Country Arts WA Feedback on DLGSCI Draft Cultural Infrastructure Plan

**Have the key strengths of WA been listed? If not, what else needs to be included?**

* Vastness of the State and our beautiful Isolation (natural beauty)
* WA’s identity bound up in images and stories of regional space and culture (eg food and wine)
* The distinctiveness and diversity of regional communities
* Our proximity to huge Asian and Indian Ocean neighbours
* Lack of industrial development in wilderness areas
* Public transport networks are a weakness rather than a strength, particularly with respect to accessibility of regional centres. The cost of regional travel is prohibitive and hinders the ability to promote development of cultural industries and tourism in regional areas.

**Are these six layers appropriate and adequate? Are there any changes you would make?**

* Invert the layers so that Connected State was the topmost, then a narrower focus each layer ending with the Cultural Centre Nucleus
  + This would foreground what seem to be the broader goals listed against the Connected State layer in the diagram
  + It would also give much more weight to the key strength of Aboriginal culture and heritage - linking of Aboriginal cultural centres and regional Hubs as the infrastructure drivers across the whole state and them being seen as the Gateway to WA’s rich culture
* Perhaps there is only a need for 4 layers
  + Combine the first three to create two - Cultural Centre Nucleus and River City. There is too much duplication and pandering to metro centre. It may also lessen the notion of 80% being spent in one city block.
  + Combine Greater Perth Cultural Nodes and Metronet Hubs (this may also avoid the whole Mandurah not a region issue)
* There is only 1 layer for regional WA which is of course the bulk of the State, maybe 6th layer could focus on the major regional areas and a 7th layer for remote or most vulnerable and isolated communities
* The Regional Layer needs substantial additional work to explain the regional strategy and how it integrates with the other layers.

**Is the list of priorities for cultural infrastructure investment appropriate? What changes would you make to this list? Is the list of strategic objectives adequate? What amendments would you make to this list?**

* How about Local Leadership rather than the dated and patronising “Empowered Communities”
* Promote resilient and safe communities
* Build connection with local cultures and stories
* Celebrate and share community identities
* Incorporation of more diversity in decision making
* Local values will inform and strengthen decision making
* Unsure why there is a separate Strong and Resilient Regions?
  + Similar to the way First Nations considerations should be taken as read and always considered, so should Regional concerns - If the Regions were truly considered in all of the above Priorities, then would it need its own little box?
  + OR if we inverted the Layers and saw regional and FN identity as the drivers of WA’s cultural narrative, this would become the most important Priority?
* Each layer is so unique – not sure how the strategies are relevant to the layer
* Existing infrastructure – soft and hard - must be adequately funded before new initiatives are added. We cannot expect to add initiatives and attractions without significant additional funding

**Are there any other matters that you think should be addressed in the strategy and why?**

* The Regional section does feel very light on. Its really just some notions of existing Aboriginal Art Centres then the obvious regional centres. Do these adequately serve as Hubs or Connectors.
  + There is no talk of what actually connects these dots on the map - each region, including Perth - there is no connection from Perth to regions and between the regions.
* There is also no explicit talk of soft infrastructure vs hard ie people vs buildings. The Regions don’t need more buildings - they need soft infrastructure investment to enable the connectivity to Perth and each other, networked tourist experiences and the delivery mechanisms for local leadership and creative activity - **they need Regional Arts Hubs – can we not just name this in the document?**
  + Is this our Hubs? “whole of government regional services model for key regional art centres and the Aboriginal art centre network”
* From a First Nation point of view - if you look at Storylines they link one region to another.  For example, Rottnest Island has a Creation Story and the Songline leaves Rottnest travels to the Swan River and travels east to Kalgoorlie.  (I presume other Songlines would travel North and South.)  Along the way there are special Creation Stories for each Region and it links one town to another through Songlines.  All these Songlines connect all the regions together (they all end up at Uluru.)  The Song Lines are travel lines, where tourists can gain a wholistic experience and see how connected the State is.  How this Region is related to the previous region and how it relates to the next Creation Story Region.
* A lot of the strategy, particularly in Layer 6, is built around Aboriginal culture and cultural experiences, which is good. The reference on p42 to partnering with Aboriginal communities for formal recognition of sites of grief etc will need to be elevated to a much more prominent position in the strategic plan if those elements of the plan are to be genuine and meaningful. The Robben Island example is interesting as it confronts the Apartheid era, but nothing in the plan speaks to confronting our post settlement history in a similar way. Are we really ready for warts and all tours of the Rotto prison?

**Is there anything you think should not be included in the strategy and why?**

* In Kings Park it’s possible to have a quick botanical tour of the entire state – maybe to help link this Plan together, there needs to be a similar mapping exercise somewhere in Perth for arts and culture, showing how the connections are made and the significant artworks or cultural practices for each region.
* Create cultural arts and tourism podcasts for each region