



**THE HON SIMON CREAN MP**

**Minister for Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government  
Minister for the Arts**

Reference no: C11/13125

**21 MAR 2011**

s 47F

Dear s 47F

Thank you for your letter of 5 January 2011 to the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, the Hon Tony Burke MP, concerning the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH Convention). Your letter has been referred to me as Minister for the Arts.

While Australia is not a party to the ICH Convention at this time, the Australian Government is currently considering accession to the Convention, in line with the commitment set out in the Government's 2007 *New Directions for the Arts* policy paper. The Government is in the process of assessing the value, as well as cost to the taxpayer, of Australia acceding to the ICH Convention.

You may be aware that the Government already has a range of policies and programs in place that recognise intangible cultural heritage in areas such as the arts and culture, heritage, and Indigenous reconciliation and language.

Information on the Government's initiatives that support the arts, culture, Indigenous languages and broadcasting can be found on the website for the Office for the Arts: [www.arts.gov.au](http://www.arts.gov.au). The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPac) also administers a range of initiatives that identify, protect and manage Australia's heritage. Please visit DSEWPac's website for further information: [www.environment.gov.au/heritage](http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage).

On a related matter, Australia recently became a party to the UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (the CD Convention). The CD Convention entered into force in Australia on 18 December 2009.

The broad objectives of the CD Convention include fostering a climate for cultures to flourish, encouraging cultural dialogue locally and internationally and affirming the right of state parties to protect and promote a diversity of cultural expressions.

Again, the Government has already implemented a variety of measures to protect cultural expressions and promote cultural diversity, including through policies and programs that provide support for the arts and culture, heritage, education, foreign affairs and immigration. Further information on the CD Convention can be found on the Office for the Arts website at: [www.arts.gov.au/culturaldiversity](http://www.arts.gov.au/culturaldiversity).

Yours sincerely

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**SIMON CREAN**