



## Arts Centre Melbourne's Submission

### Australian Government's Foreign Policy White Paper

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Arts Centre Melbourne welcomes the opportunity to contribute and provide ideas to support the development of the Foreign Policy White Paper - designed to guide our international engagement over the next 10 years.

We believe the creative industries sector can play a significant role in advancing and protecting Australia's interests in a dynamic, complex and unpredictable international environment.

Cultural content and exchanges enhance Australia's interests, reflect and communicate our values and can help ensure Australia is better positioned to seize opportunities and manage risks.

Organisations such as Arts Centre Melbourne are well placed to support the Australian government achieve its goal in advancing Australia's interests through strategic partnering on a range of initiatives.

As the flagship arts centre in Victoria with a leadership role in the creation, presentation and promotion of the performing arts, ACM believes it is well-positioned to provide input into new ideas and ways of utilising cultural assets and content such as the arts centre to deliver diplomatic, economic and social outcomes.

Our submission focuses on Australia's engagement and strategic interest in the Asia Pacific region. We believe this is the area of greatest opportunity and growth in terms of cultural exchange initiatives, commercial streams, tourism, and audience development. These types of activities and initiatives underpin cultural engagement, deeper people-to-people links and diplomacy.

### Context

There are large and growing markets for creative products and services. In particular, Asia's rapid economic growth, industrialisation, urbanisation and growing middle class present significant opportunities for our creative and cultural industries. However, there is fierce international and interstate competition to attract talent, projects, businesses and investment.

One of the key recommendations arising from the Victoria-Asia Engagement Research Report 2013 '*On The Ground and In the Know*' Asialink report commissioned by the Victorian State Government is the need for high level leadership to advocate the value of cultural exchange between Australia and Asia, and its contribution to innovation and nurturing positive social, economic and cultural relationships.

*Key findings of the Report include:*

1. Asia is a priority for more than 60 per cent of cultural organisations. Engagement with Asia is a higher priority for arts organisations in the next five years compared to the previous five years.
2. Small organisations and individual artists were more active in cultural exchange initiatives and more

willing to take risks than larger organisations that had a greater requirement to balance commercial returns with cultural exchange.

3. One-off projects do not necessarily lead to sustainable relationships.

4. Successful engagement with Asia requires a long-term commitment and substantial investment, and long-term relationships require repeat visitation, people-to-people communication and opportunities for two-way exchange and collaboration.

#### **Key challenges and barriers to effective Asia engagement identified in the report:**

- a lack of organisational capacity including cross-cultural understanding and relevant
- experience and relationships in Asia;
- access to flexible funding models to respond to opportunities as they arise; and
- access to better information and contacts about local infrastructure and business models.

We believe cultural organisations want to learn from others' experiences in Asia through local networking across art forms and would value strong advocacy from cultural leaders about the importance of cultural engagement with Asia across all sectors.

#### **Whole of Government coordination**

##### **Make it easier**

- Greater coordination of investment amongst government departments and agencies is required to better leverage, streamline and amplify international cultural activities to underpin government's strategic foreign policy objectives.
- Experience with Victorian Government's approach to incorporating Creative Victoria into the economic portfolios of DDJTR has provided much needed visibility and profile for international cultural engagement. This has included working closely with a range of key ministers across creative industries, trade, tourism and the international student sector. ACM worked closely with Trade Victoria and DFAT (Victoria) to deliver a series of successful high-level business and government delegations (India, China, and Indonesia) hosting events throughout Asia TOPA 2017 (Feb – April).
- Needs to be better cross-departmental coordination and consolidation of programs between the Department of Communication and the Arts (Catalyst/cultural diplomacy program), Australia Council (international programs) and DFAT (cultural diplomacy) and its agencies (Tourism Australia, Austrade). This approach would enable streamlined communication, funding, coordination, leverage and impact in relation to Australia's growing creative and visitor economies.
- The Australian Government through a coordinated consortium including state governments, Tourism Australia, Tourism and hotel organisations, groups including ACCI, BCA, and Conventions Association, to develop a cultural diplomacy strategy including a calendar of cultural events and offerings to be utilised by diplomatic clients and international businesses exploring networking opportunities. This type of soft diplomacy is normal practice in many countries, particularly across Asia where engagement using cultural activities and entertainment are the precursor to getting to know each other before a deal is negotiated or struck. This is an opportunity vastly underutilised in Australia.

- Tourism Australia appears to invest more focused in sport than cultural activities despite culture being a much bigger driver than sport for international visitors.
- Austrade's **Match Australia** program currently focused on sporting events only should be extended to cultural events particularly with Asian countries preference for cultural activities underpinning people to people links (Attachment 2)
- Austrade could play a more proactive role in supporting cultural organisations to build Australian brand and reputation through sponsorship/partnerships with international companies. This currently occurs but in an ad hoc manner.

### **Evaluating soft diplomacy outcomes**

Support by government could be provided to the creative industries to help them better measure soft diplomacy outcomes.

Objectives and measures could include:

- Promoting brand Australia as innovative, creative and sophisticated – inward and outward bound media
- Responding to the contemporary imagination of peoples co-habiting the Asia Pacific region – performances/literary etc
- Reflecting Australia's commitment to engaging with our key strategic partners in the Asia Pacific region (India, China, Indonesia, Japan and Korea)
- Building sustainable relationships and ongoing dialogue with Asian artists and communities extending beyond the triennial event
- Promoting and supporting people to people links through hospitality, delegations, forums, exchanges etc

### **Programming**

Government needs to invest in programming that will build new Asian audiences both inward and outward bound (see Asia TOPA below).

### **Professional development and professional development exchange**

- International exchange and secondment programs particularly with Asian regional arts centre personnel could be better coordinated and strategic, particularly with the growth in arts centres across the Asia region. Government investment in supporting these types of programs could eventually build long-term revenue streams for Australian arts centres and is also a great way to build deep and lasting international relationships.

- There is a demonstrated need for expertise as arts management infrastructure is still evolving in countries such as Indonesia and China with very few arts managers having expertise across programming, administration, production etc.

### **Soft Diplomacy**

- A government /business package providing access to venues, performances, conferences, exhibitions etc to host clients as a vehicle to promote and engage cultural diplomacy and build business relationships works.
- Victorian Government (Trade Victoria/Creative Victoria/Visit Victoria), DFAT missions, Austrade, Tourism Australia all accessed Asia TOPA activities to promote people to people links using cultural activities as a platform to engage.
- Asia TOPA has proven this model can succeed but it took enormous resources, and a deep knowledge of government relations to build and execute the model. DFAT support through a secondment would have been highly advantageous in coordinating, leveraging and providing advice on sensitive matters.

### **Arts Centre Melbourne (ACM) - A strategic asset**

Arts Centre Melbourne's focus, efforts and strategic foresight is to increase engagement in the Asia Pacific region due to changing demographics in Melbourne and opportunities arising across the region – China, India and Indonesia - due to a growing middleclass.

As part of this approach, ACM is developing an Asia Pacific engagement strategy to build sustainability and relationships through partnerships, collaborations, and exchanges, shared knowledge, internships and national and international audience development. Its focus is on Australia's key trading partners including China, India, Indonesia and Japan.

We are testing a number of initiatives, which have had encouraging results, and could be applied more broadly. These include:

### **Venue Partnering**

- Asia/ACM venue partnering to build expertise, technical skills, collaborations etc (based on Lincoln Centre model). ACM is a member of the Association of Asia Pacific Performing Arts Centres and this forum could provide an opportunity to facilitate such partnerships. We see ACM as potentially becoming a central point for delivering skilled-based programs to the sector in the Asia Pacific region. This is not only a business opportunity for ACM but builds cultural and political ties.
- International performing arts centres such as Lincoln Centre have seen the huge and lucrative potential for utilising their programming and marketing expertise. The Lincoln Centre has created a sub company 'Lincoln Centre Global' which has a three year consultancy agreement with a new cultural centre in Tianjin which is *"the beginning of an effort to supplement ticket sales and donations by serving as expert consultants to clients from around the world who might want to adopt the center's model of cultural programming"*

- ACM is keen to build a partnering strategy with Asian base venues to share knowledge, ideas and expertise. This has been occurring on an ad hoc basis but ACM would like to make this more strategic and would look to government investment to support such as program given its international engagement and cultural diplomacy value. With support this could become a significant revenue stream as it is at the Lincoln Centre.

### **Programming and collaborations**

- Invest in Asian programming and collaborations to build domestic and international audiences (Asia TOPA/KMATs)
- In 2014 the Sidney Myer Fund made the bold decision to award a grant of \$2 million to the ACM to inaugurate the first Asia Pacific Triennial of Performing Arts. Our shared vision to create a cultural paradigm shift in the Australian performing arts sector in much the same way as GOMA's inspirational Asia Pacific (APT) achieved for the visual arts.

### *Programming outcomes*

- Show Australia as a sophisticated, Asia-literate state with deep appreciation of contemporary Asian culture and build brand and reputation.
- Embed Asian programming in Australia (Victoria's) cultural calendar for inward bound visitors and delegations.
- Commission new works by the small to medium arts sector in collaboration with leading Asian artists to build cultural understanding
- Reflect the rich and diverse Asian culture on the main stage by providing a platform for flagship Asian artists and collaborations
- Actively target the young Asian populations of Melbourne CBD, particularly the large international student audience with contemporary programming – an increasing important economic group particularly with family and friends regularly visiting.

### **Asia TOPA – a Test Case**

- Asia TOPA has seen enormous success in this area through a strategic and coordinated approach to working with key government departments, agencies and bilateral.
- The Asia TOPA model of engagement provides a test case for government and the business community to integrate a trade and investment strategy into this program.

### **Outcomes**

- Provide opportunities for high level hosting of Asian government and business delegates at cultural events in premiere venues

- Attract local and international Asian media
- Build and develop new state based, national and international Asian audiences
- Through a combination of hospitality, VIP invites and benefits aligned to our corporate partnerships, ACM has been able to curate rooms around our 3 key events which increasing the appeal to government and corporates and supports the cultural diplomacy objectives of Asia TOPA (attachment 3)
- Asia TOPA 2020 would benefit from greater whole of government coordination and strategic investment in align with foreign policy objectives.

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## Attachment 1

### ACM's International activities and programs

ACM has had a long history of international engagement, particularly in the Asia Pacific region and believes it can play a leadership role in supporting the Australian Government build international engagement and leverage cultural diplomacy for Australia more broadly.

ACM has had a strong engagement with Asia for over a decade in terms of commissioning work, exchanges and co-commissions. Much of these activities have been funded through the Keith Myer Asian Theatre Series (KMATS) Endowment Fund. Some of the more recent Asian work programmed includes:

- **Peony Pavilion (2012)** – epic production from National Ballet of China
- **Shanghai Club (2012)** – jazz from 1920s Shanghai
- **Nitin Sawney (2011)** – British Indian Music underground
- **IETM Asia Satellite Meeting (2013)** – an ACM initiative in collaboration with the Australia Council, brought 240 artists and arts leaders from 34 countries from three days of creative exchange and conversation. This activity was a platform event of ACM's new Asian Performing Arts Program strategy to lead sector engagement with Asia.
- **Cho Cho (2014)** – a ground breaking bilingual musical theatre production in collaboration with the National Theatre of China and Carrillo and Ziyin's Gantner PLAYking Productions P/L. Winner of the two Australian arts in Asia awards presented by the Australian Government. Cho Cho also enjoyed seasons in Beijing and at the Shenzhen International Arts Festival thereby living the aspiration of cultural collaboration, and coproduction and presenting.
- **Asia LAB (2014)** – 30 leading independent Australian and Asian artists in a two week creative Lab bringing artists together from Australia, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, India and Korea to begin work on 12 new projects ranging from music, theatre, installations and street art and seed relationships for future projects, commissions and shared knowledge.
- **Asia LABs (2015)** – partnerships with the Australian Theatre Forum and Melbourne Festival enabled two further Creative Labs in 2015
- **ISPA (2016)** – ACM has been selected to host the International Society of Performing Arts Congress in June 2016. About 400 cultural leaders will descend on Melbourne to discuss ideas and trends. The conference will take place in venues around the Southbank precinct with over 50 per cent of the delegates coming from the Asia Pacific region.
- **Asia TOPA (2017)**
- **Supersense (2017)**
- **Positioning for Asia TOPA 2020**

## Attachment 2

### Match Australia (Austrade program)

#### Major Sporting Events overview

The planning and delivery of major sporting events is a global growth sector. Genuine opportunities for Australian expertise and capability exist across all stages of the 10 year major sporting event lifecycle which includes: bidding; planning; event staging services; operations/management; cultural/ceremonies and venue design/construction.

Major sporting events are linked closely to government/public sector support and operations in host countries and it can be difficult for private enterprise to gain the trusted access that comes with being a Government agency.

Australia is recognised internationally as a world-leader in major sporting event delivery. Over 140 Australian companies and major sporting event specialists have played pivotal roles shaping every major sporting event around the world since the Olympics in Sydney in 2000.

#### Focus

Managed by Austrade, Match Australia – International Sports Business Program, is the Australian Government's business networking program which connects Australian businesses with global partners through major sporting events.

The program is focused on promoting Australian capabilities and creating business opportunities across trade, investment, education and tourism. Match Australia also aims to reinvigorate and raise the profile of Australia's global expertise and capability in the planning and delivery of major sporting events, by:

- educating/reminding key decision makers behind the world's future major sporting events of the significant contribution Australian's have made to major sporting events around the world and in Australia since 2000
- providing access and establishing high-level connections for Australian major sporting events businesses primarily in Brazil, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Peru and Russia, as well as in Japan, assisting Australian major sporting event companies and specialists gather insight into future major sporting event contracts
- uniting Australia's 'nomadic' major sporting events 'industry'
- promoting major sporting events Australia is hosting: Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Asian Cup Australia 2015; International Cricket Council (ICC) Cricket World Cup 2015; and the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games\*

Attachment 3

Example of Asia TOPA (hospitality events – building people to people links)

EVENT	DATE	HOST	GUESTS
Red Detachment of Women	Wednesday 15 February	Victorian Premier	<p><b>HOSPITALITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trade Victoria</li> <li>- Chinese Consulate</li> <li>- S&amp;J Media / Youku</li> </ul> <p><b>ACM GUESTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Australia China Business Council</li> <li>- Australia Council for the Arts</li> <li>- BMW</li> <li>- City of Melbourne</li> <li>- Creative Partnerships Australia</li> <li>- Creative Victoria</li> <li>- Department Foreign Affairs &amp; Trade</li> <li>- Department of Premier &amp; Cabinet</li> <li>- Multicultural Arts Victoria</li> <li>- Study Melbourne</li> <li>- Visit Victoria</li> </ul>
Music of AR Rahman	Thursday 16 February	Victorian Minister, Creative Industries	<p><b>HOSPITALITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trade Victoria</li> </ul> <p><b>ACM GUESTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Department of Foreign Affairs &amp; Trade</li> <li>- Australia India Council</li> <li>- Creative Victoria</li> <li>- Asialink</li> </ul>
Satan Jawa	Friday 24 February	Fed Minister for the Arts	<p><b>HOSPITALITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Trade Victoria</li> <li>- Australia Indonesia Institute</li> <li>- Department of Foreign Affairs &amp; Trade</li> <li>- Indonesian Ministry of Tourism</li> </ul> <p><b>ACM GUESTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- City of Melbourne</li> <li>- Consul General of Indonesia</li> <li>- Creative Partnerships Australia</li> <li>- Australia Council for the Arts</li> <li>- Asialink</li> <li>- Department of Foreign Affairs &amp; Trade</li> <li>- Australia ASEAN Council</li> </ul>

