

Action Plan Proposal to the Government of Saskatchewan for the Arts Sector

... Short term steps. What can be done now!

Introduction

This action plan is based on a cultural policy framework that takes as its primary resources the 1990 Saskatchewan Arts Strategy Report and the Saskatchewan Status Report of 1993. The 2004 Minister's Advisory Committee on Status of the Artist (MACSA) also serves as a support.

Resources for the cultural sector, which are so critical to its growth, must remain an ever-present concern. The government must address the current SaskCulture (lotteries dollars) funding crisis by lowering the government license fee and secure adequate allocation to the Saskatchewan Arts Board.

This plan is presented as steps for immediate action in 2005 that will bring concrete meaning to artist equity proposals and coherence to arts policy.

The Saskatchewan Arts Alliance (SAA) proposes:

1. That Government adopt a pan-departmental **arts policy**, proactive in supporting and developing the arts sector and ensuring cultural sovereignty. The policy would recognize the fundamental value of all the arts, in all of their diversity. It should be grounded in the policy and strategies articulated by the Saskatchewan Arts Strategy. (** See Footnote.*)

2. The **arts policy** would recognize and be guided by the intent of the *Status of the Artist Act* (2002) which affirms the contribution of artists, the value of artistic creation in Saskatchewan life, and the importance of fair compensation (Section 3) and sets out guiding principles in establishing the rights of artists (Section 5). SAA proposes simple practical steps toward development of a full program for status of the artist reform.

2.1 Legislation:

SAA proposes the following amendments be made to the *Status of the Artist Act* in the fall session of the Saskatchewan legislature, 2005.

Delete in Section 6 the phrase "as far as it considers it reasonable and appropriate to do so".

Add a definition of professional artist (Section 2) that accommodates the definition provided by the 1993 Report on Status of the Artist and includes MACSA's (2003) addition of "traditional knowledge" and "cultural traditions".

Add general collective bargaining rights for artists, harmonized with federal legislation inclusive of full collective bargaining rights for artists' organizations; recognition of national agreements and provision for sector bargaining, recognizing the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board as the body for administration, dispute resolution and certification powers.

In regulation under the Act, provide that the guiding principles of the Act shall be the base terms of all government, agency and crown procurement policy.

2.2 Procurement:

The government enshrines in policy that 1% of budget for all new and refurbished public buildings be allocated to art purchase.

The government establishes a fair procurement policy for artists, in cooperation with artists' representative organizations that applies to all government departments, agencies and crowns.

Handbook: SAA has proposed previously and does so again, that between Culture, Youth and Recreation (CYR) and the SAA a single general information package be developed - a who, how, what for hiring, understanding artists' engagement and work circumstances document. This would be a major step forward in engagers, including government, handling of contracts with artists that would detail a) how to contract artists, b) copyright, c) who represents artists, d) a "help" column for artists and engagers. Distribution of such an "information" package should be wide spread in government, public agencies and the cultural community.

2.3 Occupational Health and Safety (OHS):

The government through cooperation between Saskatchewan Labour, OHS Division and key representatives establish an on going Health and Safety Advisory Committee for the Arts and Cultural Industries for the purposes of establishing working guidelines for health and safety, research and resources. Such a working group could be facilitated through examination of similar work elsewhere in Canada. Key artist and producer organizations would include SAA, ACTRA, AFM, CAEA, CARFAC, DGC, IATSE, PACT, SCC, Sask. Film Producers Assoc. and SRIA.

2.4 Workers Compensation:

The government act through the Minister of Labour to remove the exclusion of artists from the regulations of the WCB Act. Further, that educational materials and guides be produced by the WCB, in consultation and cooperation with CYR, SAA and artists' representative organizations, that would be addressed to artists and assist their understanding of WCB processes and options.

2.5 Taxation:

Enact the following recommendations of the MACSA Report:

#5 – Full exemption from provincial income tax on any grant income earned by individual artists from the Canada Council, Sask. Arts Board and other Canadian granting agencies.

#6 – Provincial tax exemption of up to \$30,000 per year on income derived from copyright, neighboring rights and / or other income derived from sale of any creative work.

Note: these recommendations are supported by the 1993 Status Report

recommendations, are similar to tax measures in other provinces, and are within the powers of the Provincial Government.

2.6 Status of the Artist – established support system:

The government makes provision under the *Status of the Artist Act*, or by other means, for creation of a body – Council, Commission, or Committee – as envisaged and described in the 1993 Status Report. Such a body to have responsibility and powers as delineated there, inclusive of the following critical areas: to propose measures for the improvement of artists' working conditions, to defend and promote professional status of artists, to maintain contact in all disciplines, to act as a resource for artists not within collective bargaining organizations, to act as a resource to the Minister and to work in cooperation with government at all levels.

2.7 International Trade:

The government, particularly the Department of CYR and the Minister, are urged to take critical account of the present international trade debate concerning cultural diversity and protection of cultural sovereignty. Other provinces have taken an active interest in these negotiations and the discussions are within the appropriate interests of the province since they are proving to be of issue to all concerned with Canadian culture, particularly such issues as copyright and traditional knowledge.

To conclude:

SAA acknowledges that the government has reengaged MACSA to continue work on those issues left in November 2004 with insufficient study. We believe the Committee should continue investigation of those issues and problems. However this does not prevent action. Almost all of these proposals are based on recommendations from the arts community that are more than fifteen years old. ***The time for the government to act is now.***

Why Take Up These Seven Proposals?

They will make definite progress on Saskatchewan's cultural policy for artists' equity.

They will enhance the Saskatchewan's social and economic goals.

They will make a clear, positive statement to artists and cultural organizations of the government's intent to put the principles of the Status Act in to reality.

They will make Saskatchewan an especially artist / cultural industries "friendly" place. These are simple steps that can be taken now.

* Footnote:

Saskatchewan Arts Strategy: Focus on the Future (1990): Policy concepts and goals.

as a society we have confidence in who we are, what we are and where we are; and that we have ownership of our culture, including the arts we have the courage, responsibility and political will as individuals and a community to support the arts, and that commercialism and popularity will not determine the value of the arts we have developed circumstances that empower both Aboriginal and non-

Aboriginal artists

artists in all disciplines are able to earn a living from the making of their art
a continuing and open dialogue exists among artists in Saskatchewan,
Canada and the rest of the world, and that creative ideas and
expression are exchanged
the arts community in the province continues to be diversified but is also
united, working together toward common goals
from early childhood on, the arts are an integral part of the lives of
Saskatchewan people
resources for training and education in the arts are available
the expanding audience for the arts in Saskatchewan is open, informed,
enthusiastic and demanding
everyone in Saskatchewan, regardless of where he or she lives, has
opportunities to engage in the arts.

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