum of definition, is the valuation of youth as an alternative and autonomous group which is defined – or defines itself – in opposition to the rest of social and cultural life. If the first definition – *Youth as Transition* – dates from the 1940s, *Youth as Opposition* dates from the 1960s and was consolidated in various forms of sub-cultural theory and sociology in the 1970s. This characterises youth as essentially rebellious, oppositional and, as DP2 puts it, 'under siege'. While this is a quite different categorisation of the qualities of young people from the first definition, there is nonetheless a tendency, albeit in a more celebratory mode, to evacuate youth identity of any connection with other social groups and processes. There is a notion, within this definition, of youth as an unsocialised, 'natural' force attested to, for example, by the reference to young people 'hunting in packs' in DP2. Youth here constitutes a raw material which is shaped only in relation to the values and forms of identification which are intrinsic to specific youth communities. They exist in a relation of implicit or explicit opposition to an adult institutional world characterised by unwelcome forms of 'guidance'. Hence the argument in DP2 where martial arts, bodybuilding and cadet training are effectively disqualified as authentic components of youth culture because '...they were basically activities under the guidance of adults and pretty stringent guidance at that.'. Given the nature of these activities, it is not surprising that 'stringent guidance' is a key factor but it is the way that this is represented as an 'intrusion' into the spontaneously creative world of youth culture that represents a problem here. For, in so far as it

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seems to deny any role of *training* and *institutional intervention*, this perception of youth culture is disabling from the point of view of policy formation.

While this approach to youth as opposition has the advantage of validating a wider range of activities than those in the previous definition and thus works towards expanding current definitions of the arts, it does so by privileging certain youth activities as more authentic, creative, real and natural (a tendency noted in the discussion of the Gulbenkian study in DP8) than those customarily within the framework of artistic validation. It is clear from the selection of activities in DP2 – graffiti, street machines, skateboarding, etc – that within this definition, youth is predominantly defined through its subcultural activities and that this is seen as a relatively closed field in opposition to and distinct from other creative and cultural activities.

In DP2 we find a list of the characteristics of this type of youth activity. These include references to the lack of outside intervention in the generation of activities, the marking of a social space of their own, a revolt against perceived norms. While we can concede the reality and importance of these aspects of autonomy, identity and revolt, the logical outcome of a general definition of youth culture in these terms is to separate youth from other social influences and identities in the home, the workplace, the school and the streets and to unduly stress a set of communicative activities which lie outside the competences of other groups. This is characterised as a 'code of social meanings, behavioural characteristics and fashion style' which is 'transient, changing, active and continuously coming into being, elusive and unrecognisable to institutions, which are seen as unsympathetic to its cultures, fearful of its challenge to the *status quo*. While there is certainly a good deal of truth in the argument about institutional non-recognition of the characteristic forms of youth culture, specifically in institutions concerned with funding, this should be seen as the starting point and key problem for policy formation in this area rather than as a permanent and universal feature of enclosed youth cultures.

While it is important to recognise and give a distinctive profile to the specific activities and meanings which operate in youth sub-cultures and creative practices, there are some problems with the extent to which this definition places youth and their activities in a 'circle' which is almost by definition, impervious and resistant to intervention, policy-formation and training.

First, it removes young people from their connections with those other organising principles of identity, community and social life such as gender, ethnicity, class and social environment. These are identities which traverse and sometimes significantly transform what is taken to be a 'youth identity'. A key absence in DP2 which is related to this point is any consideration of the forms of girls' cultural involvements in the identified forms of activity. By taking just those activities which fit in with an inherited sub-cultural definition of youth, the Discussion Paper reproduces the marginalisation of girls in their study and is therefore unable to address the conditions through which, within the enclosed and heavily coded domain of youth culture, there is a corresponding process of marginalisation of other groups and identities. The celebratory orientation towards particular 'street smart' activities obscures the very real fact that these are, of themselves, heavily exclusive.

Second, the association of youth with action and 'direct experience' and the validation of youth activities by these criteria overlooks 'private experiences, silent experiences, daydreams and imagination' as is argued in *Youth Attitudes to the Arts (Part 4 of Ideas, Facts & Futures)* by Emmison, Frow and Turner. These do not figure in street-oriented and sub-cultural perceptions of youth as a group and thereby cannot be validated as an active component of their cultural activities and identities. A comparison of the importance of, for example, skateboarding with watching soap opera or reading teen magazines across genders and other forms of social identity might reveal some interesting facts about the general profile of youth cultural activities which are not accounted for in the definition of youth as opposition. Thus, DP2 concentrates only on those activities that fit with an 'on-the-streets', physically energetic, performative and heavily coded perception of youth cultures and, notwithstanding the comment at the end of the paper that girls are marginalised in these activities, the very premises of the paper can be said to have excluded these considerations from the beginning. While there is no claim in the paper that these activities can be taken to

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represent youth in general and the authors were clearly working towards a specific brief and object of concentration, the *general* arguments which proceed from their observations and interviews do tend towards a 'global' categorisation and validation of these activities and values as applicable to youth cultures as a whole. This has negative implications for policy formation in terms of both defining the possible field and objectives of policy and in terms of clarity with regard to the actual mechanisms of intervention and support.

There is an assumed truth of 'authentic' youth experience which exists only in distorted or unrealised form due to the refusal of arts institutions to engage with it. This presupposition is evident in some of the general arguments of DP3 which posit the intrinsic opposition between young people and their culture on the one hand and distant bureaucrats, irrelevant statistical calculations and 'bullshitting' politicians on the other. From this perspective everything that youth chooses is privileged as oppositional to a rather monolithic notion of how a dominant and mainstream culture operates as a negative and corrupting force at worst and an artificial one at best. Because this perception tends to privilege those forms which do not have an institutional base – and which can thereby be represented as in opposition to the world of institutions – any sense of an enabling procedure of policy-formation which necessarily proceeds partly from an 'institutional' domain is excluded. Quite apart from the fact that these forms of youth activity are as rigorously 'institutional' in terms of membership, dress code, rituals and behaviour as Freemasonry, there is the larger issue of whether, in fact, it is necessary or desirable to separate cultural forms in this way. Is it possible, for example, to separate completely an involvement in popular music from involvements with those other forms of musical activities such as the playing of instruments discussed in DP7? When does playing an instrument become youth culture as opposed to more general cultural training and activities – in the swapping of the guitar for the violin and the fingering of the saxophone and not the clarinet?

The final point to make about this definition of youth culture, however alternative and expanded it may be with regard to traditional perceptions of culture, is that it constructs such a plural and intangible field of activities that there is little indication of a role for public support, enabling policy-formation or facilitative institutional intervention. In a country where the arts and related industries were the second largest growth sector after finance and investment in the 1987-88 period and where youth unemployment is a real problem, this validation of youth culture by its 'enclosure' can have negative consequences.

Whatever the problems associated with these definitions of youth, however, they do effectively identify a persistent policy gap between 'formal' or general artform-based activities, funding and support arrangements and the 'informal' youth cultural activities, rich in cultural resources and skills, which have hitherto lain outside the domain of public arts or cultural policy formation. Youth as such, when perceived as a *social* issue, has been within the domain of public policy as witnessed by various recent government initiatives and inquiries but, by virtue of this public concern and the ways in which it is represented in the media, the characteristic cultural activities of young people have tended to be assimilated under the heading of a 'social problem'. Sometimes they are, but the key issue here is the formulation of an appropriate and differentiated policy framework in the cultural field which can be integrated, as necessary, with these more general social concerns and initiatives. In this context, youth cultures can be seen as not so much a problem as an essential reserve of cultural resources which can be mobilised for the benefit of young people and the wider community. The growing recognition, nationally and internationally, of the social and economic benefits of encouraging, through specific and targeted programs, cultural activities and assets with the combined aims of enhancing of identity, fostering self-reliance and providing creative employment prospects, forms the broader context and rationale for a wide-ranging and facilitative approach to youth, the arts and culture.

Recognising the limitations in both definitional and policy-enabling terms of inherited categories of youth we now turn to some of the implications of redefinition as evidenced by the Discussion Papers. Prior to that, however, we can foreshadow the following general policy implication which arises from the above considerations:

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The formulation of an appropriate policy framework for 'youth and the arts' must first examine the categories and assumptions which inform the two key terms youth and the arts. This examination should take place in the context of the formulation of clear strategic cultural, social and economic goals and objectives for enhancing the cultural activities and resources of young people which will benefit both them and the wider community.

## REDEFINING YOUTH

It is possible to detect a shift in the terms of reference established in some Discussion Papers which point towards a way of redefining youth. This shift is partly related to the broader social concerns of youth homelessness, unemployment, abuse, crime and suicide rates as commented on, for example, in the Burdekin Report produced by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission. The shift, partly discussed above and considered in more detail below, concerns the ways in which identities are expressed and realised within the arts and cultural activities broadly defined. There is a way of seeing these activities, in a general sense, as socially meaningful and productive forms of signification or 'meaning-making' activities which provide pleasurable forms of participation, engagement and celebration which derive from and consolidate the characteristics of particular social groupings. For some social groupings, this may mean screen-printing and poster-making activities in community arts workshops; for others, and certainly the majority, this may mean listening to Tracey Chapman, dubbing and mixing on a ghettoblaster, reading a book or watching a soap opera. The *heterogeneous* nature of these activities are well described in DP1 and DP8 and these two papers also make the important point, in different ways, that there is no point in establishing an *a priori* system of validation of which activities are more valuable than others since culture and the arts are *what count as culture and the arts* for those groups to whom they are meaningful activities.

This expanded definition of youth cultural and artistic activities works from the characteristic forms of engagement which young people exhibit and implies a broader ambit for policy interest and formulation. We might suggest, for example, that there is equal justification for support for forms of training in how young people actually *consume* the products of the electronic and print media and information technology which is well demonstrated in DP3 as there is for access to some of the more traditional art forms. Given the pervasiveness and power of the media, training in techniques of 'cultural communication and response' – whether in learning how to critically interpret soap opera or make your own videoclip – is surely an important component of any modern program of arts and cultural training for young people. Such a strategy would entail various forms of policy coordination and joint initiatives between arts funding agencies, schools, colleges, universities and other institutions concerned with youth training:

Program development in this area would need to suspend some current assumptions about the varying forms of 'appropriateness' of different types of cultural involvement. An expanded definition of arts and cultural activities and a commensurate expanded policy ambit would take as its starting point the actual involvements and preferences of the young and take these seriously rather than as provisional, temporary and even undesirable tendencies to be erased by a more traditional conception of cultural education on the way to maturity. This suggests a way of crossing some of the boundaries between those 'formal' activities which have been traditionally situated within the domain of public funding and support and the 'informal' activities of the street, the home, the workplace and the school within a revised program of cultural education.

This process of revision takes artistic activity, however defined, as a key component of more general modes of *cultural* expression. It thus orients questions of the patterns of participation in the arts towards the broader and more strategic agenda of access to social, economic and cultural resources as a key dimension of citizen rights in a country with both a significant indigenous population and an increasingly ethnically diverse population where narrow standards of cultural validation are no longer – if they ever were – appropriate. These are issues which cannot

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adequately be confronted within the enclosed categories of 'youth' and 'the arts' discussed above and the acuteness of these problems is well addressed in DP1, DP6 and DP8.

There is a need to establish systematic connections and forms of policy coordination between concerns with 'youth arts' in particular and the more general issues of equity in social provision and access to cultural resources across the board. Objectives for 'youth arts' thereby become one targetted component of a general program of cultural 'empowerment' in social life. This implies seeing youth – and the objectives of arts and cultural activities – as elements of a broad strategy for enhanced citizenship where citizenship is understood not just as a formal or legal identity but also as a social and cultural identity which entails rights of access to a wide range of cultural resources and forms of training.

This broader agenda is signalled in all of the Discussion Papers which are concerned, in various ways, with the role of arts and culture in securing plural and diverse forms of identity, participation and celebration – qualities which are central to any full definition of citizenship. The Discussion Papers have in common a concern with the criteria of identity, autonomy and sense of place. Rap graffitists have specific 'signatures' which signal identity and authorship and a sense of place or territory (DP2). Non-English speaking background and Aboriginal young people, most acutely, experience at a daily level the role of culture from language to behaviour in terms of distinctive cultural markers and boundaries which sometimes confirm but more frequently deny identity and autonomy (DP1&6). The teaching of curricular and extracurricular drama to young people is designed, in contemporary circumstances, to teach both technique and forms of self-expression and realisation (DP4). Young people in rural areas need to be able to establish an identity (and employment prospects) which are not totally dependent on the nearest urban conurbation (DP5). In short, the relations between culture and identity are well registered.

The activities associated with youth identity are thus inflected by other social categories relating to broader political objectives and they bring acutely into vision those processes by which disparities and inequities are engendered and by which any full meaning to 'citizenship' can be frequently and systematically denied. The problems of access and deprivation in arts and cultural activities which these papers address reproduce those patterns of privilege and marginalisation within other arenas of social and economic life. At the same time, this stresses the importance of systematically forming connections between the arts and culture and the more general issues of access and participation to enable what DP8 calls a '...transformative model of arts support which avoids reproducing inequalities, limitations and invisibilities currently structuring informal as well as traditional cultures.'(p.14). This entails the development of a pro-active and facilitative policy framework and agenda by the establishment of criteria for arts support and programs which address the diversities intrinsic to youth and other social identities.

Given this basic orientation, a 'youth arts' policy would be able to address more comprehensively funding and support priorities and practices in coordination with social justice policies and programs. This may entail a comprehensive system of establishing and funding programs with clearly stated goals, objectives and performance measures.

Further evidence of the importance of making these connections within a general strategy of enhancement of access to resources is provided in DP5, for example, where we note that patterns of youth participation in the arts are affected by greater costs of travel in rural areas. As various commentators have put it in different contexts, there is no point in having the best cultural centre, theatre, sports complex or cinema in the world if people cannot afford to travel to it or eat the food there and there is a quite basic lesson here which points to the need for levels of coordination between the providers and facilitators of arts and cultural services on the one hand and those responsible for other forms of social infrastructure on the other. Additional levels of difficulty in access to basic resources are also experienced by women for reasons of safety and domestic commitments and by non-English speaking background and Aboriginal and Islander groups for reasons of cultural difference. In DP1, for example, factors which are seen to structure access and participation are 'external' to the artforms themselves and include illiteracy, education, unemployment, homelessness, family circumstances, poverty and patterns of resistance to

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institutionally organised activities deriving from an association of such activities with 'the welfare'.

Clearly, it is not within the brief or policy ambit of arts funding agencies to deal with all of these issues but an expanded program of access to cultural resources would enable appropriate forms of liaison and coordination to be established with other public and private sector agencies at Federal, State and local levels. The general objective here would be to enable and to facilitate access of young people to a wide range of cultural resources and thus access to and participation in a fuller definition of citizenship than currently prevails.

The momentum of this argument also implies a response to the call for arts and cultural services to function as a component of self-definition and self-reliance which may involve the devolution of structures of management and facilitation and the provision of routes for effective community consultation and research in the identification of cultural needs. These points are made in DP1 and DP8 and the need for such a framework is clearly attested to in the rest of the Discussion Papers. There is therefore an argument here that any policy framework for 'youth arts' needs to be closely related to – but as a distinct component of – initiatives targetted at encouraging community cultural development. Given the proximity of local government to people's everyday lives and the nature of its jurisdiction over local cultural and artistic resources, this may, in the context of the 'New Federalism' and the mooted decentralisation of service delivery provide the basis for strategic cultural planning which addresses the needs of youth as well as other social groups.

Whether or not systematic forms of partnership between local government and arts funding agencies emerge, there is clearly a need for a system of resource allocations and program development which has, as a central principle, coordinated and integrated forms of service delivery with the objective of strategic cultural planning and development.

In the light of the 'redefinitions' which we offer above and their wide ranging policy implications we can foreshadow a further policy implication:

Following a redefinition of the policy ambit and jurisdiction implied by the 'youth and the arts project', consideration should be given to the processes, mechanisms, goals and objectives which will enable effective policy coordination between arts funding agencies and other agencies with the aims of strategic program development and integrated service provision to enhance access for young people to cultural resources.

## YOUNG TURTLES, OLD MASTERS AND THE ARTS OF LIVING AND DOING

Jim Henson did not take to the grave with him the 'secret' that for many young Australians, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael and Donatello are teenage mutant turtles skilled in certain fighting techniques from the sewers of New York and not Old Masters. The arts here are martial, not aesthetic, but the corporeal and mental skills and techniques are no less important for young people. This is evident from the attention paid to techniques, style and skill in graffiti, street machines and skateboarding as reported in DP2 with a concern for codes, styles, genres and audience as rigorous as any formalised school or discipline of art or cultural production.

But is it Art? The question does not need to be posed since it is unanswerable in general terms. Art is what has been defined as Art in particular historical circumstances. It is posed here only to signal a question of *approach* to these issues. We note, for example that DP2 does treat rap graffiti, street machines, skateboarders and, minimally, martial arts, as 'non-traditional arts' and that although youth 'may not call their work art, it is so obvious that it identifies itself as art'. The assumption here needs questioning since, as we argue above at some length, the techniques, skills, codes and practices of young people provide the basis for a new terrain of definition.

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The example of the Redfern Youth Action Group in DP1 offers some appropriate cautions in this regard where it questions the assumptions about the benefits of the arts for teenagers. The young Aborigines were not committed to either the values, the timetables and requirements, or the artforms of the original Streetwise Program. 'None of them', the authors point out, 'had been involved in dance classes before and they were more interested in other movement skills-based activities such as self-defence and sport.' As the Streetwise arts-based program was gradually transformed into the Redfern Youth Action group program, the appropriate form of training turned out not to be 'Arts' as a medium of expression and self-definition, but the much more tactical and technical *arts of living and doing*: 'how to react appropriately under stressful situations – how to stay cool during a police raid and so on.' Just as an Anglo-European may use art to cultivate a certain disposition and to accumulate a certain cultural capital as a mode of social self-training, so the Aboriginal teenager from Redfern uses available cultural resources to fashion an equally distinctive disposition. The same argument applies to the general skills of street life manifest in rap graffiti, skateboarding, street machines and martial arts addressed in DP2, the varied *uses* of television and computers in DP3, the stress on the young as 'artists of their own lives' in DP4, the varied *uses* of music in DP7 and the general stress on proceeding in policy formation from where young people *are* in DP8.

Key components of such an expanded brief and objectives would include enhanced recognition of:

- The *diversity* of culture: appropriate training in use and appreciation of the effects of the wide range of cultural forms which 'train' young people.
- The diversity of *cultures*: appropriate training and resourcing in recognition of the wide range of cultures and forms of cultural formation as shaped by ethnicity, gender and socio-economic status.

These two objectives have in common the recognition that culture, especially as allied to the idea of arts, offers no necessary standard of validity whether in terms of civilisation, cultivation or discrimination. From these observations we can formulate the following general policy observation:

**A brief for, and process of investigation into new cultural technologies as they affect young people and others needs to be established. Such a program would include, in liaison with the *National Culture-Leisure Industry Statistical Framework* and arts funding agencies' initiatives, detailed statistical analysis of needs, participation, consumption and usage of a wide range of cultural forms and products.**

## CONSUMING CULTURES

It is not to be assumed from the above that the 'arts of living and doing' are restricted to what has conventionally been defined as artistic production. DP8 argues, for example, that

*Assessments of the potential for creative and innovative relations to artistic activities on the part of young people need to be as alert to their role as consumers and users of artistic forms and technologies as to more direct forms of creative participation.*

This assumes that modes of consumption and usage can also be an active and creative dimension of artistic and cultural engagement and that identifying young people's patterns of consumption is an important part of asserting and satisfying their cultural needs and offering access to those cultural resources necessary for 'entry' into the cultural realms of adult life. The fact that commercial cultures provide the major context for young people's occupancy of social space is documented in DP8 and also made clear in the arguments of DP1, DP2, DP3 and DP7. DP2 reminds us that most young people's experience of music is through the 'creative consumption' of selection, combination and

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reworking through rap or dance or dubbing and other examples of culturally underestimated and 'invisible' activity.

Even that most decried and 'passive' of cultural activities, watching television, is an active and negotiable cultural relationship. *Sesame Street*, *Hill Street Blues* and the average family living room operate on the basis that 'distracted attention' characterises our relationship to most popular cultural forms and that people do different things with what they see on TV from ignoring it, to having dinner or making a cup of tea in front of it, to making fantasies out of it. Until recently, so much concern has been directed at the 'ideological' effects of media messages transmitted from producers to hapless consumers that little attention has been paid to the point of consumption itself. This passive model has not helped the formulation of cultural policy in this area. Certainly people get sent 'messages' from television, cinema and recorded music but, with the advent of newer technologies such as videos, TV 'zappers', multiple cinema complexes and the dubbing and mixing facilities of sophisticated 'ghettoblasters', these messages have become much more *malleable* at the point of consumption, enabling various permutations of choice in what people do with these messages. This level of *negotiation* is clear from DP1, 2 & 3 where 'messages' and products get taken up and then transformed into something quite different from their original intention or design.

The forms of tactical engagement with the 'mainstream' employed by young people allows consumption to play a key role in the identification of the way arts participate – at the points of production *and* consumption – in the formation of social identities, dispositions and capacities for 'living and doing'. The products, and the ways of consuming the products of culture and the media, from love songs to soap opera, allow young people to situate themselves and sometimes 'reconcile' themselves with social, economic and personal relations, to manifest their aspirations and to respond to their conditions of living.

There is no doubt, in Thea Astley's expression, that in terms of the ways people actually *use* cultural forms, art and culture are closely related to a sense of 'the parish'. This does not necessarily mean that such forms are produced in the parish. They are usually *produced* elsewhere – in Hollywood, London, Birmingham, Sydney or Melbourne – but *they are used here*, in various ways, to help consolidate or form an identity. This is well documented, for example, in DP1 where the Redfern Aboriginal community makes good use of the cultural imports, in image, disk and print, of Nelson Mandela, Malcolm X, Tracey Chapman and Martin Luther King. The local interpretations of reggae and aspects of the Rastafarian cult as well as the youth interest in Asian martial arts, provide additional examples of local uses of 'imported' cultural influences. They are imported, of course, through the major publishing houses, music companies, and multinational media organisations.

This is an important argument to make since the validation of art and culture by the criteria of locality and identity often assume that such culture needs to be locally produced, almost in an artisanal mode and that this level of production in some way guarantees a sufficient level of expressivity and identity. This assumption misses the point, once again, that our major relationship to culture is as consumers and not as producers. Short of returning to an artisanal mode of production this is an irreversible situation but one that we do not need to be too pessimistic about.

#### **'VALUE-ADDED': CULTURAL TRAINING AND CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Massively expanding patterns of private consumption going well beyond levels of public expenditure and the stagnation of participation levels in many publicly funded cultural activities entail a shift of focus or at least a shift in the equilibrium between 'process-oriented' cultural activities and 'product-oriented' initiatives. Should, for example, a 'youth arts' organisation be more concerned with enabling the creativity and expression of a young person or group, or with getting people to produce something which can be put into the cultural marketplace either in the forms of skills training and employability or an actual product? The dichotomy is a false one since

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such an agency can clearly do both. It can train young people to find forms of expression in new media communications and technology, get skills training in a rapidly expanding industrial sector *and* produce a marketable product. It can facilitate forms of musical production *and* act as a broker to find a club, pub or cabaret for that person to perform at. It can stage publicly-funded, facilitated or assisted concerts *but also* get sponsorship from public and private sectors to get songs recorded and cut and even set up its own record label as the Community Arts Unit has recently done in Brunswick, Melbourne. This implies, of course, a slightly more 'entrepreneurial edge' to community arts activities and a role of *brokerage* to the cultural marketplace. It recognises the simple fact, however, that the major experience of culture is through forms of consumption in the commercial sphere and gives a slight toehold to those who believe that this could do with some improvement. This is one operational point of connection between the desired strategies of cultural animation and the realities of new cultural technologies which might, for example, benefit rural youth in an area like the Mallee in rural Victoria discussed in DP5.

We note from this Discussion Paper, for example, that tourism is the second largest industry in the Mallee after primary production. These are both notoriously unstable and vulnerable sectors of economic activity. This factor seems to remain, however, relatively 'external' to the question of cultural provision in rural areas, being listed as a 'regional characteristic' characterising an overall low level of such provision. The possibly productive relationship between an agenda for sustainable tourism development and local cultural resources is not really considered. What if, for example, with the assistance of seed or recurrent funding from appropriate Federal, State, Regional and Local bodies, a training and employment program for local youth which would both draw on local cultural resources and provide a level of sustainable economic development were possible? This would entail forms of training and professionalisation for young people, a distinctive profile and 'image' for the region and levels of economic development which would not be so dependent on current fluctuations in the tourism market.

It is important to register the growing importance of cultural tourism strategies overseas in both reviving flagging regional and urban economies and in realising the wealth and diversity of local cultural resources. Writing of cultural tourism in the revival of industrial cities in the USA, for example, Carole Rifkind points out that '[b]asing tourism development on the arts, ethnicity, architecture and industrial heritage involves the recovery of cultural resources that, until, recently, we hardly knew we had' (McNulty, 1986, p.225). In the same context, Robert McNulty underscores a crucial policy equilibrium that needs to be maintained in such circumstances: '[s]uccessful cultural tourism...should satisfy the requirements of economic development without sacrificing environmental and cultural quality'. (McNulty, 1986, p.228). No doubt this equilibrium is sometimes very difficult to maintain but this does not rule out its possibility. What it does do is sketch out some fruitful and pro-active connections, in the rural and urban contexts, between 'arts and culture' on the one hand and economic development on the other. Since tourism now represents some 6% and rising of GDP it is fair to say that it is here to stay and multiply. In such circumstances it would be much wiser to shape cultural policy development for young people with an eye to maintaining and sustaining cultural integrity and diversity than try to recover it after the theme parks and luxury complexes have been built.

Given the employment profile in the tourism industry, the significance of a carefully thought out strategy in this area for youth employment participation rates and, indeed, for young people's participation in social life as a whole should not be underestimated.

There are regional and local imperatives, responsibilities and agencies attached to initiatives such as these and associated fears about the loss of locality or 'local-ness' attached to long-standing and sometimes justified fears of tourist 'invasions'. But, as Carole Rifkind points out above there are ways in which, if properly handled and situated within an appropriate policy framework, with arts and economic agencies in self-scrutinising partnerships, cultural tourism can actually encourage the revitalisation and rediscovery of local cultural resources. These are the prerogatives not just of the community but also of government. This is acutely experienced in rural areas where government's role has been traditionally defined as 'roads and basic infrastructure' and where many have battled to add on such 'supplementary' requirements as human services, community

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development and, last of all, the arts. DP5 illustrates the paucity of political imagination in this context not only from the point of view of local government but also in the deployment of 'missionary' models of arts and cultural education acting as a compensatory stimulus to local everyday life.

What if another approach were available in terms analogous to those sketched out above in relation to cultural tourism? Is it possible to reconcile the needs of local expression, identity and sense of place with the real contours of contemporary culture? It may be, on condition that the local community and government, whether rural or urban, are willing to 'overcome the oppositions – as false as they are facile – between trade and culture, between art and industry' (Girard, 1981, p.62). What does this mean? Let us first consider the special nature of local government as defined in the following terms in the AGPS publication *The Role of Local Government in Economic Development*:

... local government has the ability and the responsibility to take on a prominent and activist role in fostering local economic growth. This is largely based on local government's unique position *close to the people* which invests it with a close understanding of local employment, economic and social issues.(p,1)

What does this have to do with cultural policy? We provide some answers to this question and some possible lines of development in what follows.

In the inner-Melbourne suburb of Brunswick a local government community arts unit facilitated the establishment of a commercial record label for young people in what *The Bulletin* described as 'an interesting marriage of civic duty and private enterprise'. In Beenleigh, south of Brisbane, the Beenleigh Area Youth Service, essentially a homeless youth placement scheme, is establishing public sector support and private sector sponsorship to produce and place its own musical initiative – *Blue Angel* – on disk. In Brisbane the City Council Community Arts Unit has entered the commercial publishing market with the *Community Self-Portrait of Brisbane* and organised a radio project with the ABC and the local community. The Community Recreation Unit staged a successful rock music training program and concert – *Bandshake* – at the Brisbane Entertainment Centre with more to follow. These are relatively small but indicative initiatives for the development of cultural policy involving various forms of partnership and self-activity enabled by an engagement with the commercial sector in the form of the cultural marketplace. Things like this happen all the time but more frequently as a matter of contingency than as a matter of policy.

It is no accident that three of these four projects are directed at young people since these essentially *cultural* initiatives are directed toward the *social* problems affecting youth. These are not merely compensatory welfare initiatives however; not 'The Welfare' in DP1's terms. Their objectives, as programs, are to facilitate and enable young people to get involved in those cultural forms that matter to them; to train them in certain skills and to establish a place for them in the cultural marketplace.

Initiatives such as these go beyond the inherited boundaries of arts policies and suggest the important connections that are to be made with contemporary commercial and popular culture. More importantly they indicate the possible connections between contemporary commercial and popular culture and the more general policy jurisdiction of local government.

These connections are well-emphasised by Gay Hawkins and K. Gibson in recent research on 'cultural industries' in Parramatta:

In Australia cultural industries are rarely considered in strategies for local economic development. Instead the major emphasis tends to be on manufacturing industries. This approach marginalises the service sectors in which leisure and cultural industries are increasingly important. The term 'cultural industries' refers to that sector of the economy organised around the production and consumption of cultural goods and services. This includes organisations like theatres, cinemas, galleries, museums, bookshops, radio and TV stations, libraries, theme parks, video shops, festivals, music venues, cabarets, arts centres, dance clubs etc. These activities have varied economic organisation ranging from the small

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business to the large multinational corporation to public sector cultural services. In Sydney, cultural industries are growing, witness the proliferation around Darling Harbour, and cultural consumption is now a major leisure activity (Hawkins and Gibson, 1990, p.1)

Putting the 'local' back into local government – or just there in the first place – might be deemed a particular priority of a properly coordinated cultural development strategy in these terms. There are clear implications here for the nature of the relationships which Federal and State arts funding agencies might establish with local government and related agencies and, whatever the outcomes of the Australia Council initiated Local Government and the Arts Task Force, it is clear that local government will increasingly become an important provider of cultural programs, services and resources.

In this context, it would be appropriate for arts funding agencies to give full consideration to the sorts of projects and positions currently funded at local government level. Community Arts Officers, for example, have played a key role in getting community cultural development onto the agenda of those local governments willing to take steps in this direction. There have been 'external' constraints on the effectiveness of these officers because of poor resourcing and the inappropriateness of local government programs, but there have also been 'internal' constraints relating to the actual brief of Community Arts Officers and their perceived jurisdiction and policy ambit. These have been defined largely in terms of strategies of cultural animation but not, for example, in the more 'entrepreneurial' roles of brokerage to the cultural marketplace as outlined above. As a component of strategic development a redefinition of the role and function of such positions may be deemed appropriate in order to meet the new agenda of cultural planning in which young people, their needs and resources, have a central role. A general policy implication follows from this:

**In addition to existing evaluations of the 'economic benefits of the arts', a full assessment of the relationship between cultural resources and activities and economic development is needed. This assessment should address issues of skills formation, employment prospects and the role of culture and leisure industries in local and regional economic development strategies and be directed to sustainable cultural development.**

## **CONCLUSION: A PARADIGM SHIFT IN ARTS AND CULTURAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

Without wishing to deny any future to the initiatives of publicly funded 'cultural action', it would be interesting if such action was more closely articulated with the activities of the media and cultural industries. Of course there are problems with involvement with mass communication technologies, which have their anti-cultural aspects, but there is probably no alternative if those charged with the responsibility for public culture want to enlarge their contact with the majority of the population. New formulas must be invented, involving industrial techniques; risks must be taken and setbacks accepted. But necessity is the mother of invention. Between cultural animation which emphasises the self-expression of a group, and the diffusion of industrial media which emphasise the product, it must be possible to find a new reconciliation. This is the real connection between new cultural technologies and new social needs. By accepting this reality as it is now, cultural action will avoid the paradoxical elitism to which its contradictions threaten to confine it. (Girard, 1978, pp.603-4)

These are the words of Augustin Girard, Head of the Research Section of the French Ministry of Culture and Communication. They were written in 1978, on the cusp, as it were, of two overlapping and sometimes conflicting paradigms of cultural policy development. The first of these paradigms, largely a product of the early 1970s and linked to a model of cultural democracy, can be described in the French expression, *animation socio-culturelle* or 'socio-cultural animation'.

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The 1972 San Remo Symposium defined this as

... that stimulus to the mental, physical and emotional life of people in an area or community which moves them to undertake a range of experiences through which they can find a greater degree of self-realisation, self-expression, and awareness of belonging to a community over the development of which they can exercise an influence. A stimulus of this kind seldom arises spontaneously in modern urban or even rural societies, and it has to be contrived as something additional to the normal circumstances of daily life. (Mennell, 1979, p. 24)

The agenda here is a familiar one: the stress on self-realisation, self-expression and community development and the policy imperative of something 'additional to the normal circumstances of daily life'. Animation strategies are concerned with a whole range of cultural activities, broadly defined. The actual nature of the cultural form, whether mural painting, dance or street theatre does not matter. What does matter is that animation involves people *actively* and not just as spectators.

The model is well-known and animation is at the origin of what, in Anglo-Celtic countries, particularly in the UK and Australasia, came to be known as Community Arts. This is a 'socio-cultural' strategy, since animation need have no particular connection with 'culture' in the traditional sense, '...and may instead use local issues such as neighbourhood planning or road schemes as vehicles for "creative", "spontaneous" expression and communication.' (Mennell, 1979, p.24). The emphasis here is on active *participation, involvement, identity and process*. This emphasis is at the heart of the paradigm. This is 'cultural animation which emphasises the self expression of a group' in Girard's words above. Because of its process orientation and declared rootedness in an idea of community, it exists in a slightly ambiguous relation to the second paradigm.

The second paradigm falls under the heading of 'cultural industries'. Though this may sound like – and initially was – a rather negative *description* it has now become an *orientation*. It is an orientation whose logic is posed in the following question formulated by two British writers and cultural policy advisers:

Who is doing most to shape British culture in the late 1980s? Next Shops\*, Virgin, W.H.Smith's\*\*, News International, Benetton, Channel 4, Saatchi and Saatchi, the Notting Hill Carnival and Virago or the Wigmore Hall, Arts Council, National Theatre, Tate Gallery and Royal Opera House? Most people know the answer, and live it every day in the clothes they wear, the newspapers they read, the music they listen to and the television they watch. (Mulgan and Worpole, 1986, p.9)

The example is readily transposable, with a few name changes, to Australia and, indeed, to most of the industrialised world. This reality is acutely reflected in the Discussion Papers and this is not surprising given their concern with the activities of young people whose culture is now more than ever determined by the symbols, images and products of the cultural industries. What are the implications of this and why do statements such as these signal an 'orientation' in cultural policy rather than just a description of a state of affairs?

The answer to this question lies in how, at a policy level, you choose to respond to the state of affairs. It is an orientation because it insists on a recognition of the contemporary mapping of

\* A 'yuppy'-oriented clothing chain which is about one-notch down, but more comprehensive in its stock, from Country Road in Australia. Next also runs a mail order service and its style is marked by 'European' espresso bars in many of its main outlets.

\*\* The major retail newsagent and bookstore chain.

culture: of where culture is being made, remade, defined and redefined for better or for worse. One characteristic and dominant response to the emergence of the 'cultural industries' in the twentieth century has been to establish both a categorical and operational – and thus ideological – line of demarcation between essentially 'pre-industrial high arts' and 'post-industrial mass culture'. Whether the art forms were deemed popular and community-oriented or 'high' and thereby elite forms, a close proximity between the idea of culture and that of art has meant that cultural policies, where they have existed, have tended to concentrate on funding and provision guidelines within the former category and to decry, sometimes explicitly, sometimes simply by omission of appropriate policy parameters, the rather unsightly and messy commercial world of the latter. It is as if, argue Mulgan and Worpole,

... every energy has been directed to placing a preservation order on a Tudor cottage, while all around the developers were building new motorways, skyscrapers and airports. (Mulgan and Worpole, 1986, p.9)

In the cultural field those motorways, skyscrapers and airports are represented by the music industry, the electronic media from television to video-production, magazine and book publishing, computers, information technology and all their adjuncts in production and consumption. These are, to cite Girard again, the 'cultural machines [which] have arguably transformed the cultural life of the greater part of the population – intellectuals excluded – more in the last thirty years than in the previous three hundred' (Girard, 1978, p.597). The problem – and one identified in nearly all of the Discussion Papers – is that these cultural machines have not produced, *in the policy field* at least, a sufficient number of technicians and mechanics to deal with them.

We stress 'in the policy field' there because although there is a clear shortage of technicians here produced by long-entrenched orientations in cultural policy, there is one area where such experts, formally and informally trained, abound: among young people. It is absolutely clear from a number of the papers that the young population is full of mechanics and technicians in forms ranging from graffiti to street machines, skateboards, music production, computing and video production. This is a population which knows well how to tactically respond to, use and manipulate cultural machines in their own activities, forms of expression and self-presentation. It is a population whose interests, enthusiasms and dispositions are formed and transformed by what 'cultural machines' produce and by the ways in which such products are consumed, tactically, in everyday life.

Our objective in raising these issues and questions is to properly situate, in both historical and policy terms, the broadest implications and tensions of the eight Discussion Papers. There is no point in pretending that they are all coming from the same place, operating on the same assumptions or heading towards the same objectives since they are not. It is therefore useful to situate the policy tension and to bring it up front rather than pretend that it is not there.

The policy tension roughly corresponds to the situation as described by Girard in our lead quote above: a tension, that is, between a *model* of 'cultural animation' based on the self-expression of groups but still rooted in an arts framework in which *active process and involvement* are the key standards of validity and a *reality* of 'cultural industries' where the sale and consumption of products are the key criteria. Even though we have designated this as a tension between two distinct paradigms and this distinction manifests itself across the Discussion Papers, we believe, with Girard, that it must be possible to find a reconciliation and to establish the 'real connection between the new cultural technologies and the new social needs.' From this we can abstract a final policy implication:

A policy framework needs to be established which can build on the best aspects of the animation and community arts forms of activities while orienting the skills derived from those traditions to the imperatives of the contemporary cultural marketplace and its attendant technologies which is where youth culture is formed.

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## SUMMARY OF GENERAL POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RATIONALES

We restate here the general policy implications as stated in the text and support them with some more specific arguments in an overall rationale for youth cultural development.

- **An expanded definition and policy ambit for arts and cultural activities are needed in order to address the needs of young people to enhance their access to a wide range of cultural resources. This would involve a revised national program of cultural education and training at primary, secondary and tertiary levels which recognises the major contemporary sites of cultural production, diffusion and consumption.**

The education system is the key formal disseminator of cultural values in our society and is a major site of cultural definition and redefinition. It goes without saying that the education system also has a special and statutory relationship to young people in terms of professional, vocational and character training objectives in which cultural training from speech and writing through literary appreciation to the forms of cultural awareness taught in drama classes have a major role to play. DP4 notes, in fact, that through earlier successes and campaigns schools have now largely taken the initiative in youth drama programs and made them central to the secondary curriculum. DP4 also stresses the need to combine the more general social values of awareness, access and diversity with levels of professionalism in dramatic training.

Given these precedents there is a case for developing these forms of cultural training, combining social values and professionalism, in relation to the major cultural industries of the contemporary period in television, film and music. To systematically realise the objective of ensuring access to cultural resources, traditional and modern, strategic initiatives would need to be taken in this area.

- **The formulation of an appropriate policy framework for youth and the arts must first examine the categories and assumptions which inform the two key terms 'youth' and 'the arts'. This examination should take place in the context of the formulation of clear strategic cultural, social and economic goals and objectives for enhancing the cultural activities and resources of young people which will benefit both them and the wider community.**

A policy framework for youth and the arts implies the formulation of a program or programs with stated goals, objectives and performance measures and appropriate resource allocation. The general tenor of the Discussion Papers suggests that such programs should be multi-directional (addressing the various categories of youth) and multifunctional (addressing their various arts and culture-related activities). Such a program of cultural development cannot be carried out in isolation from more general objectives of ensuring equitable access to cultural resources and services and a youth and arts program might therefore be situated within a general framework of strategic cultural planning and development.

- **Following a redefinition of the policy ambit and jurisdiction implied by the 'youth and the arts' project, consideration should be given to the processes, mechanisms, goals and objectives which will enable effective policy coordination between arts funding and other agencies with the aims of strategic program development and integrated service provision to enhance access for young people to cultural resources.**

Mechanisms of liaison, policy coordination and partnership between arts funding and other agencies in the public and private sectors are a precondition of effective policy development and implementation. As noted above there are good reasons for effective and systematic liaison between arts funding agencies and education authorities in this area but there is a wide array of other agencies concerned with youth affairs, ethnic affairs, Aboriginal and Islander affairs, local and regional development which may, at the Federal level, be linked through a procedure of program budgeting to meet declared objectives in the area of youth and the arts. This is a mechanism of resource allocation which involves the formulation of clear goals, objectives and

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performance measures with appropriate community consultation and input and the integration of services to meet social needs. It is possible to see ways in which these agencies have a legitimate stake – and obligations – in *cultural* development in a broader definition of the arts.

- **A brief for and process of investigation into new cultural technologies as they affect young people and others needs to be established. Such a brief and research program would include, in liaison with the *National Culture-Leisure Industry Statistical Framework*, detailed statistical analysis of needs, participation, consumption and usage of a wide range of cultural forms and products.**

Data before policy is often a sound working principle and the fact is that there is still insufficient knowledge about the cultural activities, preferences, dispositions and tastes of the Australian population as a whole, let alone the younger component of it. The Discussion Papers offer some glimpses of little known cultural worlds but this only serves to confirm the need for data and knowledge about how people spend their time, what they like and where they like to do it. Some initiatives have begun to chart this vast field but the enquiry into youth cultures demonstrates the absolute necessity for restraint in prescribing options for cultural development which we cannot be sure will correspond to actual cultural needs. A major research program into cultural needs, dispositions, tastes and activities is needed as a complement to any initiatives for strategic cultural planning and development.

- **In addition to existing evaluations of the 'economic benefits of the arts', a full assessment of the relationship between cultural resources and activities and economic development is needed. This assessment should address issues of skills formation, employment prospects and the role of culture and leisure industries in local and regional economic development strategies and be directed to sustainable cultural development.**

While the economic benefits of the arts have been well documented these calculations have usually applied to major performing arts activities and stressed the benefits of diffused 'multiplier effects' of arts spending which, while extremely valuable calculations, are cold comfort to those agencies responsible for direct funding and public subsidy to which the economic benefits only return in a very indirect way – and always with the possibility of being diverted elsewhere. Taking the arts and cultural industries in their broadest sense, however, it is clear that they have a major role in the national economy, representing at the last count about 5% of GDP and the second largest growth sector in employment after finance and investment. While these figures are impressive at the national level, they are even more significant at the local and regional level and especially for large metropolitan centres.

Facilitation and encouragement of arts and cultural industry development is becoming increasingly important in overseas centres and some initiatives of this type are underway in Australia. Quite apart from the creative values associated with these forms of development, there is the simple fact that there is a significant market emerging for both labour skilled in techniques of media production, design, leisure management and for the products of these industries.

These developments and the forms of coordination and liaison that they may entail between arts funding agencies and those concerned with economic and industry development should form part of any overall framework for 'youth arts'.

- **A policy framework needs to be established which can build on the best aspects of the animation and community arts forms of activities while orienting the skills derived from those traditions to the imperatives of the contemporary cultural marketplace and its attendant technologies which is where youth cultures are formed.**

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This final general implication follows naturally from the preceding points and is, in effect, a way of summarising the productive tensions that we have identified in the Discussion Papers which evidence on occasion an uneasy equilibrium between the creative and expressive values of the arts and cultural activities and the nature of the contemporary cultural marketplace. In identifying these tensions and uneasy equilibria we have also tried to abstract some of the ways in which the objectives of cultural expression and aesthetic pleasure might be reconciled, on a new agenda, with where culture and arts are now being defined for young people.

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