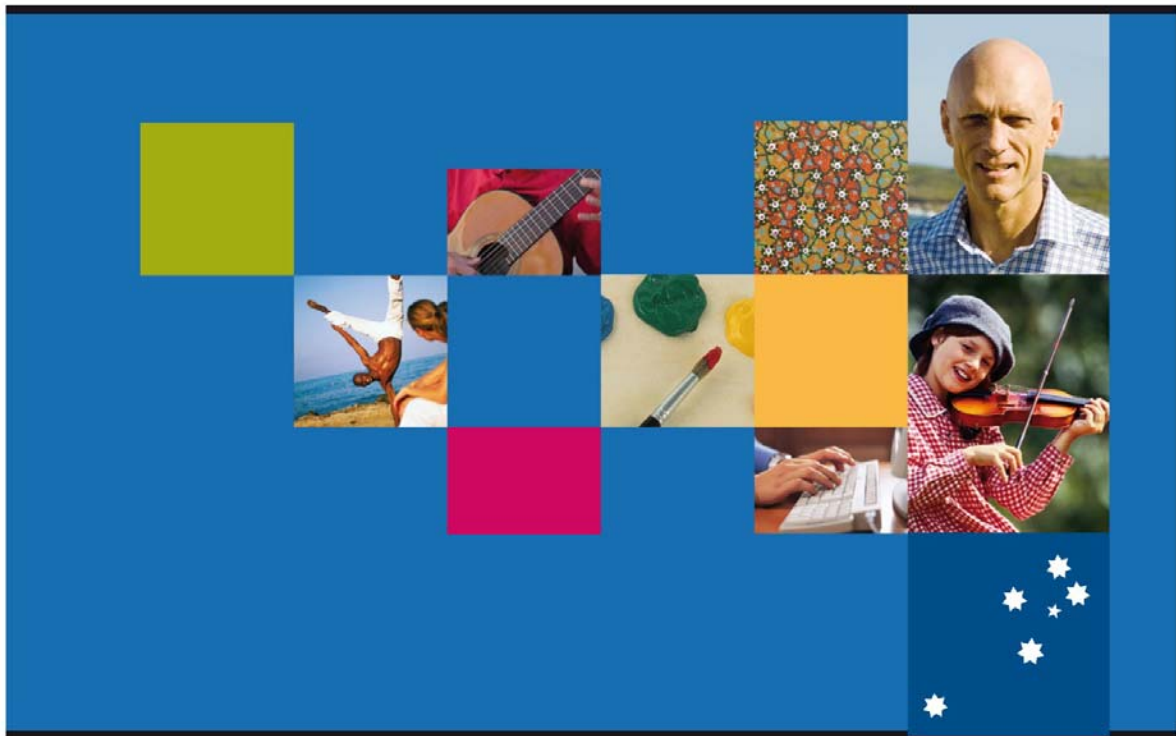


# New Directions for the Arts

Supporting a vibrant and  
diverse Australian arts sector



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[www.alp.org.au](http://www.alp.org.au)



## **Introduction**

As the century unfolds, the nature of our society will be determined by the energy and vision of Australian artists and the creative expression of all our citizens.

Labor is strongly committed to a vibrant, diverse, and well-supported arts sector. Under Labor, there will be recognition from the Prime Minister of the contribution of the arts to our identity, community and economy.

The arts tell our stories, paint our pictures and increasingly embody our innovative capacities and talents. The arts are worthy of support both in their own right and through their substantial economic, health, educational and social benefits. If supported and harnessed, the creative endeavours of artists and citizens will deepen cultural understanding and build economic prosperity in years to come.

In a modern and mature society, cultural, political and social values are constantly evolving. Artistic endeavour often leads and communicates these changes and governments have a critical role in ensuring this takes place in a supportive social, cultural and economic context.

A successful and sustainable arts policy is underpinned by the principles of access, equity, education, excellence and innovation.

All Australian school students should have the opportunity to learn and experience the full range of the arts. There is abundant evidence that education in the arts at early childhood, primary and secondary levels promotes literacy, numeracy and creativity, and builds team-work skills and respect for cultural diversity.

Younger audiences are increasingly blurring the boundaries between arts consumption and participation. Labor welcomes the emerging democratisation of cultural practice, and believes the talents of young Australians will drive our capacity to innovate and benefit from the new global digital economy.

The arts play a major role in conveying Australia's image overseas. By taking the best of Australian arts to the world, we communicate the unique character and qualities of our country.

A Rudd Labor Government will increase support for the arts, working to expand participation and enjoyment of the arts for all Australians, no matter where they live or what their circumstances.

Labor will build on the cooperative and collaborative arrangements between all levels of Government that were developed in response to the Myer Report into Contemporary Arts and Crafts and the Nugent Report into the Major Performing Arts Sector.

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# **1. Howard Government Neglect**

The Arts has been forced to the margins over the last eleven years.

The Howard Government has been slow to react to the growth of a globalised digital economy. The digital sector is a key field of creative industries policy and is characterised by strong employment growth and participation.

Over the last decade, Mr Howard has failed to make even one significant statement defining the role of Australia's creative industries in this emerging economy. While countries such as the United Kingdom and Singapore have shown vision, Australia has been left behind.

The Government's hastily devised anti-terror legislation engendered concern and confusion throughout Australia's arts community, with fears the new sedition clauses might threaten freedom of expression. Labor will review the legislation and remove the term 'sedition' from federal criminal law.

Mr Howard's approach to the arts has been characterised by the politicisation of board and ancillary appointments and a lack of ministerial accountability in decision-making processes.

The Howard Government has shown indifference towards Australia's role in the cultural world at large. Australia was one of only six nations that refused to ratify the UN Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in 2005. While 148 nations supported the Convention, promoting and protecting cultural diversity, Australia has isolated itself on the world stage.

## 2. Funding Models / Infrastructure

### *An Independent and Transparent Australia Council*

Labor is committed to an independent and transparent Australia Council with responsibility for the delivery of investment in new and existing arts programs.

The Council should undertake advocacy, encourage policy debate and work closely with arts organisations, individual artists, and state, territory and local governments to deliver arts programs to Australians.

Labor is committed to the principles of maintaining arm's length funding and a rigorous peer review process.

#### **Labor will:**

- **ensure a transparent process of independent board and ancillary appointments;**
- **consolidate the number of existing investment delivery bodies and ensure rigorous peer review processes;**
- **place a limit on the number of repeat board appointments to promote diverse and new representation; and,**
- **ensure that the mix of board appointments includes practicing artists, young people and arts entrepreneurs.**

Labor recognises that unnecessarily cumbersome bureaucratic processes shouldn't be imposed on artists, non-profit organisations and state arts bodies.

**Labor will implement greatly simplified and faster investment application processes, whilst acknowledging that accountable and rigorous processes underpin good governance.**

**Labor will review the system of fellowships and grants to determine the fairest and most effective way of supporting artists through the course of their careers.**

**Labor will consult widely with state government departments, local governments, relevant regional bodies and arts organisations to consider retrieving all suitable existing programs from DCITA and placing them under the Australia Council.**

Labor recognises the special needs of arts bodies for additional research and development funding, including a margin for risk and experimentation in supporting new work.

Labor also recognises that arts organisations face a looming challenge in delivering their programs to a younger audience with different consumer patterns. The boundaries between arts consumption and participation are being redefined, and arts organisations require support as they engage with these new democratic forms of cultural practice.

Labor is committed to ensuring that dance and small-to-medium-sized theatre organisations are given every opportunity to flourish.

**Labor will therefore ensure that the Australia Council develops:**

## New Directions for the Arts

- **A Dance Action Plan as identified in the Resourcing Dance Review (Australia Council, February 2004).**
- **A Small to Medium Theatre Action Plan, drawing on the ‘Small to Medium Performing Arts Review’ and the ‘Make it New?’ discussion forum.**

### ***Harnessing Private Investment in the Arts***

Australians are highly competent and innovative arts practitioners. The growth of the arts sector is currently impeded by a lack of genuine capital investment from the private sector and low levels of corporate philanthropy.

Significant private sector capital investment is needed across a range of sectors, including film, the performing arts, arts promotion, digital art and cross-disciplinary work between artists and other professions, to provide a greater opportunity for the arts to flourish.

Labor believes the private sector can benefit from supporting the arts, and will investigate ways to promote further capital investment in creative endeavours.

The Australia Business Arts Foundation (AbaF) is intended to facilitate and increase the amount of private sponsorship and philanthropy in the arts.

**Labor will review the performance of AbaF and examine ways to increase corporate support for artistic practice. Labor will consider merging AbaF with the Australia Council.**

### ***Taking our National Cultural Institutions to the Regions***

A fundamental role for the Commonwealth is the maintenance and development of our great national collecting institutions. Museums, libraries, galleries and archives are valuable sources of cultural information, and play a critical role in safekeeping and celebrating the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Australia.

Australians in all regions must be able to access quality traditional and contemporary works of both local and international artists. National institutions will be encouraged to tour their collections to ensure access by as many Australians as possible.

Labor is determined to ensure our national institutions flourish free from political interference.

**Labor will ensure that each national cultural institution develops a Charter of Operations that guarantees the operational integrity of the institution, and identifies its national responsibilities. Charters will ensure that our national institutions cultivate regional participation and access to programs.**

**Labor will require our national institutions to share resources where appropriate and identify opportunities to develop and grow the independent creative sector.**

**Labor will legislate to make the National Film and Sound Archive a statutory authority, following the de-merger of this institution from the Australian Film Commission.**

### 3. Supporting Australian Artists

Labor believes that the work artists produce shapes our identity and gives an immeasurable, sustaining dimension to the life of the nation; and that the arts, as a significant field of endeavour, are worthy of support in their own right.

Many Australian artists are poorly remunerated for their work. For example, the median income for Australian writers for all arts-related work in 2001 was \$11,700.

Labor recognises that artists often have the opportunity to produce unpaid work which contributes to the social, economic and cultural life of the community and increases the likelihood of paid work at a later stage.

**A Federal Labor Government, working collaboratively with the sector, state and local governments will implement *ArtStart* as a critical step in acknowledging the important role of Australian artists.**

**The *ArtStart* program will review the current state of artists' incomes and introduce initiatives that enable artists currently on welfare greater opportunity to produce work and generate employment.**

**Specifically, issues confronting young and emerging artists will be addressed through the provision of start-up assistance for professional artists.**

**Labor will develop a 'Social Security and the Arts' policy that harmonises current Australia Council, Centrelink and Australian Tax Office rules and determines the most equitable way to treat earnings and royalty payments for artists currently receiving welfare.**

Labor will consider adding 'participation in arts projects' to the criteria for employment and community participation in work for the dole programs where it is likely that such participation will improve a person's prospects of gaining employment or private income.

**Labor will implement a resale royalty scheme for visual artists.**

**Labor will implement a program of mandatory presentation by major performing companies of work created by and featuring young and emerging Australian artists.**

Labor acknowledges the vital importance of continuing support for the Educational Lending Right Scheme, which provides payments to Australian creators and publishers whose books are held in the lending libraries of educational institutions.

#### ***Parliament House Collection***

Labor will ensure the Parliament House collections policy embraces diverse works representing emerging and established artists.

Labor will consider establishing a Parliament House collection loans scheme, displaying works on a rotating basis in schools, communities and local councils.

## 4. Arts Access and Participation

Labor is committed to ensuring all Australians have the opportunity to participate in and enjoy the arts, irrespective of where they live or how much they earn.

Labor understands that any policy for equitable participation and access must place great emphasis on the development of arts in rural and regional Australia as well as in outer suburban areas.

Creative communities are demonstrably stronger socially and economically.

**Labor will work closely with state and local governments to ensure effective, strategic support, encouraging communities to identify and establish their own creative and cultural priorities.**

**Labor will work with the Australia Council to develop an *Arts and Disability Strategy*.**

### ***Regional Arts***

Labor acknowledges that arts activity in regional Australia has grown in recent years, providing opportunities for local communities and artists alike through increased cultural amenity, economic activity and social engagement.

It is vital that young people in regional areas have access to creative opportunities and are encouraged to participate in the arts.

Labor recognises the extensive work and consultations undertaken by Regional Arts Australia during the development of its 2007 Budget proposals which were rejected by the Howard Government.

**A Rudd Labor Government will work with Regional Arts Australia and examine ways to develop the arts in regional and remote areas.**

The regional touring arts programs are an important part of bringing the arts to regional and remote communities across Australia. They will form a core component of Labor's approach to the arts.

## 5. Arts Education for All Australian Students

**A Federal Labor Government will enhance the delivery of arts education.**

Nourishing the creative talents of our community requires a commitment to providing arts education for all young Australians.

Arts education provides the basis for a vibrant and creative arts practice that expands the artistic activity of the nation and fosters lifelong involvement and affinity with the arts.

Access to arts programs enhances students' engagement with school education, promoting cooperative learning and social skills, assisting the development of self-esteem and reflection, and promoting a culture of tolerance.

The National Review of School Music Education (NRSME) 2005 confirmed that music education is valuable and essential for all Australian school students (NRMSE Final Report, DEST, 2005). The report found that despite examples of excellent music education, many Australian students are denied such opportunities because of a lack of equity of access, lack of quality of provision and the poor status of music in many schools.

Only 23% of state school students have access to music education compared to 80% of students in non-government schools (Music Council of Australia, 'Trends in School Music Provision in Australia', July 2003).

**Labor supports the recent expansion of the schools touring program and believes an essential element of arts education must include the opportunity for students to experience performances in concert halls and theatres.**

**Labor will develop practical initiatives following consideration of the recommendations of the National Review of School Music Education Report and the soon to be released National Review of Visual Education.**

**Labor will work with state and territory education authorities, teacher employers and universities to review the provision of music education through the entire education system. This is the first step in creating a comprehensive music education program in our schools and educational institutions.**

**Labor will work with state governments to help target areas of need under programs that provide for professional arts practitioners to participate as 'artists in residence' in schools and as sessional staff in universities.**

**Labor will consider the yet to be released review of the Australian National Academy of Music as a teaching and training institution.**

**Labor will extend the mandate of the Australian Academy of the Humanities to include arts scholarship and practice to provide a source of independent advice on the arts.**

## 6. Developing the Creative Industries

Labor recognises that the nurturing and facilitation of creativity will provide societies with an increasingly fundamental resource to build and sustain new knowledge-based, information-rich industries. New media forms, which are creative by nature, will play a crucial role in this growth.

Artists are well placed to be new cultural entrepreneurs. Their success depends on greater links between the new media industry and creative artistry. Cultural content creation in countries like Great Britain and Japan has become a key generator of economic value in areas such as cinema, television, popular music and online.

Labor understands that increased synergy between artistic creativity, innovation and economic activity, if encouraged and supported, can make a significant contribution to the cultural and economic vitality of cities and regions.

Labor recognises that new creative industries, while placing considerable demands on the skills and talents of Australian artists, are models of what the global economy will look like in the future. Meeting these demands for skills and talents will provide Australia with a foothold in industries which provide intensive employment, high median income levels and significant international prestige.

Significant investment in education and new and emerging technologies is critical in developing the creative industries sector in Australia.

**Labor is committed to world-class telecommunications infrastructure for Australia, and will invest up to \$4.7 billion to establish the National Broadband Network in partnership with the private sector to boost productivity growth and build long-term economic prosperity.**

### ***New Media***

The emerging democratisation of cultural production is driven by the expectations, lifestyles and talents of young Australians. This new demographic, while widely dispersed, is conquering the tyranny of distance and changing the way we consume and participate in the arts.

New media forms offer exciting opportunities to hear, see and experience Australian stories and perspectives. New platforms, like podcasting, interactive television and wireless applications, will become increasingly central to our cultural landscape.

Labor recognises the cultural and economic importance of creative practice in new media. The new media industry encompasses a broad range of activities and skills, from cutting-edge digital art to high-tech industry growth areas such as gaming and multimedia design.

These emerging new media practices already make a significant contribution to the new digital economy and represent some of the most innovative and exciting work produced by artists. Labor will strengthen the links between conceptual inventiveness, design and technological know-how in this fast-growing new media industry.

There is a clear need for new approaches and forms of cooperation between universities and research institutions, the private sector, arts organisations, artists and governments to harness and further develop the industry.

## **New Directions for the Arts**

Labor is committed to innovation reform, including providing greater incentives for increased and additional R&D investment, complemented by market research both locally and overseas.

**Labor will aim to maximise Australian-sourced creative content in new media programs, exhibitions and installations.**

### ***The Digital Content Industry***

The digital content industry includes products and services across a number of sectors including film and television, gaming and Information Communications Technology (ICT).

In Australia it is estimated the industry is worth around \$21 billion p.a. and employs approximately 300,000 people.

Australia's current account deficit in cultural goods is almost \$2.8 billion (for the year 2002/03, 'Arts in Culture in Australia: a Statistical Overview, 2004'), including a deficit of around \$2 billion per year in the digital content industry.

**Labor will develop a *Strategic Digital Industry Plan* in response to the Digital Content Industry Action Agenda report. The plan will encompass the many aspects of the digital content industry, particularly addressing skills training and education for artists.**

The plan will be developed through relevant portfolios, and will include a framework to increase and target innovation investment, creating pathways for cooperative work between producers and distributors; government and the private sector; and artists and technologists.

In light of rapidly concentrating trends towards foreign takeovers of local companies, it is important to support companies who seek to retain intellectual property (IP) in Australian hands, and to renew investment strategies for the industry and ensure that the unique mix of creative, technological and business skills required in this dynamic global industry are developed on best practice bases here in Australia.

Labor recognises that engagement with the digital sector in the areas of IP, government procurement and export and innovation will be critical.

### ***Research and Creative Activity***

Developing creative industries must be a government priority. Labor has long recognised the need for a significant investment of political, financial and intellectual capital in the creative industries, maximising their considerable potential for sustainable economic growth.

Creative research is central to the growth of arts and innovation, and increasingly draws across disciplines and incorporates emerging technologies.

## 7. Building a Sustainable Film and Television Industry

Labor acknowledges the enormous contribution the film and television industry has made to the cultural life of the nation and its significant reach throughout Australia's population.

Film is one of the most powerful contemporary creative mediums and is capital and talent intensive. Australian creativity and stories are more often experienced through film than many other art forms.

Recent trends in the Australian film industry are concerning:

- production activity value dropped by 33% in 2005/06;
- the value of foreign films shot in Australia dropped significantly below the five year average;
- total budgets and value of television drama production were also down on the five-year average – 607 hours in 2005/06 compared to the five-year average of 667 hours; and
- private investment contributed just 7% to the Australian/co-production slate.

Labor welcomes the government's long-overdue response to the film industry review, including the introduction of the Producer Offset, the Location Offset and the creation of the Australian Screen Authority following the merger of the Australian Film Commission, Film Finance Corporation and Film Australia in 2008.

However, Labor recognises specific concerns raised by the independent production sector in relation to the government's reform package. Labor will conduct a review of the viability of the independent production industry, commencing within 12 months.

Labor will work with all sections of the film and television industry to develop a *Strategic Film and Television Industry Plan*, ensuring the commercial production industry has every opportunity to flourish.

**Labor will ensure that any efficiency gains as a result of the merger of the AFC, FFC and Film Australia will be used to increase support for the industry, including support for documentary-makers and first-time film-makers.**

**Labor will review the effect of free trade agreements, in particular the USFTA, to determine their impact on levels of Australian content, including drama, documentaries and children's programming on free-to-air and subscription television services.**

The ABC and SBS are two of Australia's most important community institutions and platforms for local creativity.

**Labor will provide adequate funding on a triennial basis to the ABC and SBS to ensure they can deliver quality public broadcasting services, including substantial levels of Australian content.**

## **New Directions for the Arts**

**Labor will amend the ABC Charter to mandate minimum levels of Australian drama on the national broadcaster, reflecting the similar obligations that apply to commercial television networks.**

**Labor will support innovative opportunities offered by ABC and SBS digital channels for enhanced arts programming and audience growth.**

## 8. A Strong Commitment to Indigenous Arts

Labor recognises that Indigenous art is expressed in many forms throughout Australia's urban, suburban and regional communities, representing a dynamic living culture that helps define Australia's image on the world stage.

Labor remains strongly committed to the reconciliation process, and acknowledges the fundamental role that Indigenous artists have played in building a dialogue between Indigenous and other Australians.

Labor recognises the profound cultural and economic contribution made by Indigenous art and craft, and creative artists, and is strongly committed to enhancing and strengthening opportunities for Indigenous arts practice, including music, dance, literature and visual arts.

Indigenous art and craft is currently one of the few ways that Indigenous people living in remote areas are able to engage in meaningful work, and this activity makes a fundamental contribution to alleviating poverty and enhancing cultural practice.

Aboriginal Art Centres play a central role as cooperatives which assist artists to produce significant amounts of Indigenous art, promote professionalism and ensure an adequate return of proceeds to Indigenous people and their community organisations.

Labor acknowledges the contribution of the recent report into Australia's Indigenous visual arts and craft sector, *Indigenous Art – Securing the future*. Labor has strongly argued for and supports the recommendations to increase scrutiny by the ACCC of unscrupulous conduct and develop an industry-wide code of conduct.

Labor will review any deficiencies in business and governance training, to enable Aboriginal Art Centres to develop sustainable business models.

**Labor will implement a resale royalty scheme, which would provide additional support for Indigenous artists who have experienced a boom in the Indigenous art market.**

## 9. Valuing the Contemporary Music Industry

Labor acknowledges the work of the Contemporary Music Working Group (CMWG) in securing a whole-of-government approach towards the future development of the contemporary music industry.

There are number of key issues facing the music industry, including structural and technological change, R&D investment, export and domestic promotion and regulatory reform. Labor recognises the need to enhance skills and education within the contemporary music industry, particularly in terms of vocational education and training.

**Labor will develop a long-term *Strategic Contemporary Music Industry Plan* as a means to enhance cooperation within the industry on an ongoing basis.**

**Labor will pursue options for boosting music industry exports through a more coordinated and consistent approach to international marketing. This will include establishing a unified presence at international trade events and exploring synergies with related industries, particularly in regional export markets.**

**Labor will investigate ways to promote private capital investment opportunities in the music industry, including through private sector microfinance models.**

**Labor will work with the states, territories and local government to reduce barriers to live music performance and encourage the growth of live music precincts in cities throughout Australia.**

### ***Australian Music Radio Airplay Project***

Community radio broadcasters play a crucial role in promoting contemporary Australian music to every corner of the country. Since 2000, this role has been supported through the highly successful Australian Music Radio Airplay Project (AMRAP). The project has provided regular and targeted distribution of new Australian music to Australia's 350 community radio stations, helping the sector broadcast diverse and fresh local releases to its four million weekly listeners.

Under the auspices of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBA), AMRAP has distributed more than 75,000 CDs by Australian artists. Over the same period, the level of contemporary Australian music played on community radio has increased 25%.

AMRAP also produces and distributes radio content promoting Australian music, and is responsible for developing a web presence to help community broadcasters, musicians, industry bodies and the public learn about new Australian artists.

Despite its clear success, AMRAP has not received any additional funding subsequent to its initial allocation of \$1.5 million in 1998. Over the last seven years, the project has been forced to gradually cut back its activities, and now operates in a reduced form.

**Labor will provide the Australian Music Radio Airplay Project with increased and extended funding of \$2.4 million over four years, helping promote new Australian music to community radio's four million weekly listeners throughout the country.**

## 10. Australian Arts and Artists Overseas

Labor believes that there is a vast and largely unexplored scope for Australian artists to succeed in overseas markets. This potential is reflected in the significant inroads made internationally by new digital art, Indigenous art, novels and non-fiction, and some specialist touring companies.

**Labor will ensure that there is adequate recruitment, training and appointment of cultural officers with broad arts experience to Australian embassies abroad. Cooperation and communication between DCITA and DFAT in relation to arts, including cultural exhibitions, export markets and skill sharing, will be enhanced.**

**Labor will establish an international arts information database with DFAT detailing Australian artists' work and international programs, trade fairs and exhibitions.**

In 2005, following extensive international negotiations, the General Conference of UNESCO approved (148 votes for, two against, four abstentions – including Australia) the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

The convention identifies the need to promote and protect cultural diversity, without hindering current legislative frameworks in signatory countries.

Despite the government's abstention, the Music Council of Australia argues: "The obligations imposed by the Convention are not onerous. For the most part, it *reserves the right* for governments to act, or *encourages* various types of action in support of cultural diversity. The entire document seems to sit comfortably with current practices in the cultural realm by the Australian government."

**Labor will ratify and give effect to the UN Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and consider ratifying the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.**

**Labor will examine ways to adequately protect artist's copyright given the challenges posed by new and emerging platforms and changes in consumer patterns.**