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**COMMENT ON THE DRAFT NATIONAL PLAN FOR GAELIC.
PROISEACT NAN EALAN. Nov 2006**

Congratulations are due to all who have laboured so long and so successfully to bring the Gaelic Act, Bord Na Gaidhlig and the National Plan for Gaelic into existence. The Draft Plan is a cogent, well presented and highly encouraging document. In our view, however, the arts section is currently weak. As you know, the GASD Forum is drafting a National Gaelic Arts Strategy for Bord Na Gaidhlig that is challenging, ambitious, reflecting the growing confidence of the sector and recognising multiple opportunities for growth.

The following comments are offered in the expectation that the Plan's final text will be amended in the light of the National Gaelic Arts Strategy to be agreed by the GASD Forum and Bord Na Gaidhlig over the coming weeks. I understand that the GASD Chair, Agnes Rennie, has secured a brief extension period from Donald Morrison beyond the 10th November deadline to enable the GASD Forum to meet and finalise the draft of the arts strategy paper. We aim to deliver the draft strategy to Bord Na Gaidhlig by the week beginning 20th November.

1. *"Increasing Gaelic arts events through strategic marketing and promotion"* is a limited and inadequate Arts Priority. It is essential to address and develop the "supply" of arts services and activity as well as promote "demand." (p.33)
2. The term, Gaelic *"art"*, should be replaced with Gaelic *"arts"* which is generally understood to be plural, inclusive and referring to all the artforms. The singular term, *"art"*, is generally understood to refer to a specific artform and the visual arts in particular. (p.33)
3. Defining *"Cultural Activities"* without reference to the arts will be baffling to many. (p.32)
4. Defining the Gaelic Books Council as a Primary Player in *"Cultural Activities"* while excluding it from the *"Arts"* category is eccentric at best. Clumsy terminology and dubious categorisations will undermine the credibility of the Plan in the eyes of the arts community, stakeholders and the public. (p. 32 & 33)

5. The Arts Priority of promoting training in “*the Gaelic language aspects of the arts*” is ill-informed and unworkable. Good arts practice is a holistic activity and the language aspect is so interwoven that it cannot be artificially separated out from either the form or the content. These words should be deleted and criteria for support determined by the overall impact and Gaelic language benefit of specific projects. (p.33)
6. The Arts Primary Players listings should include the embryonic Creative Scotland, the National Lottery, the Gaelic Media Service, the BBC, the British Council, Colmcille, the Highlands & Islands Enterprise Network and the Gaelic Books Council who all have key roles as Gaelic arts funders, employers and/or promoters. (p.33)
7. While in full agreement with the Sport and Recreation statement that “Gaelic culture, and experience of it, should not be limited to artistic or heritage activity”, it is unclear how these activities are any more “*self-conscious*” than “the influential realms of sport and recreation?” (p.31)
8. The Heritage section should specify both material and non-material heritage and prioritise the Gaelic oral tradition. (p.34)
9. The Heritage Primary Players list should include Proiseact Na Sgeulachdan, the National Libraries, the Heritage Lottery and Scottish Natural Heritage. (p.34)
10. The Communications section should list the emerging community television initiative, Hebrides TV, as a Primary Player. (p.40 & 41)

Leis gach durachd

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