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Clover Moore MP
INDEPENDENT

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Creative Industries Must Respond to Climate Change

From eNews 501 - Friday, 18 June 2010

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES MUST RESPOND TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The creative industries have a significant role to play in responding to climate change, according to Justine Simons, the Cultural Strategy Manager for the Greater London Authority. Over the past week, Justine has been briefing City staff and key people in the arts about the action London is taking to encourage sustainable practices. On Wednesday she was a key speaker at the Greening Sydney Creative Industries Forum hosted by the City and the Creative Industries Innovation Centre at UTS.

Describing climate change as the biggest threat to the future development of civilisation, she explained that London, as an internationally-connected city, cannot insulate itself from its effects. Catastrophic climate change almost anywhere in the world would severely impact on London's economy. London is also vulnerable to flooding, drought and heat waves.

To address this London has set a carbon emissions reduction target of 60% by 2025, and invited the cultural community to help achieve it. London's cultural sector is a major contributor to the London and United Kingdom economies, is able to reach global audiences and champion global causes, and has a significant carbon footprint.

London has established a Creative Industries Steering Group, made up of people already committed to taking action, to guide its Green Creative Program. The program has already produced three booklets tailored to the theatre, film and music industries which provide practical industry specific information on reducing energy use and saving money in the process.

Sydney's cultural institutions are already responding to climate change. The Sydney Theatre Company have undertaken an ambitious Greening the Wharf program, which includes fitting its Walsh Bay home with roof-top solar panels to meet most of its energy needs and installing an innovative rainwater harvesting system. The Museum of Contemporary Art won the 2009 Lord Mayor's Sustainability Award for its initiatives with green IT and LED lighting. Its new wing will incorporate sustainable design that includes a seawater heat exchange with a fully integrated air-conditioning system. The Opera House, the Australian National Maritime Museum and the Botanic Gardens also have strategies to reduce water and energy consumption and to encourage recycling.

At the Forum, arts company representatives spoke about opportunities for collaboration, including international collaboration. One example was the possibility of Sydney and London theatre companies jointly bulk buying lighting and set construction materials, to make it more attractive for suppliers to provide sustainable alternatives.

The City will continue to work with our creative industries to support and encourage the adoption of sustainable practices.

Information
 ■ Information on London's cultural strategies and Green Creative Program at www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/mayor/publications/culture

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CREATIVE SYDNEY: BLOG COVERAGE OF 10 X 10

Creative Sydney

http://creativesydney.tumblr.com/

Most Visited - Getting Started Latest Headlines

Home - Creative Innovation Welcome to Flickr! Flight Bookings - Select Flig... D'Hub - From WORKSHOPP... Realise Your Dream Creative Sydney

1 week ago The Creative Industries Innovation Centre provides our 10x10 Project nominees with real-world support

CIIC Director, Lisa Colley, said that supporting 10 x 10 would enable the CIIC to achieve its vision of supporting the next generation of creative leaders.

"We believe that today's emerging creative practitioners are tomorrow's creative leaders, and by offering access to professional business support and advice, the Creative Industries Innovation Centre can help them to make that critical step-change," she said.

"Creative start-ups and entrepreneurs need different assistance compared to established companies, which is why we're offering tailored support packages.

"We hope that in a year's time we will hear some great stories from this group of 100 companies about how they have progressed as a result of the 10 x 10," Ms Colley said.

Read the full story (and find out more about the services the CIIC will provide) on CreativeInnovation.net.au

1 week ago



MUST CLOSE THIS SUNDAY 30 MAY 2010

DESIGN NOW!

Object Gallery
 417 Bourke St, Surry Hills
 Tuesday - Friday: 11am - 5pm

Play audio tracks

Transferring data from counters.gigya.com...

CREATIVE SYDNEY: THE LOOP COVERAGE OF 10 X 10

Creative Sydney - 10X10 - The Loop

http://www.theloop.com.au/creativesydney/10X10

10X10 HOME | BACK TO CREATIVE SYDNEY

10X10 PROJECT

Personal recommendation spools volumes, so who do Sydney's creative bosses turn to for inspiration?

10 creative leaders each nominate 10 creative businesses or practitioners, introducing us to the local creatives who inspire them.

Creative Sydney is working with the Creative Industries Innovation Centre to provide a practical benefit for a number of these nominees, taking a business development program, over the course of the next year, which could include support to develop business plans, workshop stops and prepare pitches for investment.

Browse the resulting 100 profiles on the 10x10 Project site, hosted by TheLoop.com.au. We'll be expanding the 10x10 Project in coming weeks, so start dreaming up your top 10 now...

SHARE Share Creative Sydney on Facebook!

Browse by 10x10 Curators

- 10X10 - HEIDI MIDDLETON & SARAH JANE-CLARK
- 10X10 - MARGARET POMERANZ
- 10X10 - ROB HIRST
- 10X10 - LIANE ROSSLER
- 10X10 - SIXTY40
- 10X10 - CHRIS BOSSE
- 10X10 - LEE LEWIS
- 10X10 - REBECCA CARRASCO
- 10X10 - RHODA ROBERTS
- 10X10 - ROSS DAWSON

SARAH-JANE CLARKE & HEIDI MIDDLETON Australia, NSW
Founders Sass & Bide
Sass & Bide is one of Australia's most loved fashion brands, recognized globally for modern, distinct designs. Sass & Bide is the namesake label of Sarah-Jane Clarke (SASS)...

FASHION DESIGN, ALL DISCIPLINES MORE

MARGARET POMERANZ Australia, NSW
Australian Film Critic
Margaret is a Sydney girl from birth, which she admits was many years ago, way before there was an Opera House on Bennelong Point.
After abandoning a degree in Economics...

EXECUTIVE, FILM MORE

ROB HIRST Australia, NSW
Midnight Oil Founder/Drummer
Rob Hirst is a musician and songwriter, a published author (Willie's Bar & Grill - Picador) and magazine contributor one of the founding members of Australian rock group 'Midnight Oil'...

TALENT, MUSIC MORE

LIANE ROSSLER Australia, NSW
Seed Planter at Eternal Harmony
Liane is a co-founder of GreenUps, Sydney Green Drinks, Co founder & Gritter at Knitty Gritty & Loopy, and Co founder & Collaborator of Pacific Islands Project (PIP). She is...

CREATIVE & ART DIRECTION, SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENT MORE

AUSTRALIAN CREATIVE MAGAZINE: CHANGE AGENTS PROJECT ARTICLE

CREATIVE

AUSTRALIAN CREATIVE - INSPIRATION FOR CREATIVE PROFESSIONALS



SOUND & MUSIC ISSUE

BEND IT LIKE BLAIR

Compose your own eccentric tunes

DIGITAL RADIO UNVEILS

More scope for creativity

NEW KIDS IN SOUND

A shift in audio production studios

AUSSIES IN AMSTERDAM

Take a dip with agency Twofish





Agents of change.

In a world of messy problems ...

... the power of Design offers a way ...



DESIGNERS ARE FACED with all sorts of challenges and none more so, perhaps, than how to challenge oneself. In an industry where innovation, adaptation and progressive practice are benchmarks, are we always the best at being introspective? Is there something more we could be doing, something different we could be offering than the multitude of other creative agencies essentially offering the same service?

In a landmark project, Digital Eskimo, in partnership with the Creative Industries Innovation Centre, are asking professional designers to help determine the future of the industry. The idea is to rethink how the skills inherent in design can be applied to a whole host of other complex and 'messy' problems, for the betterment of the environment and society at large.

What is the Change Agent project and how did it come about?

DAVID GRAVINA (DG) The project was originally presented as an idea at the AGDA Design a Better World conference last year, hosted by Alan Saunders. The conference asked whether graphic design could save the world. We answered this rather loaded question by posting that while it has a significant role to play – in shaping how our societies create meaning, interpret value and so forth – it is the way designers think and the process of design that could really impact on efforts towards a sustainable world.

We have since partnered with the recently established Creative Industries Innovation Centre (CIIC) to create the Change Agent project, which aims to support designers who want to apply their creative problem solving skills to a much broader array of problems than the industry has tended to work on to date.

ADAM BLAKE (AB) Our involvement with the project is aligned to our mission to increase the competitiveness, profitability, productivity and innovation of Australia's creative industries. The CIIC, hosted by the University of Technology, Sydney, offers a range of services to support creative businesses of all sizes in Australia, and also focuses on developing collaborative opportunities across and between industry sectors which strikes a chord with this project.

What exactly is a 'change agent'?

DG In this context a change agent is a designer who acts as a catalyst for change in society. We're referring to designers across all disciplines that are passionate about the capacity of design to bring about transformative change in society for positive social and environmental outcomes. We're hoping to attract designers who don't see design as being confined to a discipline or the creation of artefacts; people who see design as a creative problem-solving process that can be applied to any situation.

A change agent is a designer who is ready to engage with their colleagues, collaborators, clients and the broader community to embrace the opportunities that design offers for engaging with the more challenging problems. These 'messy' or 'wicked' problems tend to be those that are hard to define up-front, involve complex interactions between people and systems and often continue to morph over time. The design approach is perfectly suited to addressing these.

ge.

... the power of Design offers a way ...

... to embrace the mess.

What opportunity do you see for your world?

Agent Project.



Can you give an example of how such principles have been applied in practice?

DG One example that's particularly close to us at Digital Eskimo is a project we worked on last year. Businessman and peak oil expert Piers Dawson-Damer came to us with a brief to create a peak oil viral campaign that would frighten and shock Australians into action. (Peak oil refers to a point in time at which the maximum rate of global oil extraction is reached). From insights garnered through research we designed a response that barely mentioned peak oil but instead aimed to inspire people to return to a more local way of living, thus avoiding the contentious and divisive themes of peak oil and sustainability, while still championing intelligent responses to its impact. It turns out that what's good for your local community is almost always good for the environment and local resilience.

Through the design process we were able to completely rethink the project's strategy and purpose, ultimately creating the Live Local project. The first prototype – all design processes should emphasise prototyping – for the idea is a website that hundreds of people have used to document stories about their experiences improving their local communities. We call these endeavours 'experiments' and they range from simply smiling at your neighbours, to giving up your car to a blow by blow account of making your house more sustainable.

Live local has since been incorporated into a not-for-profit organisation, of which Piers and myself are directors, and is in its early phases of development. We are now designing the strategic plan for the organisation that includes partnerships with local councils and other organisations that can use the platform to provide a voice for their communities. We are also exploring the project's potential as an educational program in schools, a television show and a social change campaign much like the Life. Be in it. campaign. (See www.livelocal.org.au).

Another example, this time from the UK, is *live|work*. They were commissioned to reduce energy usage in households situated in a mining district. Through their research, they began to understand that energy efficiency was an abstract concept that was hard for the target audience to engage in, and actually not a huge financial priority. Using these insights, they designed and developed 'Saverbox'. Saverbox is basically a home improvement energy saving loan that's paid for through the savings households make on their energy bills by reducing their energy use. All this information was actually programmed to be displayed on the home television, which visually represented energy usage and how this was affected by consumption, thereby encouraging people to use less. It was an innovative project that not only reduced emissions, but made energy efficiency accessible, desirable and affordable for everyone. (See www.livework.co.uk/our-work/DOTT-07).



Why does the design industry need this project?

DG Design has been primarily employed for servicing consumer capitalism since the 1950s and the rise of the consumer product and advertising industry. With few exceptions the design disciplines have struggled to reduce their reliance on the consumer product and advertising industries. As a result, for the most part, our role has become one of servitude to our clients rather than trusted strategic partner.

We have become part of the problem, ironic for people who often become designers to solve problems. The winds of change are blowing and whole sectors are positioning themselves for a resource-constrained future. The design industry on the whole is only just beginning to engage with the shift. An increasing number of designers are looking to rethink their approach to value creation and their relationship with their clients and society, whilst a number of agencies and individuals have been forging ahead for years and have insights and methods to share.

It is about each of us redesigning our own design practices and ultimately the design profession itself. Through the shared method library we aim to give individuals, collectives, agencies and practices of all shapes and sizes some of the tools and knowledge they need to begin the process of transformation.

We accept that changing such fundamental aspects of our businesses will take time. Designers will need to prototype and implement the new ways in which they will interact with their clients and society. This project offers a platform to begin that journey.

AB Design and creative agencies have a great opportunity to apply the design processes they use in their daily work with clients to social, environmental and economic challenges, which we believe can have a positive impact on a wide range of industries across our economy. This is important for the CIIC as our remit is to uncover and support new market opportunities and approaches for the growth of the creative industries. The Change Agents project allows us to partner with leaders from industry, government and business to develop new ways of engaging the creative industries with other sectors. Designers as change agents act as innovation catalysts in this way.

So what is the next step for this project and how can designers get involved?

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To get involved contact David Gravina at Digital Eskimo on (+612) 9212 3366, email changeagents@digitaleskimo.net or visit www.digitaleskimo.net.

Creative Industries Innovation Centre call (+612) 8217 5000, email Adam.Blake@uts.edu.au or visit www.creativeinnovation.net.au.

How do you propose that designers can start to enact change?

DG We propose to co-create a shared toolkit that designers can utilise to map out and action a change program for themselves or their practices. This may take some people say two to five years to complete, with the goal being to go as far as personally viable and desirable.

We don't want to be too prescriptive as to what this tool kit will look like – this is a collaborative project so the people involved will have a big say in how it evolves. However, we envisage that it will likely contain a method library of case studies, stories, processes, materials and other useful design tools that we can all share and draw on, as appropriate.

AB This online tool kit will allow us to collectively build and share leading design thinking, practices and tools that facilitate people working in the creative industries to make a real contribution to sustainability. I think we all realise that often we need to draw on knowledge beyond ourselves, in order to ensure we are achieving best practice. This open source tool kit provides the opportunity to do just that.

AUSTRALIAN CREATIVE JUNE, JULY, 10

TEXT VERSION:

Could YOU be a Change Agent?

Jackie Hawkins, a Marketing & Communications consultant to designers and architects, gets to grips with the recently launched 'Change Agents' project and chats with David Gravina, Principal of Digital Eskimo and Adam Blake, Director of Programs and Partnerships at the Creative Industries Innovation Centre.

Intro

Designers are faced with all sorts of challenges and none more so perhaps, than how to challenge oneself. In an industry where innovation, adaptation and progressive practice are benchmarks we commonly strive for on behalf of our clients, are we always the best at being introspective? Looking at ourselves and our industry and asking, is there something *more* we could be doing? Something *different* we could be offering than the multitude of other creative agencies essentially

offering the same service? Do you ever ask yourself if you genuinely feel that you are being creatively stretched; that you are applying your creative problem-solving skills to maximum effect? Using your design skills to help tackle issues like runaway consumerism, climate change or social problems, or worse, are you worried that you may be contributing to the problem? For those of you fidgeting uncomfortably in your seats, and for those of you who may agree with leading thinker Roger Martin that humankind itself needs to become competent in 'design thinking', the time for change is now. In a landmark project, leading design thinkers Digital Eskimo in partnership with the Creative Industries Innovation Centre, are asking you, YES YOU, to help determine the future of the industry. To rethink how the skills inherent in design can be applied to a whole host of other complex and 'messy' problems, for the betterment of the environment and society at large. This is not to mention, the added value it will bring to the perception of the design industry itself.

What is the 'Change Agent' project and how did it come about?

DAVID GRAVINA The project was originally presented as an idea at the AGDA Design a Better World conference last year, hosted by Alan Saunders. The conference asked whether Graphic Design could save the world. We answered this rather loaded question by positing that while it has a significant role to play (in shaping how our societies create meaning, interpret value and so forth) – it is the way designers think and the process of design that could really impact on efforts towards a sustainable world.

We have since partnered with the recently established Creative Industries Innovation Centre (CIIC) to create the *Change Agent* project, which aims to support designers who want to apply their creative problem solving skills to a much *broader array* of problems than the industry has tended to work on to date.

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have been forging ahead for years and have insights and methods to share. It is about each of us *redesigning our own design practices* and ultimately the design profession itself. Through the shared method library we aim to give individuals, collectives, agencies and practices of all shapes and sizes some of the tools and knowledge they need to begin the process of transformation.

We accept that changing such fundamental aspects of our businesses will take time. Designers will need to imagine, prototype and implement the new ways in which they will interact with their clients and society and this project offers a platform to begin that journey.

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So what is the next step for this project and how can designers get involved?

DAVID GRAVINA We're now calling for input from the design community to help shape the initial strategy and direction of the project. Towards the latter part of the year we hope to begin the creation process in earnest.

For those keen to get involved or want to learn more, they can contact me directly at Digital Eskimo on 9212 3366 or changeagents@digitaleskimo.net or visit www.digitaleskimo.net

ADAM BLAKE And for anyone interested in learning more about how the Creative Industries innovation Centre can help them, please visit us at www.creativeinnovation.net.au or email Adam.Blake@uts.edu.au or call on 8217 5000

Jackie Hawkins
www.jackiehawkins.com.au
www.theloop.com.au/Jackie - portfolio

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In the business of ideas

Connect talks to Lisa Colley of the Creative Industries Innovation Centre

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Lisa Colley is director of the Creative Industries Innovation Centre at the University of Technology, Sydney, set up under the Australian Government's Enterprise Connect program. Connect asked Lisa about creative industries, the arts, and how the CIIC can help.

What is CIIC's role and what progress has been made so far?

Our remit is to support Australia's creative companies to increase productivity, efficiency and effectiveness. The centre has a national network of business advisers who work with small-to-medium creative businesses. They undertake a comprehensive business review and recommend how to improve future growth and operations. All the advisers have a strong background in creative industries and solid business experience.

To date, our advisers have completed 65 business reviews with a further 100 in the pipeline – clearly we are having an impact on the creative SME sector.

To ensure that creative companies of all sizes can benefit, the CIIC runs support services and provides resources through UTS and with partner organisations. A key platform is www.creativeinnovation.net.au, a business resource website for creative practitioners and companies.

The CIIC has initiated a business accelerator program for high-potential creative businesses and is developing programs to provide access to enterprise education and training and research and technology. We support and provide a range of events on topics as varied as fashion, intellectual property, digital innovation and screen business.

What are 'creative enterprises' and how large is this sector?

Creative industries include architecture, design and visual arts; advertising and marketing; film, TV and radio; music and performing arts; writing, publishing and print media; interactive content and games.

The Centre for International Economics (CIE) report (2009) found that in 2007 there were 100,000 businesses across these 13 industries.

How successful is Australia at developing and encouraging successful creative enterprises at home and internationally?

Considering the small size of Australia's population, the impact of creative enterprises is immense. They contribute \$31.1 billion towards GDP (2007-08 figures). This is greater than agriculture and fishing; communications; accommodation and hospitality; and the supply of electricity-water-gas.

While creative industries are a significant contributor to the economy, this contribution is under-developed. The significance of creative industries to national innovation can be realised and new markets grown through greater interaction and connection between creative and non-creative sectors.

What kind of enterprises have been engaging with CIIC and what assistance is most important to them?

Businesses in the creative industries need assistance primarily in strategic business activities, advertising and marketing, human resources, financial management systems, internal systems and product and service development.

Working with our advisers has allowed our clients to identify opportunities for improvement and growth, and to create an achievable implementation plan.

As the former managing director of the National Folk Festival, Jared Wilkins, said: "The review is there to not only improve your business through pointing out weaknesses but also to improve your business by highlighting hidden strengths."

I think creative companies appreciate the objectivity that our advisers bring to the table – just having someone else to look at your business from an outside perspective can be significant.



The other major benefit is that our advisers tend to put creative businesses in touch with other opportunities, or access to funding, that they wouldn't have known about before.

In practical terms, what do Australian creative businesses need to do, or to do better?

While government and business now recognise the value of creative companies, there remains a lack of understanding and awareness of the nature of this contribution at the company level.

Australia's creative companies add value across a broad range of industry sectors – such as manufacturing, sustainability, health, education and beyond.

We aim to demonstrate to creative and non-creative companies the benefits that result from industry engagement, while also identifying new business opportunities, networks and markets. In 2010 this will include work on themes such as integrating design in manufacturing; the role of design in sustainable futures; digital and creative innovation in the National Broadband Network roll-out; and skills transfer and new markets for the interactive media workforce.

Which parts of the creative sector do you identify as having the greatest growth potential?

The advances in technology and digital marketplaces mean that all creative industries have an opportunity to take their business from a local to a global market. We are a small market here in Australia, so there is an opportunity to take advantage of the digital economy.

Creative companies that have a good understanding of who and where their market is, and have converted ideas into services and products, can develop new business models and digital strategies to reach their customers or audiences on a global scale.

An example of this is Portable, a Melbourne-based social media agency that has expanded its operations to New York. Portable balances client fee-for-service work with its own product offerings, such as the Portable Film Festival – www.portablefilmfestival.com.

Where do the arts fit in? How can arts organisations engage with CIIC?

The CIIC has engaged with a range of arts organisations around Australia – many have had a business review, such as the National Folk Festival. For those that don't qualify for this service, visit www.creativeinnovation.net.au to access online support.

It is important for arts organisations to recognise that they are businesses too – even not-for-profits need a commercial focus in order to prosper. If you can't reinvest in your organisation then often it's difficult for it to continue.

Questions to ask include: Is your organisation looking at all the opportunities available and how would an entrepreneur view the business and the opportunities?

There is a need for arts organisations in Australia to look at new and online business models. By adopting new ways of doing business and getting to market, these organisations can diversify their income and strengthen their position, to reduce reliance on government funding and investment.

I would encourage arts organisations to contact us for a confidential discussion. Call the Enterprise Connect Hotline on 131 791, the CIIC head office 02 8217 5000, or visit www.enterpriseconnect.gov.au and www.creativeinnovation.net.au.

• According to the Creative Economy Report Card 2010 from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation

Abaf is a partner of the Creative Industries Innovation Centre.



Tom Vincent, jazz musician

I love the arts because I'm immersed in them! Arts leaders I admire Cathy Gurrin, Simon Rogers and Nicholas Hayward. **Film** ZEN (Japanese with subtitles) **Exhibition** Chrome. **Excerpt** as part of the 2010 MONA FOMA in Hobart (the Long Gallery). **Book** Swing to Bebop that TSO tuba player Tim Jones lent me. **Concert** Branford Marsalis at Sydney Opera House in March – Branford called my bro on stage to play his tenor with him. **Currently listening to** Vladimir Kozlovsk playing Rachmaninov piano concertos. **Performance** The first ballet I ever saw was so beautiful. I cried. It was Mozart in New York. **Arts space** Concert halls, now that I've just toured Australia playing in them, and found they work really well if you have a proper jazz sound person on the desk. **Guilty pleasure** Deliberately playing wrong notes. **Most memorable arts experience of my life** The first time an audience spontaneously stood up, erupting in applause in the middle of a lament piano solo (Amsterdam 2001). **If I wasn't a jazz pianist and composer, I'd be a** Zen monk. **Quote** "Always arouse a humble mind." – Eithei Dogen. **Tom Vincent's Australian tour was assisted by donations to Abaf's Australia Cultural Fund, and his partnership with Moorilla Estate was matched by Abaf's Tasmanian Premier's Arts Partnership Fund. Tom is embarking on a world tour in 2010. Find out more www.tomvincent.com.au and make a donation at www.abaf.org.au/act/**

TEXT VERSION:

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What is CIIC's role and what progress has been made so far?

Our remit is to support Australia's creative companies to increase productivity, efficiency and effectiveness.

The centre has a national network of business advisers who work with small-to-medium creative businesses. They undertake a comprehensive business review and recommend how to improve future growth and operations. All the advisers have a strong background in creative industries and solid business experience.

To date, our advisers have completed 65 business reviews with a further 100 in the pipeline – clearly we are having an impact on the creative SME sector.

To ensure that creative companies of all sizes can benefit, the CIIC runs support services and provides resources through UTS and with partner organisations. A key platform is www.creativeinnovation.net.au, a business resource website for creative practitioners and companies.

The CIIC has initiated a business accelerator program for high-potential creative businesses and is developing programs to provide access to enterprise education and training and research and technology. We support and provide a range of events on topics as varied as fashion, intellectual property, digital innovation and screen business.

What are “creative enterprises” and how large is this sector?

Creative industries include architecture, design and visual arts; advertising and marketing; film, TV and radio; music and performing arts; writing, publishing and print media; interactive content and games.

The Centre for International Economics (CIE) report (2009) found that in 2007 there were 100,000 businesses across these 13 industries.

How successful is Australia at developing and encouraging successful creative enterprises at home and internationally?

Considering the small size of Australia’s population, the impact of creative enterprises is immense. They contribute \$31.1 billion towards GDP (2007-08 figure*). This is greater than agriculture and fishing; communications; accommodation and hospitality; and the supply of electricity-water-gas.

While creative industries are a significant contributor to the economy, this contribution is under-developed. The significance of creative industries to national innovation can be realised and new markets grown through greater interaction and connection between creative and non-creative sectors.

What kind of enterprises have been engaging with CIIC and what assistance is most important to them?

Businesses in the creative industries need assistance primarily in strategic business activities, advertising and marketing, human resources, financial management systems, internal systems and product and service development.

Working with our advisers has allowed our clients to identify opportunities for improvement and growth, and to create an achievable implementation plan.

As the former managing director of the National Folk Festival, Jared Wilkins, said: “The review is there to not only improve your business through pointing out weaknesses but also to improve your business by highlighting hidden strengths.”

I think creative companies appreciate the objectivity that our advisers bring to the table – just having someone else to look at your business from an outside perspective can be significant. The other major benefit is that our advisers tend to put creative businesses in touch with other opportunities, or access to funding, that they wouldn’t have known about before.

In practical terms, what do Australian creative businesses need to do, or to do better?

While government and business now recognise the value of creative companies, there remains a lack of understanding and awareness of the nature of this contribution at the company level.

Australia's creative companies add value across a broad range of industry sectors – such as manufacturing, sustainability, health, education and beyond.

We aim to demonstrate to creative and non-creative companies the benefits that result from industry engagement, while also identifying new business opportunities, networks and markets. In 2010 this will include work on themes such as integrating design in manufacturing; the role of design in sustainable futures; digital and creative innovation in the National Broadband Network roll-out; and skills transfer and new markets for the interactive media workforce.

Which parts of the creative sector do you identify as having the greatest growth potential?

The advances in technology and digital marketplaces mean that all creative industries have an opportunity to take their business from a local to a global market. We are a small market here in Australia, so there is an opportunity to take advantage of the digital economy.

Creative companies that have a good understanding of who and where their market is, and have converted ideas into services and products, can develop new business models and digital strategies to reach their customers or audiences on a global scale.

An example of this is Portable, a Melbourne-based social media agency that has expanded its operations to New York. Portable balances client fee-for-service work with its own product offerings, such as the Portable Film Festival - www.portablefilmfestival.com.

Where do the arts fit in? How can arts organisations engage with CIIC?

The CIIC has engaged with a range of arts organisations around Australia – many have had a business review, such as the National Folk Festival. For those that don't qualify for this service, visit www.creativeinnovation.net.au to access online support.

The important point for arts organisations to remember is that they are businesses too – even not-for-profits need a commercial focus in order to prosper. If you can't re-invest in your organisation then often it's difficult for it to continue.

Questions to ask include: Is your organisation looking at all the opportunities available and how would an entrepreneur view the business and the opportunities?

There is a need for arts organisations in Australia to look at new and online business models. By adopting new ways of doing business and getting to market, these organisations can diversify their income and strengthen their position, to reduce reliance on government funding and investment.

I would encourage arts organisations to contact us for a confidential discussion. Call the Enterprise Connect Hotline on 131 791, the CIIC head office 02 8217 5000, or visit www.enterpriseconnect.gov.au and www.creativeinnovation.net.au.

* According to the Creative Economy Report Card 2010 from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation

AbaF is a partner of the Creative Industries Innovation Centre.