



Submission to Manitoba Sport, Culture and Heritage  
in response to the consultation  
on a new culture policy for Manitoba

Canadian Museums Association

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June 2017

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## Introduction

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The Canadian Museums Association (CMA) is pleased to respond to the invitation by the Government of Manitoba to help create a new culture policy for Manitoba.

Museums are an important part of the fabric of our country. Canada counts more than 2,600 museums, public art galleries and related heritage institutions, the stewards to our national heritage who preserve our collective memory. Museums employ more than 32,000 people and over 103,000 volunteers (who contribute over 5.6 million hours per year!) across the country.

Close to 62 million people visit our museums, galleries, and historic sites each year, including 7.5 million school children. The economic and social impact of museums in Canada is enormous. Past surveys have demonstrated that people who visit museums indicate a very high appreciation level (78%), and agree that they provide valuable learning experiences (91%), whether they are located in large urban areas or remote communities.

No longer static or traditional temples, museums have transformed themselves into innovative community hubs, becoming more engaged and relevant within their communities. Museums across the world are engaging in new innovative activities and programs that reinforce their important social role. Many Canadian museums have developed and implemented social programs meant to engage the public in positive and innovative ways. From working with health agencies in developing therapeutic programs, to exploring the topics of climate change, sexual identity, mental health and disabilities, museums engage the public in important social conversations.

Canadians in turn have responded by making museums and art galleries popular destinations for all ages, in all parts of the country. Manitoba museums and art galleries retain their popularity through the development of a variety of programmes, exhibitions and services. As centres of lifelong learning, they are valuable resources in the research, preservation and interpretation of Manitoba's heritage. Museums and galleries foster a better understanding of Canadian life and its history with new Canadian citizens.

Most of Manitoba's museums are non-profit bodies, dependent upon dedicated volunteers and resourceful techniques to survive. They provide a useful model to be nurtured and require new tools for survival in these uncertain times. Therefore, in this submission, we will focus on four topics:

1. Increased Collaboration
2. Indigenous Culture
3. Modern Challenges
4. Financial Support

As you will see below, *Increased Collaboration* and *Financial Support* are like bookends: they underlie and support all our proposals.

## **About the Canadian Museums Association**

The Canadian Museums Association (CMA) is a national not for profit organization governed by an elected Board of Directors and active internationally in the International Council of Museums. The CMA counts 33 museums and art galleries as members in Manitoba. Among its activities and services, the CMA delivers the Young Canada Works (YCW) program, which offers summer jobs and internships in museums and related organizations for Canada's youth. This program is funded by Canadian Heritage in support of the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy. In 2016, 59 summer jobs and 4 internships in Manitoba museums received funding from the YCW program.

## 1. Increased Collaboration

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### a) Collaboration among museums

Museums succeed when they share their expertise, as have shown the award-winning conservation projects, educational programs and exhibitions developed in partnership between various museums and art galleries. Furthermore, national and provincial museums have a leadership role to play with other museums across Canada to ensure their skills and resources benefit all.

**Manitoba's culture policy should encourage museums to work closely together.** Examples of collaboration include shared storage space, shared conservation services, shared expertise, etc. Resources are and will continue to be limited. National and provincial museums have incredible expertise which should be shared with the wider museum community, from curatorial training, exhibit design, marketing, conservation, public programming, etc.

**An effective way of encouraging such collaboration so is to continue to provide support to the Association of Manitoba Museums and increasing its funding to help it perform its networking and support roles.**

### b) Collaboration among GLAMs

The second area where collaboration should be encouraged is across what is called the GLAM sector: Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums. In this regard, we will address a few of the questions raised in the 2017 Discussion Paper *Imagine Creative Manitoba!*:

Under *The Professional Arts*:

How can the high degree of connectivity and collaboration among Manitoba's professional artists and arts organizations to best advantage? Where might there be opportunities for increased coordination, consolidation, shared resources or efficiency? (page 28)

Under *Public Libraries*:

What can be done to maximize the role and contribution of libraries to the well-being of all Manitobans? How should the cultural policy address the challenges currently impacting the public library system? (page 78)

Under *Cultural Infrastructure*:

What can be done to ensure that cultural spaces engage a broad range of citizens? How can a new cultural policy be used to maximize the role and contribution of cultural spaces to the well-being of all Manitoban communities? (page 91)

In December 2016, Library and Archives Canada and the CMA co-hosted *Taking it to the Streets, a Summit on the Value of Libraries, Archives and Museums in a Changing World*. This

international conference brought together hundreds of delegates to explore the social and economic value of galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAMs), share research, and discuss ideas for future collaboration, innovation and partnership. The conference culminated in the unanimous adoption of the Ottawa Declaration:

*Gathered in Ottawa for the Taking it to the Streets Summit, members of the library, archival and museum communities commit to find new ways of working together to increase the visibility and impact of memory institutions.*

*By adopting this Declaration, we commit to continually adapt and reinvent our institutions, and to promote the full value of libraries, archives and museums to Canadians.*

*Together, we will:*

- *Increase collaboration between our institutions and our networks at the local and national levels to catalyze new partnerships that spark creativity and enhance engagement;*
- *Develop innovative programs and services, and adopt technologies that empower us to engage our publics; and*
- *Enrich and expand access to our collections to ensure that our institutions contribute significantly to the public good and sustainable development.*

Therefore, to answer the questions above, **we believe that the cultural policy should encourage greater collaboration across the GLAM sector. Again, one way to facilitate this objective is to support the Association of Manitoba Museums as an organization that can help establish such collaborations.**

As an example – with the caveat that we have not researched its applicability to Manitoba – the British Columbia Museums Association, the BC Library Association, and the Archives Association of BC, signed in March 2017 a Memorandum of Understanding that formalizes cooperation amongst the province’s GLAM sector (galleries, libraries, archives and museums). The announcement of this initiative was made in the presence of the British Columbia Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development.

Increased collaboration may help to address this comment made at page 19 of the discussion paper: “While also a challenge in Winnipeg, the lack of venues and galleries in rural and northern areas limits artists’ access to presentation or publication opportunities to develop their professional art.”

## 2. Indigenous Culture

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### a) Background

By way of introduction to this section, we reproduce these relevant statements from the Discussion Paper *Imagine Creative Manitoba!*

“In recent years there has been increased recognition of the importance of Indigenous people to speak for themselves, to determine how they are represented and by whom, and to be involved in developments affecting them. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report acknowledges Indigenous rights to self-determination and recommends increased cooperation between museums and Indigenous communities. There is opportunity for greater inclusion of Indigenous perspectives across all aspects of heritage conservation especially relating to the research, care and custody of cultural materials and the representation of these materials and of the role of Indigenous people throughout our history.” (page 61)

“Globally, concerns of Indigenous peoples have received significant attention in the past decade. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People in 2007 recognized the urgent need to respect and promote the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples which derive from their political, economic and social structures, and from their cultures, spiritual traditions, histories and philosophies. The Declaration further expresses the conviction that control by Indigenous peoples over developments affecting them will enable them to maintain and strengthen their institutions, cultures and traditions, and to promote their development in accordance with their aspirations and needs (United Nations, 2008).

Support for Indigenous culture has often been part of general programs designed and delivered by government or partner Arts Councils, perhaps with additional assistance to remove barriers, or to otherwise ensure equitable access to programs. Insight for future public policy may be drawn from the Declaration in terms of the role of Indigenous people in determining the focus, design and delivery of programs for Indigenous culture.” (page 85)

We also note that *The Path to Reconciliation Act* adopted by the Government of Manitoba states:

*4 The minister responsible for reconciliation must guide the development of a strategy for reconciliation that*

*(a) is to be guided by the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the principles set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

We therefore address this question posed at p. 85 of the Discussion Paper:

How can the cultural policy help reflect the Government of Manitoba's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action? How can cultural policy and cultural activities help facilitate Reconciliation? What is the role of Indigenous cultural development in the Cultural Policy?

Aboriginal leadership in the museum community has significantly increased over the years, including the support for more indigenous cultural centres on and off reserves, and professional development programs. But Indigenous representation in the broader museum community is still too low, especially for a country like ours.

Other important museological questions that need to be addressed in our country are the care of aboriginal collections, their return to their rightful owner, the employment of more indigenous curators and directors, and ways of facilitating reconciliation.

The CMA and the Assembly of First Nations undertook a landmark study published in 1992 which led to the repatriation of human remains and sacred materials. This also led to the implementation of a training program for Indigenous people at the Canadian Museum of History, and the establishment of many new indigenous run and owned museums. Much more needs to be done.

The CMA is in the process of creating a Museums and Indigenous Issues Council to review the progress achieved since 1992 and to execute the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call for Action #67: "We call upon the federal government to provide funding to the Canadian Museums Association to undertake, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, a national review of museum policies and best practices to determine the level of compliance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to make recommendations."

We expect that within two years, this Council will have completed the review, made recommendations to governments, the museum community, and Indigenous groups. It will also develop toolkits for museums and Indigenous organizations.

## **b) Recommendation**

At the end of the work performed by the CMA and the Council, involving museums across the country, more efforts will be required for implementation. **We recommend that the Manitoba Culture Policy ensure that funding is available to Indigenous organizations and non-indigenous museums for their work in implementing the recommendations and for the training that will be required, all in a spirit of meaningful engagement as called for by Manitoba's *The Path to Reconciliation Act*.**

### 3. Modern Challenges

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With its growing public and digital presence, a museum management team faces growing challenges regarding digitization as well as administrative and legal requirements, including copyright and insurance, to name a few.

#### a) Digitization

Again, we begin by quoting the Discussion Paper (at page 60):

“The ‘digital transformation’ is slowly but surely changing how historical sites, objects and records are kept and used by heritage organizations, professionals and volunteers for interpretation and offering public services, although not as fast as general public demand. This transformation requires new models of support and new resources to assist heritage groups to acquire training and new technology. Museum training programs (Association of Manitoba Museums, U of W) and emerging programs (Brandon University) are working to be responsive to the emerging needs of the museum community.”

The Discussion Paper asks:

What changes need to occur to assist the cultural community in adapting to the rapidly-changing ways that culture is created, distributed and consumed in a digital environment?  
(page 14)

The digital world creates both possibilities and enormous challenges for museums. The demand for more online content is growing, yet few museums in Canada, apart from the larger institutions with sustained support, have the ability and resources required for a true digital independence – making their collections, expertise and resources available online.

**The solution will come from collaboration, the sharing of expertise, training, and financial support. As noted in the Discussion Paper, the Association of Manitoba Museums already provides training but it must be well supported to be able to continue to do so. The CMA also provides training through its conferences. We will address financial support in the next section.**

#### b) Management

As the role of museums is changing, so too are the organizational realities they face. The skills needed to work in the museum sector are evolving to encompass a wide range of business management, fundraising expertise, and new technologies. Museum professionals are working closely with their communities to create value, and public relations and fundraising are becoming part of everyone’s responsibilities.

Unfortunately, the increased emphasis placed on the “front of house” activities of museums (educational programs, exhibitions, tours...) rather than specialized “back of house” skills (conservation, curatorial expertise, restoration...) is causing the loss of curators and specialists able to understand and interpret museums collections.

The training provided by the Manitoba Museums Association is thus crucial both to help employees and boards with the new roles played by museums and the new skills required, as well as to train specialists in key museum skills. Also, the CMA offers a bursary program funded by Canadian Heritage to assist but the funding has been limited to \$75,000 in total per year.

**This training is key for the future of heritage preservation and cultural development in Manitoba and the cultural policy should recognize and encourage support by the government.**

## 4. Financial Support

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At page 15, the Discussion Paper summarizes well the situation:

“Another corresponding fiscal consideration is that flat-lined cultural spending for many years has proven to be challenging for many cultural organizations which depend, in part, on public funds to provide cultural experiences valued by Manitobans. Despite considerable pressures on the public purse, it remains that a thriving culture sector is a critical dimension of our community life, as important as our investments in other essential public services such as education and health care.”

The impact of the flat-lined funding (which translates to lower funding) is felt on day-to-day operations, on the ability of meet new challenges, and on the infrastructure. Roofs leak, buildings lack proper heat and humidity controls, artefacts rot away in poor conditions, and little research is done.

We therefore note in particular these questions:

How can better partnerships be built between the public sector and other stakeholders, (e.g. academic institutions, industry associations, private companies, regional bodies, foundations, etc.)? (page 16)

Could a partnership between the community and government benefit the preservation of heritage resources in Manitoba? Do you believe Manitobans would participate more fully in the preservation of our heritage assets if there were expanded opportunities to sponsor, partner, or donate? Are our heritage venues being fully utilized by the public, or are there opportunities being missed to engage the public and provide Manitobans with the opportunity to partner with heritage venues? (page 61)

To address these questions, we provide a recommendation for the cultural policy and another avenue of solution for government efforts.

### **a) A donation-matching program**

While museums and heritage organizations have relied heavily on government support in the past, this is increasingly not the case today as museums are diversifying their sources of income (e.g. admission fees, store sales, rentals, sponsorships). The CMA offers a Museum Enterprise Conference annually, which focuses on the development of retail and other earned revenue opportunities for museums. This is a very successful event. The CMA also offers a wholesale program to diminish overhead costs and while increase earned revenue and recognition at local museums.

However, donations of cash or publicly-traded securities have not increased significantly other than for major capital campaigns. This is due to lack of fundraising expertise and heavy

competition from more sophisticated charities. At the same time, experience shows that matching-donation programs are a powerful incentive for donors to increase their donations and for new donors to come on board. In this regard, a professional survey of Canadians' attitudes towards museums revealed that:

- 45% of Canadians would be more likely to make donations if there was a matching plan;
- 70% of existing donors would give more;
- 35% of those who have never given would make a first donation to museums<sup>1</sup>.

**The CMA proposes that the Government of Manitoba create a program to increase private donations from individuals and corporations enabling museums and heritage organizations to become more self-sustaining.**

**The fund would match private sector donations dollar-for-dollar—to an annual ceiling—for the purpose of contributing to a museum's endowment or other initiatives such as research and preservation.** The fund should be designed to be equitable for museums and heritage organizations of different sizes.

The objective over the life of the fund would be to increase the percentage of museums' total operating budgets that comes from private donations from 9% to 15-20% (Canadian average). Another objective would be to see museums and heritage organizations increase their fiscal health and self-sufficiency. Museums and heritage organizations would determine their priorities but would have to include a fundraising plan in their application.

Two examples already exist in Canada:

- The *Endowment Incentives* component of the Canada Cultural Investment Fund (Department of Canadian Heritage) matches dollar-for-dollar cash or securities donations to approved cultural organizations. Museums are not eligible—only performing arts organizations.
- The Québec Ministère de la culture et des communications announced in April 2017 that it was doubling to \$10 million for 2017 the matching funds available through *Mécénat Placements Culture*.

## **b) Federal funding**

The federal government offers support to Canada's museums and heritage organizations through a variety of important although very modest funding programs. These programs are extremely important for the recipients, yet they have been subject to many cuts over the years. They are difficult to access and no longer meet the needs of today's museum community.

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<sup>1</sup> Innovative Research Group [CMA Public Opinion Survey on Canadian Attitudes to Museums and Federal Policy](#)

For example, the Museums Assistance Program (MAP) was created in 1972 with a total annual allocation of \$7 million for grants to fund projects at non-federal museums. Based on inflation, this investment would be equivalent to over \$38 million at today's value. **MAP's current allocation is only \$6.5 million per year.**

This is a valued program which supports exhibitions, conservation and preservation work, educational programs, and staff training at museums. It is also important to understand that in 1972, there were about 500 museums in Canada, whereas today Canada counts more than 2,600 museums. Clearly the vast majority do not receive any federal assistance. This is a further indication of the erosion of this program.

**Therefore, the Government of Manitoba should call upon the Government of Canada to review the complete suite of heritage programs at the Department of Canadian Heritage, and other appropriate departments (such as the Department of National Defence for many military museums, Foreign Affairs, Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Employment and Social Development), in order to modernize them and allow an appropriate investment of new funds.**

## Conclusion

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We thank the Government of Manitoba and its Department of Sport, Culture and Heritage for the opportunity to provide comments towards the development of a new cultural policy for Manitoba.

Museums already play a key cultural role in Manitoba. To ensure that they continue to adapt to meet changing needs, the cultural policy should encourage increased collaboration among museums and across the GLAM sector, support the role that museums will play in the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, help museums and the Association of Manitoba Museums face today's and tomorrow's new challenges, and create a new program that will increase individual and corporate contribution to museums.

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