READING EXERCISE > Read the article and answer the questions below.

Culture and creativity Underpin Innovation Thinking



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Text taken and adapted from *https://www.innovationaus.com/culture-and-creativity-underpins-innovation-thinking/*

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Arts, culture, and creative expression are fundamental to Australian identity. International and Australian research indicates Australians' high rate of participation in cultural and creative activities helps us develop a sense of belonging, forges social cohesion, stimulates curiosity, enhances our ability to engage with different perspectives, and has a range of benefits to health and wellbeing.

The cultural and creative industries are also proven drivers of innovation. Unfortunately, data suggests this is an area where Australia is falling behind. The *2021 Global Innovation Index* ranks Australia 25th in the world, down from 14th in 2014.

To drive innovation, diversification and economic growth, Australia needs to enhance its population's opportunities to gain and develop creative skills.

Middle Australians agree. Ongoing research, conducted by A New Approach (ANA) since 2020, demonstrates that this demographic directly links developing new ideas and adapting to change with access to opportunities for cultural and creative experiences and expression.

These middle-income swing voters living in outer suburban and regional locations want all Australians – especially young people – to have opportunities to develop creative skills.

The voices of middle Australians, and their overwhelming support for arts and culture as drivers of ideas, adaptation, and connection, should empower us as a nation to act boldly and prioritize creativity as a foundation for future innovation.

Doing this will lead to a stronger, more resilient, and adaptable national economy and society that will help advance Australia's position on the global stage.

An economy at risk of decline

Beyond our falling international innovation ranking, there are concerning indications that Australia's economic vitality is at risk.

According to a global study, Australia's ranking for economic complexity dropped from 57th to 86th between 1995 and 2019. The study observed that '…countries whose exports are more complex than expected for their income level, grow faster,' with a country's future growth potential directly linked to its diversification of exports

Australia's *Innovation Agenda*, which sets out the nation's approach to research and development, puts significant focus on scientific and technical innovation but tends to exclude cultural and creative innovation.

ANA research suggests that this narrow focus and lack of diversification is detrimental to Australia's economic growth, and will have negative impacts on the effectiveness, innovation, and adaptability of our future workforce.

The future of work

The Fourth Industrial Revolution is upon us. Given the exponential rate of technological breakthroughs and their ensuing disruptions to industry, we know systems of production, management and governance are changing rapidly.

This unprecedented level of transformation highlights the increasing urgency for Australia to prepare for the future of work.

The diverse range of skills that drive innovation – skills related to creativity, communication, business management and analysis – will become increasingly in demand in the future.

Employees will be expected to have these social, interpersonal, and lateral thinking skills in their tool kit even if they have specialized in a technical field. Workforces comprising employees with these skills are more likely to thrive in high-tech economies and be better positioned to meet the demands.

Given that success increasingly depends on workers' ability to adapt and innovate, there is a clear path forward for Australia. Developing creative skills

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within individuals across every industry will be crucial to preparing Australia for the future of work.

The opportunity for action

Pleasingly, Australians are keen cultural consumers. 82 per cent of Australians report attending cultural events and venues over a year compared to 64 per cent in the European Union. Australians, by and large, share a passion for arts and cultural experiences and these last few years have brought this to the fore.

Throughout ANA's focus groups, the role of arts and culture in bringing people together was raised repeatedly in the context of recovery from bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many were also aware that creative industries had been hit hard by the pandemic. This insight is borne out in the data; 'Arts and Recreation' was one of only two industries classified by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) as 'High Impact' – the other being 'Accommodation and Food Services'.

Further, the ABS identified that these industries were not only the hardest hit but are the slowest to recover their payroll jobs.

This highlights both the need and public support for deliberate action to rebuild Australia's cultural and creative ecosystem following severe disruption, including through improved public policy.

Planning for the future

A contemporary, national approach to innovation should include culture and creativity in any public policy initiative focused on innovation, productivity, and skills development. The 2021 Parliamentary Inquiry into Creative and Cultural Industries and Institutions delivered a *bipartisan* recommendation for a national plan for culture and creativity. The recent announcement that a *National Cultural Policy* will be developed by the end of 2022, and that it will consider the broader impacts of arts and cultural participation, is encouraging.

More effective policy should also deliver more effective investment. While investment from our three levels of government into culture is a small part of the overall financial inflows, it is powerful in ensuring all Australians, whoever they are and wherever they live, have opportunities to keep building the creative skills that are needed in the 21st Century.

If Australia can design, resource, and implement effective, cross-portfolio public policy that ensures all Australians have cultural opportunities to develop their skills in creativity, ideas generation and collaboration, the nation will be better prepared for the future of work, resulting in a stronger society and economy driven by innovation.

Comprehension Questions

A. Choose the best answer for each question.

1. Which of the following ideas is NOT included in this article?

a. Australians develop skills in creativity thanks to their link with cultural opportunities.

b. public policy change also needs to consider public sentiment and beliefs.

c. workers' ability to adapt and innovate may lead to success.

d. Australia has not improved its rank in innovation recently.

2. According to the text, which of the following economies would demand from its employees social, interpersonal, and lateral thinking skills in the future?

a. financial **b.** national **c.** high-tech **d.** artistic and cultural

3. Which of the following best expresses the main idea of the subtopic about economy?

a. The absence of diversity in cultural and creative areas has played against Australia's economic growth.

b. Studies suggest that Australia needs further investment in cultural and creative innovation to increase its exports

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c. Australia is facing problems because its workforce has not adapted easily to the diversification of products.

d. Technical innovation is necessary to bring vitality to Australia's economy and increase its ranking.

4. According to the article, it could be inferred that

a. Sports and culture encourages Australians to be open to new ideas and ways of thinking about existing challenges.

b. Middle Australians find themselves poorly prepared to understand arts and culture as sources of ideas in the future.

c. New national plans promoting arts and cultural participation will require a substantial investment from public and private sectors.

d. Australia has diversified into too few products to contribute to substantial economic growth.

5. Which of the following illustrates the challenge faced by some Australian industries?

a. Industries such as arts, recreation, accommodation, and food services were badly hit, and their recovery has been slow.

b. Cultural industries have faced problems with the poor attendance to their events.

c. Several industries have not helped their workforce to develop skills for the 21st century.

d. The cultural and creative industries have not been recognized as the leaders of innovation.

B. Based on the article, decide if the following statements are TRUE, FALSE, or NOT GIVEN.

1. Currently, the National Cultural Policy has impacted positively among the Australians. _____

2. Companies should develop their workers' creative skills since it is crucial in the future. _____

3. Participating in cultural and creative activities may be beneficial for people's health. _____

4. According to studies, Australia's iconic products have not been exported as expected. _____

5. Scientific innovation has been as important as cultural and creative innovation. _____

6. Creative expression, arts, and culture have hardly been related to Australian identity. _____

7. ANA has been supported by the government in their research since 2020. _____

8. Australia has not performed well in the *Global Innovation Index* for nearly 7 years. _____

C. Find the 'exact' word in the text above that matches each definition.

Tip: There is ONE WORD in the paragraph given to complete each exercise

P. 1 (*verb*) _____ = ***encourage or rise interest or enthusiasm***

P. 4 (*noun*) _____ = ***the opportunity to use or benefit from something***

P. 9 (*noun*) _____ = ***increase; expansion; development***

P. 11 (*adj.*) _____ = ***limited; restricted; small***

P. 15 (*adj.*) _____ = ***practical; applied; scientific***

P. 22 (*verb*) _____ = ***aim; point; concentrate***

P. 24 (*noun*) _____ = ***plans; strategy; proposed action***

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