

SUBMISSION ON THE CULTURAL COMMISSION 'S PHASE 1 OF THE CONSULTATION PROCESS - SEPTEMBER 2004

Comunn na Gàidhlig (CnaG) is pleased to be given the opportunity to submit the following views on the Commission's remit. As requested in the invitation to comment, issued by the Commission in August 2004, we have endeavoured to provide our response under the five headings which comprise the Commission's remit.

EDUCATION: All aspects of cultural activity should be regarded as an integral part of the individual, the community and the public institutions which provide Scotland's institutional infrastructure. Each individual should have an unrestricted right of access to participate fully in pursuing their cultural interests as part of the education system at all levels. Education has an important and crucial role to play in assisting the individual to gain knowledge and information on Scotland's rich and diverse cultural. In the context of Comunn na Gàidhlig's promotional and development remit, the Gaelic language and culture is an important element of Scotland's national identity and heritage. It follows, therefore, that the promotion of the Gaelic language and culture should feature prominently in all aspects of education at local and national levels. *Scotland's culture should be provided as an integral part of the core curriculum for pre-school, primary, secondary, higher, and further education.*

THE INSTITUTIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE: Unless cultural activity and awareness is mainstreamed into the work and remit of all public sector institutions in Scotland, maximum impact and effective delivery cannot be achieved. This will require an attitudinal change in the way in which public institutions view their responsibilities in promoting cultural activities and making provision for cultural policies as part of their normal service delivery. *It may require legislation to ensure successful implementation of such an approach.*

THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES AND ACCESS TO THEM: The widest access to cultural facilities can only be successfully achieved if all major public services in Scotland such as Education, Housing, Social Work, Health, Protective and Transport services embrace and recognise the *need to take full account of their obligations to ensure that cultural activities are offered as part of their respective service provision.*

MARKETING AND PROMOTION: The profile of audience participation and engagement with cultural activities can be enhanced by requiring the above public entities to *highlight the cultural elements of their activities in any marketing and promotional initiatives being undertaken by them, together with specific media campaigns by the Executive and other public bodies responsible for promoting Scottish culture.*

ENCOURAGING CREATIVITY: The creative potential of Scotland would be greatly enhanced by the Scottish Executive adopting *a strong and vibrant Cultural Strategy, backed with relevant legislation, if necessary, and adequate resources and a firm commitment to ensure the effective implementation of such a strategy. A statutory backed Cultural Strategy would confer rights enabling each citizen to access and experience the rich and diverse culture which Scotland has to offer.*

SUMMARY

In response to your offer to take the citizen's perspective, think radically and look ahead we would suggest the following approach:

Citizen's perspective: The Citizen should be able to access, participate and enjoy, as a right, Scotland's indigenous cultures of which the Gaelic language is an important element. The citizen should also be able to share in Scotland's cultural diversity by being able to experience the other cultural elements which Scotland has to offer.

Thinking radically: All aspects of Scotland's culture should be mainstreamed into all public service activities for the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Executive, Local Authorities, public bodies including the health service and all levels of education.

Looking ahead: Once cultural activities have been mainstreamed into the work of the public sector bodies the long term aim should be to incorporate cultural activities and awareness into all aspects of the private and voluntary sector throughout Scotland.

*Donald Martin
Chief Executive
Comunn na Gàidhlig
www.cnag.org.uk*

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