



**5th WORLD SUMMIT
ON ARTS & CULTURE
MELBOURNE 2011**

3-6 October 2011



Transcript

5TH WORLD SUMMIT ON ARTS AND CULTURE

Opening Ceremony

3 October 2011

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PENNY HUTCHINSON: Good evening, everyone. Could I encourage everyone to take their seats as soon as possible. There's plenty of space down the front if people would like to move down. Just waiting for a few more to come in and then we'll be under way. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Penny Hutchinson, the Director of Arts Victoria, and it is a moment of great joy that we officially launch the Fifth Summit on Arts and Culture here in Melbourne.

We are happy to see everyone that's come, many of you have come quite a long way to be here, so we are very pleased to see so many of you here tonight.

We are gathering here tonight on the traditional lands of the Boon Wurrung people, and I am pleased to present to you Aunty Carolyn Briggs who will officially welcome us to her country.

CAROLYN BRIGGS: Thank you. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the land that I'm standing on to day, the ancestors both past and present but also about the elders and all the elders that may be present tonight from the other parts of Australia. Welcome. It is also acknowledging our ancestors and our elders and the land we stand on today.

So firstly, we'll do a fire ceremony. I have never done one in this beautiful building, but this is always a first.

I won't be known as a pyromaniac either! So (speaks in indigenous language). As a descendant of Melbourne's first people, I am pleased to be able to share this wonderful night with you and also to share our pride in our heritage.

Before the Europeans arrived at this part of Australia, it was the traditional country and the homeland of the Kulin nation, the Kulin nation consisted of five major language groups - the Boon Wurrung, the Wathaurong. Our neighbours, our land goes from the Werribee river, out east and then to the south, from Werribee river right through to Wilson's promontory. We do have a large estate and an area we have been running around today looking at issues impacting on our land.

When my great grandmother, from the Boon Wurrung clan, she was born in the 1830s at the same time as the Europeans established this settlement here in Melbourne. She was from the Yalac clan and that estate was from the Werribee River to what we know as Mordialloc.

As our custom, I would like to share a short story with you in a way of welcoming you to this beautiful city we now call Melbourne. When my great grandmother was a young girl with the arrival of the Europeans, a time of great change began from our people. When the Europeans first arrived in Melbourne, they were treated as guests, as was our custom of our people. But these guests, unlike other visitors, did not leave. Not only did these visitors not leave, they broke our laws, they killed our animals and did not eat their flesh. They killed the fish during their breeding season. Their animals trampled across our yam garden, broke the rivers and creeks. The people became frightened and sought the advice of their own wise men and women.

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The old people retreated and considered their fears. Then they returned and called the people together. The old wise men and women explained that they had seen a vision, and in this vision, they had seen a period where there would be much upheaval and despair. But the old men and women said that they had seen a second vision and in this vision, they saw a new world, with the strength and the power of the Boon Wurrung people and the Kulin nation would again be strong.

They saw a time when the rivers would run clear, a time when the animals would be protected according to the laws of Bunjil, a time when the heritage and culture of the Kulin people would again be celebrated. Today our traditional country now consists of a great multicultural city called Melbourne, where people, arts, culture and sports are celebrated.

Melbourne also hosts one of the most vibrant expressions of modern indigenous culture through its heritage, music, art and drama. You will see our art in the galleries. You will see our sportsmen on the field, you will see our performance on stage and in film. Today, it is my hope that we can all take pride in this shared history and celebrate the strength of this great nation, Australia.

It is also my hope that the descendants of the first people, we can celebrate this night as one nation, a nation that also takes pride in its indigenous history and heritage.

According to our tradition, our lands will always be protected by Bunjil who travels as an eagle and by Wan who protects our waterways, travels as a crow. Bunjil taught us always to welcome guests but he required us to ask all visitors to make two promises - not to harm the land of Bunjil and not harm the children of Bunjil, and this commitment was made through an exchange of a small vow dipped in the water of the land. (Speaks in indigenous language). It is about our strength of our women and our men in evaluating ourselves as the assets for a sustainable future.

And also about our ancestors that left us a legacy for our future, to be able to bring change from a western paradigm to an indigenous way of knowing, epistemology, so it is about that journey and how we can come together. A part of this smoking ceremony - it is coming - I had - my performance, storytellers, does a lot of my work, I will tell you the reasons for the smoking ceremony. It is about rituals and every culture around the world has rituals. It's about bringing those rituals back.

This plant here is known as the cherry balar, by in our culture it is known as the Bar-li. It needs host plants, it is parasitic so it needs host plants to grow. I will put that in and that represents our children.

This is another plant and it's the black wattle, the acacia, is what you would know it or the symbol of Australia as green and gold, and this is the plant, one of the plants, there are many different varieties, and this one grows along our coastline and other areas, but there are about - there is over 100 different species within this landscape and it's about that diversity. But this represents our families because it provided us shelter, food, our artefacts, also tan, the wattle bark for our possum skins. We have a larger cloak that we wear. So this one is the kyal, the wattle. It represents the

diversity of families. You also have the Eucalypt, which is also iconic to Australia, and there are very many different varieties that grow throughout Australia because of the different landscapes. You will have the snow gums, desert gums, all about connecting, and the connection to the diversity of communities. So that goes into the fire. That is a part of the smoking ceremony, about cleansing and bringing a renewal and bringing the stories back and the shared knowledge from all of you that we share with you, the spirit of this land and celebrate your journey while you are on our country. So (speaks in indigenous language). Welcome. (Applause).

SARAH GARDNER: My name is Sarah Gardner, the Executive Director of IFACCA. I would also like to acknowledge the Boon Wurrung people, who are the traditional custodians of this land. I would also like to pay my respect to the elders, both past and present, of the Kulin nation and extend that respect to other indigenous Australians who are present. Thank you, Carolyn, for your welcome. It is very symbolic for us, very important for us, to be conscious of this in the next three days while we are here, all meeting together. Thank you.

Thank you to all delegates who are here tonight. I know many of you come from very long distances. Some of you have come from very close by as well, which is wonderful, and from all around Australia. I have a very simple job tonight, which is just to introduce our Chairman but before I do, I wanted to say that this is the most fantastic 10th anniversary present anyone could ever organise. IFACCA has turned 10 years old in the last year and it is fantastic to celebrate here in Australia in Melbourne with such a fantastic event for this.

But let me now introduce the Chairman of IFACCA, also the Chief Executive of Arts Council England, Alan Davey. Thank you. (Applause).

ALAN DAVEY: Thank you, Sarah. I would like to welcome delegates to this Fifth World Summit, with over 70 countries represented, and over 500 delegates, which makes a record for IFACCA World Summits.

Previous World Summits have been held in Canada, in Singapore, in England and South Africa, and earlier on today we announced that Chile would be the 2014 host for the 6th World Summit. So congratulations to Chile. (Applause).

And there is a Chilean delegation here, including the Minister for Culture, and we will be hearing more from them at the end of the summit, but they will be identifying themselves and talking to you during the summit, and we thought this was very important as a part of the handover process.

I am thrilled that this fifth summit is taking place in Australia because Australia has had such a key part in IFACCA's history as a founder member 10 years ago and, indeed, as landlord and host to the IFACCA secretariat, and you have nurtured the small team who have blossomed and have representatives now in other continents, so thank you for that. Your gift to IFACCA has been tremendous.

I would like to acknowledge the - and to offer my appreciation to the role of the Australia Council, as co-host for this event. And also an international event of this

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kind requires major partnerships, partnerships that really work, and I acknowledge with appreciation the range of supporters, particularly the Australian Government and the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria. Arts Victoria are the major presenting partner for the summit and it has made a major contribution, including the presentation of the summit's cultural program with the Melbourne Festival and multicultural arts Victoria.

We will have a fantastic few days, I know that. Discussing matters of real importance in a changing and uncertain world. IFACCA's motto is that the arts mean the world to us. And the arts bring the world together. They promote understanding and challenge preconceptions and this theme of the power to bring about intersection between different fields and disciplines is what this summit is about.

I am proud of IFACCA's ability to convene so many experts and passionate individuals with passionate views, and also proud to acknowledge and thank all those who have made this summit possible.

Without any further ado, I would now like to introduce the Honourable Ted Baillieu, Premier of Victoria. (Applause).

THE HON. TED BAILLIEU: Thanks very much, Alan. I am delighted to be here and can I acknowledge in the first instance Carolyn Briggs, who has just performed a first I think in Melbourne, a smoking ceremony inside the convention centre, and that is fantastic.

Can I also acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues, the Federal Minister, Simon Crean, the Minister for the Arts, my friend Robert Doyle, the Lord Mayor of Melbourne. Can I take a moment to reflect that the Federal Minister is a Victorian and is the Minister for the Arts. The Mayor is a passionate Victorian and also passionate about the arts and I am both Premier and Minister for the Arts and the first architect to be Premier of any state in Australia, and between us, we are proud Victorians and we are passionate about the arts, and can I acknowledge Alan Davey, the chair of IFACCA, and Arts Council England Sarah Gardner, James Strong, the chair of the Australia Council For The Arts, Kathy Keele, the CEO of the Australia Council, all of our distinguished visitors and all of you, and can I take this opportunity to acknowledge all those past and present, including our indigenous communities whose love of our land, whose care of our country and whose connection to this place have made this place so special and indeed made our city and our state what we treasure, what we nurture, and what we seek to advance at every opportunity.

I could not have greater pleasure to welcome you and all our international, interstate and local guests to Melbourne. We are proud advocates of Melbourne and we unashamedly say Melbourne, the capital, the cultural capital of Australia, the arts capital of Australia, and the capital of energy and good fun! (Laughter). (Applause)

We're thrilled to welcome those who have travelled a long way and I know some here from India, Chile, Egypt and you have been greeted outside with StrangeFruit, who are those strange performers on the poles, and they do a fantastic job and they have toured the world. If you're interested, please don't hesitate to ask them. I am sure

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they would welcome a trip to wherever you have come from.

Again, delighted to welcome you to this fifth World Summit on arts and culture. In some ways, having a summit on arts and culture, is almost counter intuitive because arts and culture is so organic, but nevertheless, this IFACCA summit has - runs on the board from the past and we are delighted to have you here. You come to a city with a proud indigenous history and a record of huge achievement since settlement, less than 200 years ago, and you have come to a city that is strong and successful and made so by ways of immigration to a city of dazzling multicultural and multilingual diversity, a home to - Victoria being a home to over 5 million people from 200 countries, speaking more than 200 languages and dialects and following more than - - - dialects and following more than 120 faiths. That is our Victoria. A unique cultural, linguistic and religious experience, one of our great strengths and something of which we are very proud and we continue to seek to promote.

It is often said that arts and culture can transform a culture. It can transform a place and transform cultural institutions, and I could not agree more.

Tomorrow, the theme for this conference is place. I have to say it is fitting we are in this place for this conference, because this place is right at the centre of the first settlement experiences in Victoria. Some 170 years ago, when - when the ships first came up the Yarra river, and they reached as far as they could to where the falls cross the river, and that was where the first cultural exchanges between settlers and indigenous communities took place, that's where the first meetings took place, that's where the port first developed, and it is fitting that the meeting places in Melbourne remain so close to those original meeting places, and those falls were known as freshwater falls. They have now gone, and indeed there are buildings nearby that remind us of that history, freshwater towers, which mark that spot, but here we are still at that meeting place and we are still just a stone's throw from our place for the arts, Melbourne's thriving Southbank cultural precinct. Just a short walk from here, our leading performance arts centre, the arts centre, home of chamber music, the Melbourne Recital centre, our most visited gallery, the National Gallery of Victoria, 150 years old. An extraordinary legacy in itself, and on show there the Vienna art and design, an architect and designer's delight. An historical piece from Vienna. Marvellous. Up the road at our World Heritage exhibition buildings, the Tutankhamen exhibition. Right beside a building only 120, 130 years old here in Melbourne. Also World Heritage Listed, and of course up the road our Premier arts training institution, the Victorian college of the arts, home to the Australian ballet, the longest running professional theatre company, the Melbourne theatre company, cutting edge Malthouse theatre, the Melbourne symphony orchestra and our national broadcaster, the ABC. All at the place just up the road, all near the original meeting places of settlement and foundation in our state.

It is a place that's constantly evolving, and that's how it should be in the arts: it is a place with a history of bipartisan support, and today we're working with a group to further develop that arts and culture precinct, and I know our transformation of such precincts can be, and I have had the opportunity in recent days and literally this time last week I was in Beijing inspecting precinct 751, which are so far away from the China and the regime of 40 or 50 years ago. It is now an arts and culture precinct in

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transformation. It is attracting world attention, it is attracting energy, it is attracting youth, and it is a delight to walk amongst that transformational representation.

Just a little further up the road, you will find our heritage theatre district, our extraordinary heritage theatres and the great traditions they have, and of course we have a strong and proud tradition of artistic endeavour that stretches well beyond Melbourne as a city and stretches out into the regions. I do hope many of you have an opportunity to visit other places in Victoria, our cultural hubs, the extraordinary wedding dress exhibition in Bendigo, attracting visitors from around the world, and it is just a train trip, or to Ballarat or Mildura, because no matter where you are in this state, there is an arts gem to be found. Hamilton Art Gallery another one, a gallery established by a local grazier who bequeathed 700 items and 6,000 pounds to the City Council to build an art gallery and today that regional gallery holds over 8,000 pieces in its collection and boasts the world's second largest collection of Paul Sandby, 18th century English landscapes. Second only to the collection at Windsor castle and there it is in the Western districts, in Hamilton. I am grateful the World Summit provides us with an opportunity to learn from you and colleagues internationally and also immensely proud the summit provides Victoria and Melbourne with an opportunity to showcase what we do have. I wish you the best in all your deliberations in the coming days, discussing all of the ins and outs of arts and culture and all the opportunities. I know you will explore how the energy and imagination that enriches our lives and enriches our cities can further the health, education, environment, economy and science in your place because it is so important.

Societies that are open to new ideas and the full range of creative expression are societies which are capable of critical reflection and capable of anything. If I go back 150, 160 years ago when those first meetings took place here, this extraordinary city is based on those settlement experiences and the legacy left by those who first settled, and at the time when the extraordinary architectural legacy, cultural legacy and institutional legacy was laid down in our city, there were fewer than 50,000 people living in Melbourne, and it is a reminder that when it comes to culture, heritage, architecture and the arts, when there's passion, good sense and willpower, there's nothing that is impossible. Everything is possible, and our job is to help that happen.

Your job is to have a ball here, to find ways to allow the arts and culture to flower and flourish, and can I say the arts animate and strengthen our communities, you know that. They encourage innovation, you know that. They drive creative and ingenious responses to any number of challenges and opportunities. I wish you every success and every smile you possibly can raise, and every inspiration as you reflect on the opportunities that lie in front of us all.

Arts, culture are transformation in our society. I am sure they are of yours, and they reach across the world. Please, enjoy your stay, enjoy your conference, enjoy Melbourne, enjoy Victoria, enjoy what makes life so rich. Thanks very much. (Applause). I have to say we are particularly delighted that the Fifth World Summit is taking place in this beautiful and culturally vibrant City of Melbourne and I am glad the arrival of the IFACCA delegates brought with it a change in the weather, proof that having this is a really good thing.

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I would like to acknowledge the support of the City of Melbourne, who have been important supporters for this summit, and in particular for the exciting program of cultural tours to have been organised for delegates. It gives my pleasure to introduce the Rt Hon Robert Doyle, the Lord Mayor of Melbourne. (Applause).

THE RT HON. ROBERT DOYLE: Thank you, Alan. To the honourable Simon Crean, the Minister for regional Australia, regional development, local government and Minister for the Arts, my good friend Ted Baillieu, more of him from a moment, the Premier of Victoria and Minister for the Arts, also the Minister of culture and the President of Chilean National Council of Art, and congratulations Luciano for the next conference in your wonderful country, Alan Davey, the Deputy Minister of culture from Egypt too, and James Strong, the chair of the Australian Council for the Arts.

Could I also acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land upon which we gather today, the members of the great Kulin nation and pay my personal respect to their elders past and present, particularly those of the Boon Wurrung, whose lands we gather on today. We in Australia, those who are visitors to us, should know how proud we are of our indigenous culture, the oldest continuous culture in the world. 40,000 years in this place as a meeting place.

In many ways, that is the power of the arts as well. It brings people together. Just as this was a meeting place for indigenous people.

I said I would speak about my friend, the Premier. I'll do that right now. It is such a pain to follow Ted, the Premier of Victoria, because he always has in his speech all the things I want to say! He's done that again today! But then again, that reminds me of what a wonderful speaker he is. But at least for you, that means my speech will be very brief because I did want to say to you from the city's perspective, we are passionate about arts and culture and Ted mentioned that we're very proud in Melbourne that we have 200 different nationalities, and we speak more than 220 languages and dialects, we practise more than 120 different faiths but we are one Melbourne, and I think that makes us very special.

When I think about arts and culture, it is sometimes about the people that make our city and make our arts and culture. Ted also mentioned some of the wonderful events and some of the wonderful exhibitions and works that you can see when you are in Melbourne, and that's true. We are very proud of that as well. And I often think about that element of arts and culture too. And he also mentioned he can't resist because it is the architect in, that wonderful heritage we have in our city and you take the tram ride through our wonderful streets and boulevards and look at that heritage. Although we are only 176 years old, and that is how long ago it was when people landed where William Street meets the Yarra as Ted said. You can look at that architecture. Whether it's the people of the city, whether it's the events and the works of the city, whether it's the fabric of the city, the built form, the architecture, all of it together makes up a culture and a feeling of a city, and I hope you get to taste our city while you are here over these three days and I hope longer than that.

You will know and love your own cities. We are a different city here in Melbourne.

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We don't have a gigantic and beautiful harbour, as Sydney does, or an Opera House. We don't have a giant rock. We don't have a Great Barrier Reef. We don't have a giant prawn or giant banana for you to enjoy! But what we do is something quite different. And that's what I'm going to invite you to do while you are here, whether you have come from near or far. You can wander through our signature lane ways. You can find the galleries, the coffee shops, bars and restaurants and book shops. You can wander through different lane ways and find world-class street art. I personally thought I had made it as a politician when in Hosier Lane there was a stencil of me put there, until my daughter said, "Dad, it is not Pro Robert", and then I had a look at it, and she was right. Nevertheless, immortalised in stencil art is not a bad start for a Lord Mayor!

You can wander through the magnificent grid. People don't think about streets as art but in fact it has given the centre of our city its feel. When Hoddle described that grid on which our city is built, he said to the short-sighted politicians of the day, "I won't build them 4656 feet wide", so he bit them half again as large as was the measure of the day. Not a bad piece of infrastructure when it served us well and continues to 135 years later. Before my point is this, whether it is meeting people in the bars and in the restaurants and at this conference and through our city, whether it's going to events or enjoying performances or looking at the art work that makes up Melbourne, whether it's wandering through the lane ways where at the moment you will see our lane ways commissions which are actually indigenous works from our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, whether looking at our wonderful buildings, the point is that each of you, I hope, will have a different artistic and cultural experience of our city and that's what we are proud of, that you will take away with you something that is individual to you of our City of Melbourne, and that is the arts and culture experience you will have of us.

We love our city. We think it is very cool. We think it is very sophisticated, very urbane, very chic. We think it is a city that is fun, as Ted said. We think of it as a city of style and substance. I hope over the next few days you discover your Melbourne, and I hope that you fall in love with Melbourne as we are, and, remember, Melbourne loves you. (Applause).

JAMES STRONG: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. To all our distinguished visitors here tonight, the relevant Ministers, I would like to say welcome and also acknowledge the elders past and present, as has been done earlier tonight. My name is James Strong. I'm the Chairman of the Australia Council For The Arts. As many of you would know, Australia has hosted many international events in recent years. The Olympic Games were a great success in Sydney in 2000, the Commonwealth Games similarly here in Melbourne in 2006, the Rugby World Cup was held here in 2008, and the cricket World Cup in 1992 and the 2015 cricket World Cup will be held jointly hosted by Australia and New Zealand.

As you can see, Australia has quite a strong sporting theme and heritage. Although I must confess that I am a passionate sports supporter, it is refreshing for Australia to be hosting an event with arts and culture at its very centre, as we are doing here today.

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Australia will also be hosting the international symposium on electronic arts in 2013, so perhaps these events signal a shift in our country's outlook.

Regardless, there has always been an enduring relationship with the arts and culture in Australia over many years. From the Aboriginal and Torres Strait island people who have lived on this country for tens of thousands of years, as you heard earlier, through to the poet Michael Massey Robinson, who in 1818 was awarded two cows from the Government and these came from the Government herd and were for his services as poet laureate to the current government through their work on the national cultural policy, which we will hear more about soon.

So the hosting of this event is a continuation of Australia's deep connection to the arts and culture, and it is part of our ongoing partnership with IFACCA, a very successful one, the global arts and cultural community.

I would now like to say a few words to welcome to the stage Mr Simon Crean, the Federal Minister for regional Australia, regional development and local government, and also Minister for the Arts. Although he became the Federal arts Minister just over a year ago, Minister Crean brings with him decades of experience in policy and politics and a lifetime of passion for the arts. We are seeing this experience that he has pay dividends for the arts and cultural sector here in Australia, particularly through his careful stewardship of the national cultural policy.

This is no small feat given his weight of his other ministerial responsibilities, as I mentioned earlier. So it is now my pleasure to welcome to the stage Minister, the Honourable Simon Crean. (Applause).

MINISTER SIMON CREAN: Thank you very much, James, for the introduction, and I want to pay tribute to the work that you and Kathy do and the Australia Council, and your role in not only bringing this important conferences to Australia, but the aspects associated with the organisation of it as well.

To my friends, both Ted Baillieu and Robert Doyle, even though they come from the other side of politics, I think it is important that what you have here today is the three levels of government and whilst I do represent it on a national scale, I have been Melbourne all my life, Melbourne through and through, and Melbourne is the cultural capital of Australia. Even though we want to extend that brand to many other parts of Australia, including the regions.

It is a pleasure to them both here for this important occasion.

To Luciano, who I met earlier today, our ministerial colleague from Chile, Australia and Chile have really close ties on so many fronts. So to see them passed the baton in terms of the 2014 conference, that too is a wonderful thing to see, and to Alan Davey and Sarah Gardner, your role in IFACCA in the organisation of this conference, thank you for bringing it here. I hope you enjoyed the snuff puppets and StrangeFruit out there, part of our rich cultural diversity, and you will see much more of it as others have said.

I too will also acknowledge the custodians of the land on which we meet, the Boon Wurrung people of the Kulin nation. I pay my respects to their elders both past and present, and I would also like to thank Aunty Carolyn Briggs for her Welcome To Country, for organising the smoking ceremony that didn't set the smoke alarms off and have us all evacuated. I don't know how she did that but it's effectively done.

I should also make the point that Aunty Carolyn was this year named the 2011 national female elder of the year, and is recognised (applause). And I think from that wonderful explanation she gave you and the introduction, you can see that she is recognised as a keeper of the history of the genealogies of her people.

Tonight, on behalf government of Australia, I welcome delegates to our country, just as Australia's indigenous people have welcomed you to their country.

Australia's indigenous heritage is incredibly important to us. It is the oldest living culture in the world but it has been transformed and revived from the grassroots levels into one of the most exciting contemporary arts movements in the world.

Indigenous painting is well recognised in the global arts space and for those who have the opportunity at the other gallery associated with the National Gallery of Victoria, the history of the western art movement, which is one of the new exciting art movements of indigenous art, have a look at it. It is just up the road. If you happen to get to Canberra, go to the newly opened indigenous gallery in the National Gallery of Australia. It is a stunning presentation of great indigenous art across the ages.

But less well recognised is the significance of the 80 indigenous owned and governed community arts centres that have spawned and developed this movement. They have built capacity amongst the artists and they have brought communities together.

The indigenous performing arts are also going from strength to strength. Bangarra, the dance company, is now not just internationally recognised as a dance company. It's also incorporating indigenous song and language, and this creativity is terribly important for us.

We have also had performed again recently in this country Pecan summer, the first indigenous opera in this country. And tonight, after me, (applause. Thank you, for those who saw it, you will know what I am talking about. It tells a really powerful message and it is a credit to them. Tonight you will hear The Black Arm Band, who perform, promote and celebrate contemporary indigenous music. I must say, the last time I saw The Black Arm Band, they performed with a symphony orchestra as a backing. Again, that fusion was fantastic because it brought people to a musical event that would never have listened to contemporary art music and others who never would have listened to a symphony orchestra, and it is that creativity that you are going to be talking about here today that we are seeing so much of.

I mention those examples because it is more than just about pride in our culture, because they also help define diversity and creativity, based on that culture. And they draw strength from the culture.

If we look at the economies around the world today, we are a world in transition but diversification holds the key to how we make that transition. Diversification is the challenge of our time. Diversification unlocks opportunities, but investment in the arts and culture is central to that unlocking.

In 1994, the former Labor Prime Minister, Paul Keating, launched Creative Nation. I was a member of his government and we were proud of it then. It was Australia's first ever cultural policy. He said when he launched it, and I quote him, "We have learned that there is much to gain and little to fear from being open to the world. It is as true of the culture as it is of the economy". Almost two decades on, that hasn't changed. But what has changed is the way we create and access arts and culture.

I firmly believe that governments must invest in the arts and in culture because that investment produces dividends. It produces a social dividend because it empowers individuals and it underpins values that we hold dear. Freedom of expression, tolerance, inclusion. But there's also an economic dividend - all of the evidence so far suggests that a creative nation is a more productive nation. It lifts capability as well as productivity. And it makes us as a nation more competitive.

In Australia, the creative industries represent almost 5.5% of the work force. That has grown at 10% across the last 5 years. Our creative industries are now valued at more than 31 billion dollars in terms of industry gross product. And this represents an average growth rate of 4% almost in real terms, a faster rate of growth than our broader economy over the past decade.

Research work is now under way by Professor Stuart Cunningham from the Australian research centre of excellence for creative industries and innovation at the Queensland University of technology, to identify where the jobs are in a creative economy. His research shows that workers with creative skills are increasingly moving through the economy with designers found and design capabilities needed in nearly every industry. Our challenge is to look at ways to strengthen the research effort, to quantify the dividend. And the social and economic dividend is why the Australian Government already invests almost three-quarters of a billion dollars each year directly on the arts and other cultural activities.

Beyond those direct payments to the arts, there's also significant investment in our creative industries through our education and training system and our national institutions such as the national broadcaster, the ABC, and our national research organisation, the CSIRO. Not to mention the potential from our committed investment to a national broadband network.

But almost 20 years on from our last commitment to a national cultural policy, we're now embarking on a new one, hosting this significant international conference in our country could not have been more timely. We can learn from your experiences. We can draw from your input and we want to.

But we're also challenging Australia, one of the world's great creative nations, to have input as well. It is time for this nation to better connect the arts and creative industries into the mainstream of modern Australia and to show how they can be

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connected better to our education and training system and I must say in this regard, a great starting point is the national agreement driven by our Prime Minister to the arts now being included in one of the 8 core components of the national education curriculum.

Connected better also to our design and industry and innovation base, connected better to our communications and information industries, and connected better to our diplomatic people-to-people engagements.

The overall theme of your conference is creative intersections. I like to also call this the joining of the dots. I want you to think about partnerships, about collaborations, to think about ways to work across issues and international borders to involve even more people in the arts. As representatives of countries that support the arts and cultural sectors, we must come away from this meeting resolved to do more to lead in the dot-joining exercise.

But what is also necessary and also timely is engaging better with the next generation. Earlier this year, I announced a review of private sector support for the arts in Australia, chaired by an eminent Australian businessman and philanthropist, Harold Mitchell. In a piece of work commissioned for this report, social commentator Hugh McKay made this point: "the current generation appears to place a higher value on creativity and correspondingly a lower value on conformity"

Being trained to believe that they can do anything and being determined to live in accordance with their values, perhaps the members of generation Y will revolutionise our approach to tackling problems of social inequality. Perhaps they will also stimulate our interest in, and respect for, the idea that the arts can enrich the life of a nation. Our task is to tap that potential, to make sure it happens, and not to lament a missed opportunity.

The arts can indeed enrich the life of a nation. In Australia, we take immense pride in our creative individuals and industries, because they help us understand and to project our place in the world. Where we have come from, where we are now, and where we are going as a nation.

It is a wonderful realisation of past investments in our creative arts, but we can't afford to miss the opportunity to build on that legacy, on that commitment, on all of that enthusiasm.

So, in conclusion, I would like to thank the many people who have brought this summit to Australia for the first time. Not just IFACCA and its decision to bank on holding it here, but to Arts Victoria, the sponsors of tonight's dinner, including Australia Unlimited, and the Australia Council. I particularly want to thank Robyn Archer, who I saw here earlier tonight, and her team and everyone who has put together the outstanding cultural program associated with it, and I thank you, the many artists, performers, and creators of art and culture from around the world. It is a privilege to welcome you here tonight. Enjoy the experience, the engagement. It now gives me immense pleasure to officially open the 5th World Summit on Arts and Culture. Thank you. (Applause).

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KATHY KEELE: Thank you, thank you very much, Minister. Whether we're here from Africa, Europe, America, Canada, I think those words are good guides for all of us to think about where we are in our life cycle, how we can learn from each other and what our challenges are today that we need to overcome. So thank you very much for those words. That's quite wonderful.

Thank you also to the Premier for your words and to the Mayor. We appreciate those. And I just have one little piece of housekeeping for all of you. You will remember that we have a list of locations and sights we can go to tomorrow afternoon. It seems some of you haven't signed up and we're wondering if at the last minute you are really wanting to go or not. So please, by mid-morning next morning, tomorrow, make your way to those sign-ups so we can get a very good sense of who is coming and who is not going.

That's the housekeeping, and that's where we are in our speeches.