

Nova Scotia Cultural Action Network
Nova Scotia CAN

The arts are a dynamic force that can lead Nova Scotia to realise its full potential as a culturally and economically vibrant society.

WHO WE ARE

The Nova Scotia Cultural Action Network – **Nova Scotia CAN** – is a coalition of individuals dedicated to the progressive development of the province’s arts and culture for the benefit of all Nova Scotians.

OUR VISION

It is time for Nova Scotians to think seriously about culture and the arts. Gifted with rich indigenous cultural traditions, we are home to distinguished contemporary artists in every medium. Yet our artists struggle against a climate of neglect, marginalisation and lack of support. We are not content with mediocrity. It is time to realise our full potential.

Nova Scotia CAN be a world leader in the arts.

Nova Scotia CAN have a cultural quality of life second to none.

Nova Scotia CAN honour its cultural traditions while embracing innovation.

Nova Scotia CAN dare to be great.

Nova Scotia’s greatest past achievements arose from looking forward, from embracing innovation and critical thinking. We foresee Nova Scotia taking its rightful place on the world stage by building on its many strengths – making more effective use of existing cultural infrastructure and energising its diverse creative communities.

Our vision encompasses the arts (performing, literary, visual, media) and cultural industries (film, television, publishing, sound recording) throughout the province. Like other small and dynamic societies around the world, we can be world leaders in many areas of contemporary expression.

Nova Scotia is alive with creative people who have chosen to live and work here. It benefits **all** Nova Scotians when artists and their communities have the means to realise their ambitions, whether on a local or an international scale. The arts are vital to a sustainable economy in an age of intense competition and threatened natural resources. We cannot afford **not** to invest in the arts.

We advocate a “culture of culture” – an adventurous engagement with the arts by a confident, culturally literate population. Our songs and stories, the objects that surround us, the images that provoke our imagination, the ability to appreciate them to the fullest – these are essential to the good life, no less than health, education and economic security. Exports, tourism and development all benefit from a strong cultural sector, but culture is more than a means to a livelihood. It is what we live for.

WHAT WE AFFIRM

- 1) Nova Scotia has the artistic capital to be a world leader in the arts and cultural industries.
- 2) Individual and collective creativity is the source of all cultural dynamism, expressed in work that is innovative, daring, experimental, challenging and constantly evolving.
- 3) Our artists deserve recognition and respect.
- 4) Cultural excellence depends upon professional artists earning a livelihood from their art, commercially and non-commercially, in the studio and in the community.
- 5) Vigorous public and private support for professional artists, arts organisations and productive infrastructure is crucial to any successful cultural strategy.
- 6) Public support should facilitate and nurture artistic creation rather than direct it, respecting the autonomy and integrity of the community and its infrastructure.
- 7) Public arts policies and programmes must be transparent, inclusive, democratically accountable, developed through broad and deep consultation with the cultural community and free from political interference.
- 8) Arts education and lifelong participation in the arts are integral to Nova Scotia's cultural success.
- 9) Our citizens have the right of access to their own culture.

WHAT WE WANT

- 1) Greater access to and support for the arts and cultural industries. This will be achieved by:
 - a) creating greater awareness of the vital importance of the arts and culture to the social, cultural and economic life of all Nova Scotians;
 - b) promoting cultural excellence across the province by supporting centres of creativity where they exist and strengthening cultural infrastructure where it is weak;
 - c) striving for high professional standards – through arm's-length juried competitions, where appropriate – in all cultural aspects of public and corporate life, including design, architecture and public art;
 - d) making arts education, creativity and innovation high priorities in Nova Scotia's public schools and post-secondary institutions.
- 2) Major new investment – private and public – in the arts and culture sector so that it becomes the most dynamic component of Nova Scotian society – socially and economically – over the next ten years. This will include:
 - a) increased private investment, from businesses, foundations and individual donors, in a wide range of new and existing facilities, organisations and institutions;
 - b) increased public investment by all levels of government in ways tailored to the diverse needs of the sector;
 - c) significantly increased provincial funding as befits a designated growth sector.

- 3) Government policies and programmes that better respond to the needs and priorities of the province's culture sector. These will include:
 - a) full and open accountability for all cultural expenditures;
 - b) true arm's-length agencies which provide substantial funding for creative activity in the arts and cultural industries;
 - c) systematic collection of accurate, accessible and timely cultural data.
- 4) A strong and united provincial culture sector that has:
 - a) substantial, sustained and strategic support for professional creators at all stages of their careers, in all disciplines, in all regions of the province;
 - b) intelligently designed, operationally funded and professionally run cultural spaces in every region throughout the province, taking into account the actual needs of creative communities as expressed by those communities;
 - c) access to the infrastructure that makes creative work possible, such as affordable studio space and multidisciplinary, creative incubator facilities;
 - d) a recognition of the interdependence of the arts and cultural industries, of tradition and innovation, and of urban and rural priorities.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO

- 1) Identify and analyse models of successful cultural development in communities world wide.
- 2) Articulate cultural investment targets that will ensure transformative change.
- 3) Facilitate a cross-sector dialogue about the relevance and importance of artistic and cultural activity to the economic and social well-being of the province.
- 4) Utilise this research and dialogue to promote progressive policies and programmes to strengthen the infrastructure that makes creative work possible.
- 5) Identify and analyse successful models for advocacy coalitions and organisations.
- 6) Create a dynamic partnership of artists, cultural organisations, patrons, business associations, foundations and governments to work full time for the development and promotion of the arts in Nova Scotia.
- 7) Advocate for progressive initiatives in support of Nova Scotia's creative infrastructure.

Additional Information

Please visit our website at www.NovaScotiaCAN.ca.