

REFLECTIONS

A SUMMARY OF 30 YEARS OF CULTURAL POLICY DISCUSSIONS IN SASKATCHEWAN

August 6, 2008



**Ministry of
Tourism, Parks,
Culture and Sport**

Reflections: A Summary of 30 Years of Cultural Policy Discussions in Saskatchewan
was prepared by Heather Ritenburg in consultation with Ministry staff for the
Saskatchewan Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport

August 6, 2008

Table of Contents

Letter of Introduction	iii
Executive Summary	v
Introduction	1
1. Culture – Why Does It Matter?	1
2. Inclusion and Diversity	4
3. Stability, Sustainability and Advancing the Sector	5
4. Fragmentation Within and Across the Cultural Sector	7
5. What a Cultural Policy Must Address	9
Cultural Policy	9
Government’s Role in Cultural Policy	10
Summary	13
Appendix A: The Definition of Culture	15
Appendix B: Legislation	17
Bibliography	19
Endnotes	23

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Letter of Introduction



Welcome to *Reflections: A Summary of 30 Years of Cultural Policy Discussions in Saskatchewan*.

The Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport was created to improve quality of life and build pride of place in Saskatchewan. A vibrant arts, culture and heritage sector is key to reaching that goal.

I have a vision of Saskatchewan as a province of vibrant communities that celebrate their unique identity and contribute to a sense of pride. I envision a province where the arts, culture and heritage sector thrives and forms a strong cultural identity – the foundation for provincial growth and prosperity.

Arts, culture and heritage play a key role in sustaining growth and prosperity in communities and enhancing quality of life. For many years, the arts, culture and heritage sector has lacked a long-term plan for growth and sustainability. Our ministry is committed to crafting a meaningful and transparent framework to help ensure that the sector's needs are met while maximizing its contribution to our economy and vibrant communities.

I would like to thank all the people who have contributed to making this document a reality, including various provincial ministries, consultants and cultural organizations, as well as our colleagues in other provinces and national organizations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christine Tell', written in a cursive style.

Christine Tell
Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport

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Executive Summary

Over the years, the Government of Saskatchewan and the arts, culture and heritage sector have engaged in a number of reviews, needs assessments and policy research relating to culture in general. The government has also received considerable advice from various stakeholders in the arts, creative industries, heritage and multiculturalism sectors.

The purpose of *Reflections – A Summary of 30 Years of Cultural Policy Discussions in Saskatchewan* is to capture the essence of this valuable information into a single document that will help the government and the arts, culture and heritage sector collectively move forward. This document, together with input from key stakeholders within the sector, government partners, and the public, will inform priorities and form the foundation for a provincial cultural policy framework and action plan.

Reflections is a report of historic documents and is not intended to reflect the current state or status of any of the issues/themes highlighted. It captures the broad strokes relating to cultural policy. Direct quotations are used as much as possible to most accurately capture the spirit and meaning of what has been written.

Thematic analysis was used to identify five key themes:

- 1) Why culture matters – this theme highlights the varied perspectives relating to the value of culture, including the social, economic, environmental and individual benefits, as well as community sustainability.
- 2) Issues of inclusion and diversity – this theme discusses cultural vitality and acknowledges that people from a variety of cultures comprise our province including First Nations people, immigrants and today’s new comers. It acknowledges the importance of multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion, and suggests more work needs to be done to address racism, equity and cultural retention.
- 3) Stability, sustainability and advancing the sector – this theme discusses sector sustainability, including the ingredients needed to grow and develop the sector. It suggests that the sector functions with limited resources, uncertainty and the absence of a framework to guide activity. Frequent analysis aimed to resolve specific problems has discouraged horizontal thinking and collaborative planning.
- 4) Fragmentation within and across the cultural sector – fragmentation is a key challenge within the arts, culture and heritage sector. Fragmentation is understood as gaps in strategic thinking about sector development (which have limited sector growth and career development) and gaps in relationships and connections to organizations, individuals and enterprises in other sectors.

- 5) Considerations of what a cultural policy should address – many reports contain specific suggestions as to what a cultural policy’s purpose, goals, principles and objectives could be. Many of these proposals are universal in nature and remain relevant today.

A series of questions that seek to affirm, clarify and elicit further input with each theme identified can be found at:

<http://www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca/Reflections-Cultural-Policy>

Introduction

Reflections – A Summary of 30 Years of Cultural Policy Discussions in Saskatchewan is organized around five key themes. The material in each theme highlights the material created by the Government of Saskatchewan and the cultural sector over the last 30 years. The document begins by summarizing the various opinions and reasons about why culture is important to the people of Saskatchewan.

1. Culture – Why Does It Matter?

“[Culture] defines who we are as a people; keeping alive our past, reflecting our values, articulating our dreams, and fostering pride in who we are.”¹

It is important to define the meaning of culture to provide a common understanding of how it is interpreted throughout this document. The definition of culture used in *Reflections* is a hybrid from SaskCulture Inc. and from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] (Appendix A).

Advice offered to government, as well as discussions in the cultural community, emphasize the complexities to be considered in placing or measuring the value of culture and/or the cultural sector. Simply put, culture matters because “. . . it is who we are.”² It defines who we are individually and collectively.³

The value of culture, the value of involvement in culture, and why culture matters may be viewed from the perspectives of the individual, of society, and of government:⁴

Viewed from an individual’s perspective, cultural participation can change one’s view of the world or choices within it. . . . Viewed from a society [sic] perspective culture’s value is found in the cohesion resulting from engaging in culture; the coming together of community to celebrate and participate. And finally culture’s value to government lies in its ability to treat all citizens equally, to encourage innovation and creativity, to create economic opportunity, to educate, to enrich, to help citizens realize their full potential.⁵

SaskCulture speaks to the value of culture as a dynamic between the individual and society:

As it becomes increasingly evident that our complex, rapidly changing and knowledge-based society requires informed, educated and capable individuals who can manage social change and the demands of the new economy, it also becomes increasingly evident that participation in culture results in increased creativity, new forms of literacy, an acceptance of learning and education, an orientation towards personal growth and other qualities that enhance society and the individual. In terms of human development, participation in cultural activities can contribute to the development of children and youth through the development of the social skills required for cooperation, sharing, negotiation, as well as through

improved motor skills. Involvement in cultural activities leads to the development of individual creativity and the development of intellectual capacity. In addition, the involvement of children and youth in cultural activities and the productive involvement in structured, meaningful activities reduces involvement in self-destructive and negative social activities and produces more cohesive, healthy and emotionally bonded families.⁶

Reports ranging from the arts to heritage have discussed the importance of Saskatchewan's landscape:

The landscape [is] an important determinant of our history and culture. The natural history of Saskatchewan, as well as its social history, shapes our collective identity and moulds the sense of place for which our culture is renowned. The grandeur of our skies, the subtlety of our landscape, the harsh extremes of our climate are reflected in our cultural expression. We depend on our natural world for the basic elements of physical life and we also have a spiritual need for contact with the natural world.⁷

The heritage sector links environmental concerns to quality of life. For instance,

Re-using a building makes use of the resources and non-renewable energy that went into constructing and maintaining it. . . . The re-use of buildings reduces greenhouse gas emissions produced during the demolition and reconstruction process.⁸

Another value of culture is pride. A 2006 heritage and museum market study noted that “. . . pride and identity [were] top-rated as outcomes of preserving heritage buildings.”⁹ Heritage resources, such as museums, are instrumental in educating citizens about our cultural experience and promoting understanding in the process.¹⁰

The value of culture is also linked to economic development. Weseen and Olfert reported that “. . . there is a strong link between cultural activity and economic growth, the cultural sector is a growth industry in itself, and that governments can expect to see sizable returns on money invested in the cultural sector.”¹¹

The economic impact of certain cultural activities is understood to be greater than others: “. . . cultural industries often involve ‘levering’ investment from outside of the Province either through public or private sectors.”¹² For example, the film industry levers significant investment into Saskatchewan:

The total average provincial investment in film projects supported through the SEFTC [Saskatchewan Film Employment Tax Credit] is 17.4 % This means 82.6 % of total production financing is leveraged from other sources. . . . For an annual provincial investment of \$6.5M, \$37.5M in SFETC production volume is generated including \$23.5M in direct Saskatchewan spending. This brings \$17M each year into the provincial economy that

would not come without the industry being active and competitive enough to access these funds.¹³

Other cultural activities can have a similar leveraging impact: “Support for the Saskatchewan Arts Board similarly can encourage Canada Council contributions to provincial arts groups.”¹⁴

Scholars such as Richard Florida have popularized attaching an economic value to quality of life and cultural amenities.¹⁵ Weseen and Olfert reported similar findings, suggesting “. . . there is a strong, positive relationship between the percentage of creative workers in a region and the economic productivity of that region.”¹⁶ As stated in a submission to the Task Force on Municipal Legislative Renewal, “Culture plays a very important part in communities, both in terms of our quality of life and our ability to produce what we need to sustain a viable standard of living.”¹⁷

Culture – or social capital – is a key to successful community development. Evaluating only economic measures of success leads to one set of policies. Adding cultural measures to the mix should lead to another that is more successful at promoting the non-economic networks that make communities sustainable over time.¹⁸

Weseen and Olfert considered the relationship between intrinsic and economic benefits, noting, “The cultural sector . . . can be a source of economic development, both through increasing the quality of life in our communities and through increasing productivity and economic growth.”¹⁹ For example, “research confirms that culture plays a significant role in tourism, community revitalization, and economic development.”²⁰

Similar ideas were reflected at a 2004 conference in Regina focusing on the *creative city*. Christine Ramsay stated,

Successful cities of the future will produce complex human spaces, landscapes, or scenes – people climates for active communities that are inclusive of all races, sexualities, backgrounds, and lifestyles. The development of these environments can bring new urban life and vitality, stirring up innovative ideas and the collective energy to make them reality.²¹

At a 2006 conference, hosted by the Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy, Greg Baeker stated that “authentic urban environments bubbling with lively cultural and entertainment options are magnets that attract and retain creative people. This creative workforce in turn generates wealth in an expanding knowledge economy.”²²

Artists and cultural workers play an invaluable role in our province. They help us sustain a high-quality of life, define ourselves as a people and a province, contribute to ongoing creativity and innovation of our citizens, and create new jobs in emerging industries.²³

These views were also found in the 1996 report on multiculturalism legislation:

Not only does retention of cultural values, heritage languages and creative expression enable fuller understanding of the value in diversity, but facility in multiple languages and cultures also prepares Saskatchewan citizens to work professionally to develop businesses in the global marketplace. Clearly, continued investment in cultural diversity will result in social and economic dividends for Saskatchewan, now and in the future.²⁴

However, concern has been expressed, such as by Saskatchewan musician, Brenda Baker, about focusing on the instrumental value of culture:

When I hear phrases like ‘art for the public good’, it has at least two interpretations, and a red flag waves madly as I imagine future artists receiving more opportunities to behave as social-worker-community-animators than they do as creators of their own new work. There are many agendas at play and I wonder where the agenda of individual artist fits in, exactly. And what is its value?²⁵

At times, cultural expressions are meant to challenge existing values rather than to uphold or display them for celebration.²⁶

Finally, there is the understanding that a goal of culture is the provision of individual benefits such as engagement, enlightenment, self-actualization and confidence.²⁷ Measuring the value of culture and the cultural sector is complex and multifaceted.

2. Inclusion and Diversity

*“From many peoples strength.”*²⁸
[Saskatchewan’s provincial motto]

Numerous reports and documents in this review have addressed the importance of creating cultural policies, practices and programs that acknowledge diversity and value inclusiveness. SaskCulture states, “It is essential for a culture to be varied, vital and thriving in order for it to play a pivotal role in the development of society. A vital culture is diverse, multicultural and is meaningful on both a public and a private level.”²⁹

Government has been advised that “culture possesses the integrative potential needed to treat communities as dynamic wholes. . . . Any initiatives must be culturally sensitive, and done in ways that take account of different perspectives and fundamental cultural assumptions.”³⁰ In addition, “. . . if culture is the means by which human beings conduct relationships with one another, then language is the basis of all human culture. Language is necessary for the creation and preservation of most of the intangible aspects of our cultural heritage: customs, stories, songs, saying, games, ceremonies, beliefs, and attitudes.”³¹

Peoples from an array of cultures have always had a vital role in Saskatchewan's economic and social development, from the many First Nations peoples, to the waves of immigrants at the turn of the century, to today's newcomers. Saskatchewan proudly celebrates its cultural diversity.³²

"Celebration of cultural diversity, however, like tolerance, is insufficient. Understanding, acceptance and respect between peoples are worthy goals which . . . legislation and policy can support."³³ "While cultural retention, intercultural understanding and heritage languages remain integral components, over the years there has been significant augmentation of the definition of multiculturalism in Saskatchewan to include anti-racism, creative expression, equity, and immigrant settlement issues."³⁴

Various reports have identified specific groups either as not having their needs met by publicly funded programs, or as having been marginalized due to racist attitudes, lack of communication, small and scattered population,³⁵ or differences in culture.³⁶ In the early 1990s, the Arts Strategy Task Force Implementation Committee noted the need to be more inclusive of rural and northern residents, and the need for Aboriginal peoples and communities to be included in programming, hiring and representation.³⁷ Youth and young adults have been identified as marginalized from civic participation.³⁸ The Fransaskois community has reported that "over the years, many social and political pressures have jeopardized the survival of this community's language and culture."³⁹

There is also the need to ensure that First Nations and Métis peoples have cultural self-determination, which includes an understanding that ". . . from a traditional First Nations point of view, culture, heritage and natural heritage can not be separated"⁴⁰ Accordingly, "It is important that marketing and use of heritage resources which are of spiritual, cultural, and/or historical significance to First Nations people be regulated and monitored to ensure that their use is appropriate to the culture they reflect."⁴¹

Government has acknowledged that ". . . a necessary complement of public participation is universal access"⁴² and has stressed the importance of multiculturalism as among the ". . . cornerstones upon which we will build a society that esteems our richest resource – Saskatchewan culture."⁴³ The concepts of multiculturalism and diversity share some similarities, but carry distinct differences. "While First Nations and Métis peoples and the [Fransaskois] Community assert their distinctiveness from multicultural organizations, they are also touched by the same issues of racism, equity and cultural retention."⁴⁴ Consultation, as both an attitude and a step in a process, needs to inform ongoing dialogues to develop awareness and mutual respect.⁴⁵

3. Stability, Sustainability and Advancing the Sector

*Sustainability can be defined as ". . . serv[ing] the present and future needs of the people of Saskatchewan."*⁴⁶

SaskCulture has stated that, "Sustainable development and the flourishing of culture are interdependent."⁴⁷ "Sustainable development is founded on integrated planning, proactive

resource management, preventative interventions, integrations of the economy with the environment and the philosophy that governments hold cultural and natural resources in trust for present and future generations.”⁴⁸

A systems analysis released by the Saskatchewan Arts Board in 1997 underscored the cultural sector as “. . . a setting of dynamic interaction that leads to stability or to change.”⁴⁹ However, a healthy relationship between stability and change is vital. “While it may be true that all systems are forever in a state of flux to some degree, they must at least be stable in order to function effectively.”⁵⁰

Sustainability appears closely linked to considerations for advancing the cultural sector. The Cultural Industries Strategy Committee worked to develop “. . . key result areas . . . as to how the cultural industries and the Government of Saskatchewan could work together to achieve sustainable growth and development.”⁵¹

Over the years, various sectors have identified what they believe they need to advance. In 1998, it was reported that advancing museums must involve marketing and promotion, being responsive, encouraging community involvement and ownership, a balance between market factors with preservation goals, and establishing a brand that is founded in preservation, protection and education.⁵²

For the heritage sector more broadly, the challenge “. . . is to design and implement an integrated heritage strategy which continues to save representative aspects of the province’s past while also interpreting and presenting our best resources to residents and visitors.”⁵³ For artists, advancement includes market access; capital investment in the arts; business skill development; market and audience development; artists’ unique working conditions; appropriate application of production incentive programs by government; and addressing the erosion of arts funding.⁵⁴ Broadly speaking, prominent themes that cut across the arts, heritage and cultural sector include a form of public engagement (i.e. public awareness,⁵⁵ marketing,⁵⁶ tourism⁵⁷ and/or touring⁵⁸), human resources,⁵⁹ education⁶⁰ and/or training.⁶¹

The concept of stability is linked to the fact that the cultural sector is not self-sustaining. The arts community, for example, has expressed concern regarding the “. . . effects of chronic underfunding – the limitations it imposes on artistic choice and quality. . . . Although everyone must be fiscally responsible, decisions made purely for economic reasons may over-ride aesthetic concerns . . . long-term development and artistic values.”⁶² Financial support in the province “. . . has been both limited and inconsistent.”⁶³ Further, “. . . it is evident that the arts and culture sector has been functioning for much of the last 35 years with a great deal of uncertainty with respect to funding and . . . without a framework that clearly identified the government’s commitment to this sector.”⁶⁴

Due in part to the absence of a provincial cultural policy, “. . . uncertainty and instability in the arts and culture sector have prompted numerous stakeholders in the sector, as well as government itself, to conduct frequent analyses aimed at identifying problems within the system.”⁶⁵ As remarked by Greg Baeker, “These policy and planning ‘silos’ [are] a poor fit

with local needs and perspectives. They discourag[e] the more horizontal, collaborative and bottom-up approach needed to build sustainable local cultural strategies.”⁶⁶

In 1995, the Government of Saskatchewan acknowledged the reports and studies of the cultural community by confirming “. . . the need of Saskatchewan for a stable cultural sector.”⁶⁷ Enhanced public appreciation, improved support for arts and cultural industries, effective human and financial resources, respect for self-determination and autonomy, responsibility and accountability, as well as equitable access to lottery funding are among the courses of action identified as a vision for Saskatchewan’s cultural future.⁶⁸

4. Fragmentation Within and Across the Cultural Sector

“Involvement of others is critical to reach our dreams and to create a viable future for our people and our community.”⁶⁹

[Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company]

For decades, the cultural community has expressed concern at the fragmented, intricate and sometimes fractured character of the cultural sector. Lack of coordination between stakeholders, together with a piecemeal quality to the study of the sector, has contributed to a fragmentation of vision for the sector.⁷⁰ It has also impacted human resource development including education and training,⁷¹ funding mechanisms,⁷² communication between stakeholders,⁷³ advocacy, sector lobbying, administrative efficiencies,⁷⁴ and more.⁷⁵

The nature and implications of this fragmentation were well-documented in the 1997 report entitled, *Provincial Funding to Arts & Culture in Saskatchewan*.⁷⁶ The Saskatchewan Arts Board utilized a systems model of analysis to frame the examination of the major issues that challenge decision-makers in the sector. In this model, the arts and culture system is characterized by: the relationships among the system stakeholders; the authority they possess; the regulations governing their actions; the resources available to carry out their mandates; their work; and the outcomes and assessments of their work. “The strength or weakness of the system correspond to how well these elements and characteristics fit together.”⁷⁷

Weseen and Olfert noted:

Cooperation, coordination, and the creation of clearly defined roles are required not only for the purposes of allocating and receiving funding, but also to avoid duplication, capture synergies, increase productivity, and realize efficiencies. Such improved relationships and networking would be an asset not only to stakeholders, funders, and interest groups within the province, but also at municipal, provincial, and federal levels.⁷⁸

In 1995, the Government of Saskatchewan, in response to the cultural community, identified the need for integrated funding systems⁷⁹ such as could be provided by a single legislated arts agency.⁸⁰ Similar agencies have been suggested for multiculturalism and heritage, as well as within various sub-sectors such as film or music.⁸¹

Parallel support structures for francophone musicians and industry professionals, and Aboriginal musicians and industry professionals . . . [has led to] the development of three parallel music industries in the province, with three parallel markets, and minimal sharing of resources, supports, infrastructure, or expertise.⁸²

The intent of such agencies is to develop greater inter-sectoral and intra-sectoral communications in order to identify potential synergies and opportunities for increased efficiencies, effectiveness, coordination and partnerships.⁸³

Heritage has been identified as:

A multi-disciplinary field that encompasses a diverse range of individuals and organizations with an equally diverse range of interests, skills and abilities. . . . Currently, groups work to support their particular area of heritage and have little, if anything, to do with a wide range of heritage development.⁸⁴

Heritage has identified the need to build partnerships “. . . between cultural and natural heritage, with the tourism, education, scientific and business communities, and with the arts and multicultural communities.”⁸⁵ Heritage has called for “. . . a unified ‘voice’ to promote heritage and address heritage issues.”⁸⁶

In 2006, the *SMPIA/SaskFilm Human Resource Development Strategy* reported that “two significant barriers in developing human resource capacity are the lack of a coordinated approach to training and the absence of a training strategy.”⁸⁷ Similar fragmentation has been identified in the music industry.⁸⁸

Numerous reports highlighted the need for collaboration and partnerships. For instance, collaboration is considered to be an essential component of cultural tourism: “Tourism marketing is different from mainstream marketing in that tourist sites do not compete, but rather augment each other and therefore enhance each other’s ability to succeed.”⁸⁹

The Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan has identified “. . . partnership building [as] the foundation for strong, effective cross cultural programs.”⁹⁰ The Saskatchewan Arts Board, in a recent strategic plan, identified partnerships and collaboration as a key value for realizing their vision for the arts in Saskatchewan.⁹¹ And the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance recently stated that “. . . business support – whether monetary or non-monetary – continues to be about relationships and relationship building.”⁹²

Fragmentation within the cultural sector, including lack of coordination and cooperation, has impacted the development of the sector over the long-term.

5. What a Cultural Policy Must Address

The lack of an explicit policy framework for Saskatchewan's arts, culture and heritage sector has created a number of challenges, including those discussed in the other themes. To address such issues, two of Saskatchewan's provincial funders in the arts, culture and heritage sector, the Saskatchewan Arts Board and SaskCulture, have developed policy frameworks to guide their work.

The first section of this theme identifies what various groups have suggested should be addressed in a provincial cultural policy. The second section outlines the role of the provincial government in developing cultural policy.

Cultural Policy

Since at least 1979, a range of documents from government and the cultural community have discussed the need for a comprehensive cultural policy for Saskatchewan. Many reports contained suggestions as to what such a policy might or should address and/or be informed by, including what the purpose, goals, principles and objectives of a provincial cultural policy might or should be. While some variations are expected to exist between sub-sectors, there appear to be significant commonalities in the reports.

The Vichert Report, commissioned by Cabinet in 1979 and presented by the Cultural Policy Secretariat in 1980, stated that a cultural policy “. . . must, at a minimum, do three things: (1) protect and stimulate cultural life at the local, community level; (2) support excellence, both local and imported; and (3) offer some protection against the overwhelming impact of imported culture.”⁹³ The Secretariat stressed that “culture cannot be supplied by government, nor can it be abolished. . . . But government assistance can make the difference between a healthy and flourishing cultural life and a stunted culture.”⁹⁴

A series of consultations entitled, *The Culture Talks*, garnered public reaction to the Vichert Report and informed government response. The Honourable Clint White, formerly the Minister of Culture and Youth, stated that the purpose of a provincial cultural policy is to ensure the development of culture; to support those who are involved in culture; and the preservation of our past and present cultural products.⁹⁵ Six principles were presented as the “. . . cornerstones upon which we will build a society that esteems our richest resource – Saskatchewan culture.”⁹⁶ Principles included:

- 1) the value of culture;
- 2) public participation;
- 3) universal access;
- 4) community involvement;
- 5) the importance of multiculturalism in our society; and
- 6) the concept of Saskatchewan culture first.⁹⁷

Early in 1995, the Saskatchewan Municipal Government released the discussion paper, *Responding to the Community: Proposals for Cultural Development*, in response to approximately 11 major reports resulting from years of study in the cultural community. In

the paper was described six shared values intended to “. . . guide both current practice and the future opportunities outlined in this Discussion Paper”⁹⁸ including culture’s contribution; diversity celebrated; empowered communities; enhanced quality of life; excellence and professionalism; and the benefits of volunteerism.

In 1997, the Saskatchewan Arts Board released *Provincial Funding to Arts and Culture in Saskatchewan: A Systemic Approach*. The report emphasized the need for the Government of Saskatchewan to articulate a comprehensive provincial cultural policy to inform the long-term development of the arts and culture system in Saskatchewan, stating that “. . . given the interconnectedness of stakeholders, the lack of clearly defined roles, responsibility and authority over time have resulted in instability and . . . unproductive use of resources within the system.”⁹⁹

The Saskatchewan Arts Board has suggested a provincial cultural policy should reflect that culture is at the centre of the life of this province and is not just an aspect of that life. Further, a framework should provide for the development of an arts and culture system outlining objectives; government’s role; funds and funding; a fiscal planning model; stakeholder relationships, interrelationships, authority and autonomy; and an input and advice mechanism.¹⁰⁰

SaskCulture also provided input to the consultation process on the direction of the development of cultural policy. In December 2000, it was suggested that a comprehensive provincial policy should ask what kind of society Saskatchewan is becoming, and what kind of society we wish to have. The submission stated that “. . . a policy implies the existence of ultimate purpose (long-term), objectives (medium-term and measurable) and means (labor, money and legislation), combined in an explicitly coherent system.”¹⁰¹ It would acknowledge primary aspects of culture¹⁰² while “. . . dealing with culture in the broadest sense.”¹⁰³

In July 2001, at the request of Government, Dr. Joy Cohnstaedt consulted with the cultural community and proposed a Cultural Policy Framework for consideration. The framework established values and goals, vision and principles for cultural development in Saskatchewan, as well as articulated assumptions underlying the document.¹⁰⁴ The framework outlined principles to ensure fruitful collaboration between government and the cultural community, as well as objectives and short-term commitments to action.

Government’s Role in Cultural Policy

In 1981, the Honourable Clint White (formerly the Minister of Culture and Youth) stated, “. . . the involvement of government in the cultural process is not only appropriate but also essential.”¹⁰⁵ The role of government has been seen variously as to provide “assistance,”¹⁰⁶ as “. . . an enabler, an advocate, or a patron depending upon the kind and amount of need,”¹⁰⁷ “. . . to support [i.e. cultural production],”¹⁰⁸ to partner with the community,¹⁰⁹ as well as to provide leadership; encourage self-determination within the cultural community; promote effectiveness and ensure accountability; to sustain cooperation; and enable benefits for all Saskatchewan citizens.¹¹⁰ Government’s role has also been seen to include “. . .

planning, research, regulatory activity, inventory management, policy formation and marketing functions.”¹¹¹ And finally, “Government’s role of collaboration and cooperative development makes a major contribution to strengthening communities.”¹¹²

Informing and affecting a provincial cultural policy is a range of legislation that governs the actions of Government in regards to the arts, culture and heritage sector (Appendix B). While Government often provides direct funding to a variety of agencies and organizations, there is the expectation that it also understand and respect the principles of arms-length funding.

[The Cultural Agencies] play a special role as intermediaries within the system, channeling public funds to other stakeholders responsible for program delivery. . . . At the same time, they stand at arms-length from Executive Government. . . . This enables them to be responsive to the needs of the constituencies they serve in a way not readily achievable by Government, while helping Government to discharge its commitment to the public good through support for the activities of system stakeholders.¹¹³

The sector understands the Government of Saskatchewan has “. . . both the authority and the responsibility to ensure the well-being of the arts and culture system [as] it controls the key inputs to the system via the General Revenue Fund and the Lottery system.”¹¹⁴ The Saskatchewan Arts Board “. . . also maintains that government has a role in evaluating the effectiveness of sector outputs and in identifying and acting upon sector needs which are in the public interest.”¹¹⁵

The cultural sector and the Government of Saskatchewan recognize the need for a provincial cultural policy, anticipating the role such a framework will play both in acknowledging the importance of culture and in ensuring its continued growth and development.

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Summary

Reflections summarizes the cultural policy discussions in Saskatchewan for the past 30 years. The focus of this document is on past Saskatchewan-based reviews, needs assessments, documents and advice and is not intended to reflect the current state or status of any of the issues/themes highlighted.

Reflections highlights the many reasons why culture matters in Saskatchewan, from the perspective of the individual, society and government. It details challenges encountered by the arts, heritage and culture sector. These challenges include diversity and inclusion (acknowledging that more work needs to be done to address racism, equity and cultural retention); sustainability (acknowledging that the sector functions with limited resources, uncertainty and the absence of a framework to guide activity); and fragmentation within and across the sector (including gaps in relationships and connections to organizations, individuals and enterprises in other sectors as well as fragmentation in strategic thinking about sector development). Finally, the document discusses what a cultural policy could contain and the role of the provincial government in the sector.

There are a series of questions that seek to affirm, clarify and elicit further input from stakeholders on each theme identified. These survey questions can be found at:

<http://www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca/Reflections-Cultural-Policy>

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Appendix A

The Definition of Culture

The reports referenced in *Reflections* define culture in a variety of ways – some define culture to mean *the arts* or *heritage*, while other documents define culture in a broad, anthropological way by including the way of life for an entire society.

The definition employed by this document is that culture comprises:

the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize society. . . . It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of human beings, value systems, traditions and beliefs.¹¹⁶

Culture in Saskatchewan encompasses the following:

- **Arts** - An expression of inspiration and imagination, from the individual to the collective, from the grassroots to professional and institutional. Art reflects our culture, embraces our past, provides a window to our future to examine ourselves and our experiences and transmits humanity's knowledge of the world. *[Abridged from SaskCulture's Cultural Policy]*
- **Heritage** - Heritage is what we have received from the past. It shapes our present identity and provides insight for our future. Heritage includes intangible heritage such as values, languages, customs and genealogy, and tangible heritage such as natural heritage, documentary heritage, built heritage, archaeological and palaeontological resources, historic places, and sacred areas. Stewardship, conservation and preservation are key elements. *[Abridged from SaskCulture's Cultural Policy]*
- **Multiculturalism** - Refers to our openness to experiencing cultural differences. Multiculturalism is inclusive of all people and respectful of the rights of individuals and groups to maintain and practice their cultural heritage. It recognizes diversity and builds community by encouraging people to share, learn, appreciate, respect and accept. *[Abridged from SaskCulture's Cultural Policy]*
- **Creative industries** – “. . . can be defined as the cycles of creation, production and distribution of goods and services that use creativity and intellectual capital as primary inputs. They comprise a set of knowledge-based activities that produce tangible goods and intangible intellectual or artistic services with creative content, economic value and market objectives.”¹¹⁷

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Appendix B

Legislation

The Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport is responsible for the following legislation:

- *The Archives Act, 2004;*
- *The Arts Board Act, 1997;*
- *The Communications Network Corporations Act;*
- *The Culture and Recreation Act, 1993;*
- *The Doukhobors of Canada C.C.U.B. Trust Fund Act;*
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