



AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE FOR THE CONSERVATION OF CULTURAL MATERIAL (INC)

Hon Paul Fletcher MP
Suite 1, Level 2, 280 Pacific Highway
Lindfield, NSW, 2070

16 December 2019

Dear Mr P Fletcher,

Re: Removal of the title 'Arts' from Ministerial Department

On behalf of the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material (AICCM), I would like to express concern at the step to move the Department of Communications and the Arts into a newly formed Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications.¹

About the AICCM

The AICCM is a not-for-profit organisation concerned with the conservation, preservation, research of, and access to Australia's tangible and intangible cultural, historical and scientific heritage. Since 1973, the AICCM has actively worked to promote the long-term care of Australia's heritage in recognition of the role that it plays in developing and enhancing our national, community and familial identities.

Our Concerns

Our concern is that the knowledge, skills and stories that our heritage embodies, and its role in creating a vibrant, rich and resilient society is at risk when it is not properly represented and supported at a federal level. In respect to the decision to make cost savings through the reduction of the departments, we refer to your speech to the Creative Regions Summit of 28 November 2019 in which the arts is vital to both employment and revenue, contributing \$111.7 billion to the economy in 2016–17.²

I acknowledge your sentiments, in the same speech, in relation to growth in regional Australia. Similarly, the AICCM supports development of jobs and respect for culture in regional areas. One example is the successful conclusion of a major project by the Bathurst Regional Council, the Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation (The University of Melbourne) and the AICCM to preserve cultural material and train conservators in a regional area.³

In order to continue these major projects, it is vital that the arts has support at the top tier of government.

Next steps

The AICCM is committed to preserving Australia's heritage as a resource for present and future generations. In that vein, the AICCM would support the following:

- Recognition of the Arts in the portfolio title

¹ <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/massive-backwards-step-australia-to-no-longer-have-a-federal-arts-department>

² <https://www.paulfletcher.com.au/portfolio-speeches/speech-to-the-creative-regions-summit>

³ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10344233.2018.1544328>



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- Reassurance of continuation of current programs
- Development of a national cultural policy to ensure longevity of the arts in the future

If you would like to discuss the matter further, please contact me at president@aiccm.org.au.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'J O'Connell'.

Jennifer O'Connell
AICCM National President