

Culture News – Special Edition

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Province Responds to Arts and Culture Consultation Report

On February 14, 2011, Premier Darrel Dexter publicly released the findings and full report of the recent public consultation regarding arts and culture in Nova Scotia.

The study and its executive summary can be found at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/tch/>.

Premier Dexter also released a five-point plan for supporting achievement of creative excellence and growth of the creative economy that responds to the key findings from the consultation. The plan sets out government's priorities for supporting development of the arts and culture sector over the next several years.

Government has committed to:

- develop and introduce *Status of the Artist Legislation*.
- establish Arts Nova Scotia, an independent body responsible for decisions regarding funding to individual artists. It will take over responsibility for the peer juries that review applications and make all final decisions about grants to individual artists and then communicate those decisions.
- form the Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council, an evolution of the current Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council to provide a voice for the arts to dialogue with government and lead the development of a strategy for Nova Scotia's culture sector.
- develop a communications strategy for arts and culture, including a new interactive website that will allow for discussion and enable artists and cultural interests to showcase and market their work.
- create an interdepartmental committee to coordinate government efforts to support arts and culture development and address the needs and concerns of the community in a coordinated manner.

In the coming weeks, a panel made up of members of Nova Scotia's arts community will be established to develop the terms of reference for Arts Nova Scotia. This will include recommendations on criteria for members and how Arts Nova Scotia will interact with government.

This five-point plan not only addresses concerns raised during the consultation but builds on the experience gained with the help of the Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council. It contains the essential ingredients needed to set the stage for future growth within Nova Scotia's arts and culture communities.

Building On a Strong Foundation

The five-point plan announced by Premier Dexter on Feb. 14 responds to the themes identified in the recent public consultation and draws on the experience gained over the past number of years with the help of the Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council.

The plan:

- is based upon the advice received from 1000 consultation participants;
- takes advantage of the experience gained through the independent jury process in place since 2002 for reviewing applications for artist funding ;
- builds on the work of the Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council (NSCAPC) to advance appreciation of the importance of arts and culture to Nova Scotians.

With the evolution of the NSACPC to become the Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council, the arts and culture community will have a strengthened voice advising the minister, the department and government on all aspects of arts and culture policy. And the expertise brought by members of the council will be vital as it leads the development of a provincial culture strategy.

Key Facts – Where We've Come from and Where We're Going

Here are some important facts to inform discussion in the sector:

Status of the Artist Legislation

Strong creative economies can be supported by legislation that speaks to the importance of arts and culture to society. The five-point plan calls for such legislation to be developed in Nova Scotia to clearly articulate government's commitment to supporting creative excellence and describing the fundamental role played by the arts in building strong communities.

The Establishment of Arts Nova Scotia

- Since 2002, all funding decisions for the arts in Nova Scotia have been made by independent peer juries. Many of Nova Scotia's finest artists have contributed to this process over the years offering their expertise and knowledge in the pursuit of artistic excellence. All juried decisions are final and not subject to ministerial or political approval, allowing the arts to be judged solely on artistic merit.
- Under the five-point plan Arts Nova Scotia will be responsible for overseeing the work of the peer juries and announcing the decisions they make. This will strengthen the independence of decision-making related to funding for individual artists.

Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council to take on Leadership role

- Members of NSACPC were selected through a public call for interest and an open nominations and approval process. The nomination process is the same one used by the former Nova Scotia Arts Council.
- NSACPC is composed of fifteen individuals who collectively represent interests from Nova Scotia's arts and culture sector. Thirteen are nominated by the council itself from a list of individuals who have applied to sit as sector members, and then appointed by the Minister. The remaining two members are representatives from the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage. Sector members are appointed for three-year terms and may only serve two consecutive terms.
- Selection of members includes the following criteria; education, skills and background; relative experience within Nova Scotia's arts and culture sector; creation of a balance of representation by geographic region, the arts, cultural industries and cultural diversity; commitment to the process and ability to attend meetings.
- NSACPC's mission has been to facilitate the development, preservation and promotion of the arts and culture sector, in partnership with the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage and the arts and culture community. It fulfills its mission by offering guidance and advice to the Minister and by providing leadership to the sector.

- The NSACPC has provided advice to guide government's ongoing investment in Nova Scotia's artists, cultural industries and activities. Specifically, the NSACPC has been mandated to:
 - review any or all Culture Division programs and recommend revisions, as needed, to the Minister
 - advise the Minister regarding the creation and implementation of new programs and/or initiatives, as needed, for the continued growth of the sector
 - work to increase the visibility and demonstrate the importance of the arts and culture sector for all Nova Scotians
 - strive to increase government, community and private resources for the sector
 - help build capacity within the Nova Scotia arts and culture sector, and
 - foster a dynamic and direct relationship between NSACPC, the cultural sector, government and all Nova Scotians.
- Under the five-point plan the council will evolve to a more prominent leadership role. The leadership council will continue to reflect a broad representation of the arts and culture sector and current members of the NSACPC will be asked to join and continue to share their experience, skills and wisdom. As the mandate evolves the membership may broaden.
- In keeping with the current mandate of NSACPC, the Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council will be a primary advisor to the minister, department and government on issues related to arts and culture in Nova Scotia. The council will also lead development of a provincial culture strategy to unlock the potential of Nova Scotia's creative economy and support the underlying purpose and intention of the new status of the artist legislation.

Communications

- Participants in the arts and culture consultation spoke about the need for enhanced dialogue with the sector to strengthen relationships and clarify how government is supporting creative excellence and achievement in Nova Scotia. A communications strategy will be developed that includes a robust web presence for culture that allows for interactive discussion and provides the opportunity for artists and other cultural interests to showcase and market their work.

Interdepartmental Committee

- The recent arts and culture consultation highlighted concerns about economic incentives for the sector and the need to promote arts education and public awareness of the importance of the arts to Nova Scotia. As a result, this inter-departmental committee will be established in an effort to provide more scope

and understanding about how government can make it easier for the sector to deal with various departments and their programs. This committee will work with the Leadership Council, Arts Nova Scotia and the community at large to study and recommend ways to make it easier for artists to deal with government..

Stay tuned to future editions of Culture News for updates on implementation of the plan announced by Premier Dexter.