

Australian Cultural Policy as a Means of Reconciliation with Indigenous Australians

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Abstract

It is argued that governments at federal, state and local levels see support and commitment to Indigenous culture as a move towards reconciliation. Australian cultural policy rests on the assumption that instrumentalities of government play an important role in assisting the artist, arts organisation, public as audience, tourist, spectator or visitor and resident to enjoy and participate in the arts.

Supporting Indigenous culture is one way of doing this. This study examined Indigenous cultural policy at federal, state and local levels and its development through the Australia Council from 1970 until 2004. They exhibited significant variations in policy instruments (direct vs. indirect), but thematic similarities across states and cities. Findings identify how policies impact on patterns of development, funding approaches and positioning in Australia and the growth of awareness of Indigenous culture through cultural policy positioning.

Key words

Australia, cultural policy, Indigenous, reconciliation