



UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA

The Honourable Robert McClelland MP
Attorney-General for Australia
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
E: attorney@ag.gov.au

11 July 2011

Dear Minister,

Re. UAMA response to National Classification Scheme Review Issues Paper

University Art Museums Australia is an affiliated group of Australian university art museums that promotes links between professional visual arts practice and the university's teaching, research and community engagement objectives.

Australian university art museums are leading and dynamic contributors to the intellectual and cultural life of the nation. In contributing to the academic and cultural sectors, we demonstrate best practice in visual arts and museum research, production and community engagement.

In response to your request for submissions or comments on the questions posed in the National Classification Scheme Review Issues Paper we wish to assert that we are seriously concerned about the scope of a review currently being conducted by the Australian Law Reform Commission.

We understand this review has shown interest in whether it is feasible to apply the National Classification Scheme to artworks, in all their forms, before they are available and open to the public. In particular Question 7 asked whether 'some artworks be required to be classified before exhibition for the purpose of restricting access or providing consumer advice?'

We would wish to register our concern and strongly encourage you to reconsider the scope of the ALRC review in the context of its implications to Australian artists, arts organisations and Australian audiences.

Not only do we believe that such classification is unnecessary, but we are concerned that such a system of classification:

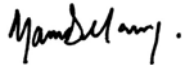
- would be completely unworkable due to the sheer number of works publically exhibited each year;
- would impose an inappropriate level of censorship and control over the work of artists;
- would position Australian artists and organisations at (extreme) odds with international practice, benchmarks and distribution networks;
- risks stifling creativity, innovation and freedom of artistic expression.

We see the significant costs and regulatory burdens of compliance as something which would have deleterious effects in the fragile not-for-profit sector of public museums and art galleries.

Universities and art museums are public spaces in which inspiring and challenging forms and ideas are encouraged to flourish. We see Australian society as a mature and creative culture in which the context of peer assessment and community participation and debate are the most appropriate means to consider the role and status of works of art, rather than government regulation or moral edict.

Thank you for your consideration of our submission.

Yours sincerely,



Max Delany, Chair, UAMA

For UAMA's Members:

Dr Vincent Alessi, Artistic Director, La Trobe University Museum of Art | LUMA

John Barrett-Lennard, Director, Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, The University of Western Australia

Tania Creighton, Staff Curator, UTS Gallery, University of Technology Sydney

Max Delany, Director, Monash University Museum of Art | MUMA

Margaret Farmer, Curator, National Institute for Experimental Arts, College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales

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Erica Green, Director, Anne and Gordon Samstag Museum of Art, University of South Australia

Campbell Grey, Director, University of Queensland Art Museum, The University of Queensland

Chris Malcolm, Director, John Curtin Gallery, Curtin University

Dr Chris McAuliffe, Director, Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne

Fiona Salmon, Director, Flinders University City Gallery

Prof Ted Snell AM, Director, Cultural Precinct, The University of Western Australia

Ann Stephen, Senior Curator, University Art Gallery, The University of Sydney

Leanne Willis, Manager, Art Collection and Galleries, Deakin University

cc.

The Honourable Simon Crean MP, Minister for the Arts

Professor Rosalind Croucher, President, Australian Law Reform Commission

Kathy Keele, Chief Executive Officer, Australia Council

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