



2020/2021 **ANNUAL REPORT**



LETTER TO THE MINISTER OF COMMUNITIES, CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Dear Minister Lohnes-Croft:

I am happy to present you with an Annual Report detailing the activities of the Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council in 2020 and 2021. Outlined throughout are highlights of our work to continue elevating the profile of culture in Nova Scotia - a fulfillment of our longstanding partnership with your department.

In this, my third year as Chair and my final year as a Council member, I was proud to spearhead an initiative that directly engaged with stakeholders from across the culture sector to discuss the pivotal role culture has to play as the province develops post-COVID-19 recovery strategies. Working with our Council and our colleagues at Arts Nova Scotia, we gathered feedback from nearly 200 folks with a wide range of experience in the culture sector. The results of this significant work were presented to you in June in our official report ***Building Back Better: A Vision for Culture Sector Recovery in Nova Scotia*** - a document of which we are immensely proud. I am hopeful that it will provide a useful roadmap for building a more robust, inclusive, and sustainable sector.

It is my pleasure to acknowledge the contributions of all Council members, whose collective passion for recognizing the tremendous importance of culture in our lives is the main driver of work. This year, our membership included **Margie Beaton, Lisa Budgen, Dr. Martine Durier-Copp, Laura Mackenzie, Craig Mercer, Daren Okafo, Virginia Stephen, Rose Zack, Evelyn C. White, and Dena Williams**. I would like to extend recognition and thanks to our outgoing members - Martine (who is wrapping up six years on Council) and Evelyn (who has been with us for three years) - for their dedication, work, and energy.

Council values its active and embedded partnership with CCH staff. We offer endless appreciation for the work of **Chris Shore, Kathleen Trott, and Chelsea Prime**. The support of these individuals elevates and enhances our work immeasurably. We have also valued working with Associate Deputy Minister **Melissa MacKinnon**, former Deputy Minister **Justin Huston**, and newly appointed Deputy Minister **Dr. Késa Munroe-Anderson**, all of whom have demonstrated a keen interest in harnessing the capacity and capabilities of the CNSLC. And - as always, Minister - we are grateful for the opportunities we have had to engage directly with you this year.

Last year, I signed off on this letter by stating my belief that we are on the precipice of a new moment. After 16 very difficult months for our sector, I remain steadfast in that sentiment. It is very clear - particularly after hearing from so many people in our sector this Spring - that there is no better time to reimagine and reinvigorate the role that culture plays in Nova Scotia. On the heels of our newly delivered report and as our work continues, the CNSLC looks forward to advising you and your department on the many exciting and life-changing ways we can endeavour to make this happen.

Sincerely,



Trevor Murphy, Chair



WHO WE ARE

The Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council (CNSLC) is a partnership between the cultural sector and the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage. In consultation with the cultural community, the CNSLC facilitates the development, preservation and promotion of arts and culture.

The CNSLC reflects a broad cross-section of the culture sector in Nova Scotia. The Council is a primary advisor to the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage, the Department and government on issues related to cultural development in Nova Scotia. The Council also provided leadership on the development of the province's *Culture Action Plan*, and works with government to support the underlying purpose and intention of the *Status of the Artist* legislation.

Members of CNSLC are selected through a sector call for interest and an open nominations and approval process. CNSLC is composed of fifteen individuals who collectively represent interests from Nova Scotia's culture sector. Thirteen are nominated by the Council itself from a list of individuals who have applied to sit as sector members, and then appointed by the Minister.

- One (non-voting) member is appointed by ArtsNS to represent them at the Council table.
- Two members are representatives from the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage.
- Thirteen sector members are appointed for three-year terms and may only serve two consecutive terms.

Selection of members includes the following criteria; education, skills and background; relative experience within Nova Scotia's arts and culture sector; creation of a balance of representation by geographic region, the arts, cultural industries and cultural diversity; commitment to the process and ability to attend meetings.

WHAT WE DO

- **Vision**
Nova Scotia is where creativity and cultural expression thrive as the fourth pillar of sustainability.
- **Mission**
Provide leadership to the creative community and counsel to the Nova Scotia government on the development of policy that elevates culture and creative expressions within the provincial government and the province.
- **Values**
Creativity, Excellence, Growth and Development, Inclusion, Partnership and Collaboration, Transparency, Fairness



CNSLC MEMBERSHIP [as of June 2021]

Trevor Murphy (Chair) of Trevor Murphy is an award-winning publicist, music industry professional, and artist with more than a decade's worth of experience in communications and public relations. He currently serves as the Chair of the Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council and as the Central Region representative for FéCANE - la Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse. A musician at heart and at home, Trevor is community-minded, naturally empathetic, and a strong leader. In addition to all this, Trevor also works behind the scenes with several local acts through his company Acadian Embassy, representing bands in both a management and a record label capacity. More than just another DIY label, Acadian Embassy also delves into deeper exploration of the Nova Scotian Acadian identity using music as a platform through which to discuss and promote shifts in the culture, community, and history.

Laura Mackenzie (Vice-Chair) of Halifax currently serves as Film Commissioner and Executive Director of Screen Nova Scotia, a film commission, industry promotion and advocacy association. Laura has a demonstrated history of activating growth for both independent film and television producers and non-profit screen industry organizations across Canada. During the decade leading up to her beginnings with Screen Nova Scotia she served as an industry market director and media consultant. During this time she held such positions as director of the Atlantic International Film Festival's, FIN Partners, where she annually created the vision for and delivered all aspects of what is internationally known as one of the world's preeminent international film and television co-production markets. Between 2015-2018 she served as the programming consultant for the Canadian Media Producers Association's annual conference, Prime Time in Ottawa.

Margie Beaton (Secretary) of Baddeck has taken on active roles with groups like Stòras na h-Òigridh/Treasures of Youth, an endowment fund dedicated to youth seeking financial aid in Gaelic development, and the Celtic Heart of North America, a cultural tourism-based marketing cooperative. It's through her work at Colaisde na Gàidhlig/the Gaelic College where her passions ignite, both within her chosen field of marketing and grassroots cultural learning, especially with youth. The unique, non-profit institution also runs an island-wide music festival, KitchenFest!, fueling the local traditional music scene, fostering relationships with on-island partners, and creating economic impact for the whole of Cape Breton Island. Additionally, Margie keeps busy within her work and voluntary contributions as a graphic designer.

Lisa Bugden of Halifax is the General Manager at Neptune Theatre and has more than 30 years of experience in leadership, public affairs and business development to the organization. Prior to Neptune, Lisa was the Interim Director and CEO of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, the CEO of Film & Creative Industries Nova Scotia, and Vice President with Nova Scotia Business Inc. (NSBI). Her work has directly helped build the capacity of the film, television, animation, publishing, music, and production craft industries, promote cultural tourism throughout the province, and develop strategies to promote the province as a location for foreign-direct investment by working closely with leading international companies in the information technology, aerospace and defence and financial services industries.

Dr. Martine Durier-Copp of Halifax is the acting Vice President Academic and Research at NSCAD University. She has a comprehensive understanding of government policy and political science aspects of governance, as well arts and cultural administration. Originally from Quebec, she has a Master's of Musicology. She is a strategic thinker with an arts background in the field of dance, particularly flamenco. Her company, Flamenco en Rouge, performs nationally and is supported by the Canada Council for the Arts. She also serves on the board of various arts organizations locally.



Craig Mercer of Halifax comes to the table with over 25 years of experience in the music industry. He has been a musician, booking agent, talent director, marketing manager, label owner, venue owner, promoter, composer, producer, and teacher. Mercer spent the past eight years as the lead instructor in NSCC's Music Business Program and has since moved on to the role of manager of the Creative Industries department at NSCC. In this new role, his responsibilities include exploring new programming opportunities for the creative industries, and strengthening ties with industry across the province.

Daren Okafo is originally from Dublin, Ireland but has been living and working in Nova Scotia for much of the last 30 years. Proudly raised in an Irish family tradition of community activism, he has worked and studied community engagement and radical adult education across the globe including sixteen years at the storied Coady International Institute leading their technology and innovations work, grounded in the popular education approaches of The Antigonish Movement. As a hip-hop musician and DJ in 90s Halifax, Daren produced work for a number of local figures, worked at and hosted several shows at CKDU Radio, scored music for CBC and MTV and performed in several major international festivals including Mutek and All Tomorrow's Parties. He co-founded the local record company Endemik Music, championing the unique brand of underground hip hop that emerged from the city during that period. As an adult educator, a technologist and community facilitator, Daren has taught, presented and published at the highest levels, presenting his work at The UN World Forum on the Information Society and The UK Society for Research into Higher Education and, until recently, was leading research and innovations at The Irish National Adult Literacy Agency.

Virginia Stephen of Lunenburg is an educator, gallery director, consultant and arts facilitator. Virginia has engaged people of all ages with art, with her own art practice working in mixed media and fibre underlying her education endeavors. She is actively engaged in volunteer leadership and has served on the boards of the Canadian Museums Association, the Canadian Art Gallery/Museum Educators, the Edmonton Arts Council, the Alberta Premier's Council on Culture, the Edmonton Heritage Council, and the board of artist run centres and community arts organizations in Edmonton and Nova Scotia.

Rose Zack of Halifax is currently Manager, Recruitment and Admissions at NSCAD University. Rose is actively engaged in her creative community, has worked with FIN: Atlantic International Film Festival, the Glenbow Museum (Calgary), and has served on the boards of several local and national arts organizations including, Linda Joy Media Arts Society, ArtCity Calgary, Centre for Art Tapes, Business for the Arts – ArtScene Halifax, Youth Art Connection (YAC) and as a founding organizer and past chair of Nocturne: Art at Night.

Evelyn C. White of Halifax is a former reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle, White is the author of *Alice Walker: A Life*. Her articles, essays and reviews have also appeared in such publications as The Chronicle Herald, The Halifax Examiner, The Nova Scotia Advocate, The Coast, The Globe and Mail, The Vancouver Sun, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, The Arizona Republic, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Seattle Times, and Adventure Journal, Essence, Herizons, Canadian Immigrant and Smithsonian magazines. Ms. White is a graduate of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and she also holds degrees from Harvard University and Wellesley College.

Dena Williams of Halifax is an Artist & Events Manager in the music industry and is currently pursuing a degree in Social Work at Dalhousie University. With her developing work in social justice, Dena has made it her mission to create opportunities for the development and advancement for creatives in the BIPOC community. As an advocate for arts & culture, Dena's been working with Youth Art Connection and has hit the ground running by lending a hand in promoting & organizing many events, including Salt Yard Sessions, Taco & Tunes @ The Local, In the Dead of Winter Festival, and Emerge Festival. With her company, Vitamin Dee Entertainment, Dena strives to promote positivity, inclusivity, and diversity through various forms of art while also creating opportunities for local artists of the BIPOC community.



COUNCIL STRUCTURE

To effectively manage workload, Council is divided into committees that, under the guidance of the executive and Council as-a-whole, strive to carry out council's priorities in a timely and efficient manner. Committees meet and work independently and provide support to each other, according to their specialty and skill set, as needed. Communications continuously flow within council, between members and committees.

Committees of the Council include:

- **Executive**
Coordinates strategic planning and ensures timely actions of council.
- **Communications**
Undertakes communications and outreach activities.
- **Nominations**
Ensures continuity of leadership, expertise and diversity of the council.
- **AGM Working Group**
Executes the vision of the Annual General Meeting

CNSLC members also participate in joint committees with counterparts from ArtsNS. These committees include:

- **Arts Investment Joint Committee**
Oversight of the Arts Endowment Fund.
- **Creative Awards Gala Joint Committee**
Provides strategic direction for the Creative NS Awards.
- **Status of the Artist Joint Committee**
Advances the Status of the Artist legislation.



2020/21 HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council reports to government on its operations over the fiscal year (April 2020 to March 2021) and this report also extends to June 2020 to provide updates on Council's work throughout the spring of that year. Over this period the Council met four times and hosted our 2020/21 AGM. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all of these meetings were held virtually.

Council's priorities in 2020/21 were largely focused on engaging with a broad range of culture sector stakeholders to discuss the impacts of the global pandemic on the cultural sector and to envision the role culture can play as the province begins to plan post-pandemic recovery strategies. Partnering with our colleagues at Arts Nova Scotia for this work, nearly 200 stakeholders participated by attending one of the ten virtual sessions we hosted, undertaking one-on-one conversations with our members, or answering an email survey. The data from this research was compiled into a report titled ***Building Back Better: A Vision for Culture Sector Recovery in Nova Scotia***, and delivered to the Minister on June 16, 2021.

In our continual effort to align Council with important government priorities around equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), our members participated in **Board Culture-Pathways to Meaningful Action** - a facilitated EDI workshop led by Tinaye Manyimo of Shumba Consulting - on March 30. This was a joint session with our colleagues at Arts Nova Scotia.

BUILDING BACK BETTER: A VISION FOR CULTURE SECTOR RECOVERY

Building Back Better: A Vision for Culture Sector Recovery in Nova Scotia is a report that was delivered in June 2021. The paper was the predominant focus of Council's work in 2020/21. As a result of extensive consultations on recovery strategies for the province's culture sector, six major themes emerged from the data we gathered:

- Operational funding for cultural organisations needs to be increased
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) should be used as a lens through which we choose to reinvigorate the sector
- More focus must be placed on the sustainability of the sector
- The language of 'innovation' and 'export' are perceived by the sector as barriers to growth
- More support is needed to increase and assess digital capacity throughout the sector
- A vision for the province's future should include measures to rebuild the vitality of the culture sector and reposition culture as a primary economic driver for recovery

The report is a reflection of insights and visions gleaned from a broad cross-section of the culture sector. This work serves to further support ongoing progress with ***Nova Scotia's Culture Action Plan*** and the ***One Nova Scotia*** report as well as previous work by Council such as our ***COVID-19 Impact Report***, which identified sector-specific issues and opportunities that emerged in the early days of the global pandemic, and ***Culture in Action: Demonstrating the Social Benefits of Culture***, a paper that endeavoured to deepen and share our understanding of how to recognize and measure culture's importance to all Nova Scotians.

The full ***Building Back Better*** report is available as the Appendix to this annual report.





BUILDING BACK BETTER

A Vision for Culture Sector Recovery
in Nova Scotia

2021



“We want the province to be
IMAGINATIVE, resourceful,
creative, and
COLLABORATIVE.”



As the province prepares post-COVID-19 recovery strategies, investment in the culture sector must be an essential part of those plans.

Investing in the culture sector is investing in Nova Scotia's economic recovery. We want more than to 'get back to normal.' This pandemic has presented an unprecedented opportunity to reposition and prioritize the culture sector as having an integral role in the province. Recovery efforts writ large should therefore include a distinct culture lens. In alignment with the provincial development strategies as outlined in the One Nova Scotia report, harnessing the vitality of the creative and cultural sector and its enormous potential will make Nova Scotia a better place to live, work, and visit, it will advance the well-being of all Nova Scotians, it will attract new investment and new business, and - of course - it will allow pathways for culture to continue making significant contributions to the economy.

Over the course of two months, the Creative Nova Scotia Leadership Council and Arts Nova Scotia undertook a series of consultation sessions with stakeholders representing a broad cross-section of the culture sector throughout the province in order to gather feedback on upcoming recovery efforts. These conversations focused on the challenges they faced over the course of the pandemic and asked what changes they consider central to revitalizing the economic and creative heart of the culture sector. Close to 200 stakeholders participated in these sessions – both virtually and through an email survey. Based on our conversations and the analysis of the data we collected throughout, six major themes emerged.

FUNDING

1 OPERATIONAL FUNDING FOR CULTURE ORGANISATIONS NEEDS TO BE INCREASED.

Operational support to cultural organisations is a central pillar upon which we can build a brighter future for our sector and the province as a whole. Core funding is part of the fabric that weaves the culture sector together. It enables innovative creative and cultural organizations to leverage similar support from other levels of government. It promotes professional development, enables effective collaboration, and demonstrates a commitment to fostering the next generation of cultural leaders, while generating a level of economic activity that far outstrips the initial investment it represents.

Despite inflation, rising infrastructure costs, emerging urgent priorities, and the pressing demands posed by a global pandemic, operational funding has not been increased in more than 20 years. This presents a multi-layered barrier to progress for the sector, preventing organisations from developing forward-thinking models of sustainability, addressing prescient issues around equity, diversity, and inclusion, and undertaking meaningful strategic planning and succession planning for the cultural industries. We cannot expect organisations to simply reallocate existing funds in order to meet these challenges. Increasing core funding acts as a catalyst through which many of these issues can be addressed while also serving to grow the sector and the province's overall cultural capacity.

Many stakeholders we spoke with also stressed the limitations of the year-to-year model through which most of this funding is delivered. Expanding to a multi-year approach – a 3 to 5 year cycle, for example - provides organisations with the stability and confidence necessary to engage in multi-year planning that emphasizes growth, creativity, better partnerships, and enhancement of quality of life for sector professionals and, indeed, for all Nova Scotians.

GAPS, INEQUITIES, AND SUSTAINABILITY

2 USE EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI) AS A LENS THROUGH WHICH WE CHOOSE TO INVIGORATE THE SECTOR.

Across the sector, there is a strong desire to be more inclusive of all Nova Scotian cultures and voices. First and foremost, this means creating more opportunities for marginalized communities and ensuring their participation is grounded in authenticity. Directly funding EDI initiatives, creating more robust mentorship programs, and prioritizing the development of these communities in the cultural space will help reorient the sector and create spaces where previously marginalized communities can define their own strategies for inclusion and real participation, helping to undo decades of complex harm and build bridges to new, citizen-driven modes of community harmony. A financial influx from government would help advance and expedite this crucial priority and demonstrate the need for closer collaborations between government and communities.

This lens must also focus on overall accessibility within the sector. Who has access to provincial programs? How is that access facilitated? How can we engage communities and ask what it is they truly need to be heard and seen? How can we get more people to the table? How can we build them up to get here?

The pandemic demonstrated that significant work must be done to find, train, and mobilize the next generation of leaders within the culture sector. All too often, we consistently rely on the same people, the same volunteer base, and the same core group of professionals to guide the ship. Many stakeholders expressed that not having adequate staffing or interim leadership available to alleviate some of the stress during the pandemic took a significant toll on their mental health, energy, and overall well-being. Organisations - from the most successful to the fledgling start-ups - require support to facilitate succession planning that ensures the viability of the sector for decades to come.

“The sector plays a big role in the wellbeing of Nova Scotians but is not really being acknowledged.”

Quite simply, we need more people, we need to do more to show young people that a career in the culture sector is possible, we need to create and illuminate pathways for young graduates considering a career in the sector, and we need to educate the province at large why support for culture is so important. As storytellers, we need to enhance our ability – through resources, funding and supports – to tell our stories to Nova Scotians and Canadians alike.

3 FOCUS ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE SECTOR, NOT ONE-TIME FUNDING.

COVID-19 put a significant strain on human resources throughout the culture sector. Many organisations sacrificed their day-to-day duties to pursue emergency funds that allowed them to simply keep the doors open. Often, these emergency funds were one-time-only offerings meaning that cultural organisations and artists spent more time on survival than on sustainability.

“The stress and pressure on the staff and artists - the human impact - has been extreme.”

Access to emergency funding often also required the creation of a new project or program within these already struggling organisations. Digital-first initiatives, for example, ran counter to sustainability efforts by asking culture sector employees to create brand new projects in order to access one-time only funds. While this allowed that injection of money to filter out to artists, cultural workers, and the community, it ultimately put a significant amount of pressure on these employees in the middle of a crisis. This shift in focus decreased overall capacity to focus on long-term sustainability in favour of what many in the sector deemed ‘make-work projects.’ Recovery efforts cannot be hinged on one-time offers. Increasing core operational funding and creating new programs focused on a longer-term vision for the sector would help to advance growth of the cultural industries in a meaningful way while also promoting sustainability.

4 THE LANGUAGE OF ‘INNOVATION’ AND ‘EXPORT’ ARE PERCEIVED AS BARRIERS TO GROWTH.

The sector concerns about single-project funding also extended to the language on which those programs are often hinged. Many stakeholders told us that requiring new projects to be presented through a lens of ‘innovation’ stifles sustainability and impedes long-term growth, particularly in a time where they are simply trying to survive.

As the province moves toward recovery, it is a prime opportunity to recognize that the cultural industries are – by their very nature – innovative. This is a sector that is continually coming up with new ways of looking at the world and developing exciting ways to engage Nova Scotians and to tell our stories. There is a tremendous opportunity to engage the culture sector as leaders in this field and to refocus how their expertise can be harnessed in ways to promote and invigorate government priorities across departments.

“There is a lot of potential for the province to invest in Nova Scotia creatively for a global audience.”

‘Export’ initiatives must also be refocused to concentrate on the growth of the whole sector. More must be done to help stakeholders at all levels achieve this status. Recovery strategies, therefore, need to foster more creation, more artist development, and more opportunities for emerging cultural producers at a grassroots level so that when we get to a point where we are once again able to focus on export and export missions, Nova Scotia has a much bigger pool of offerings. This approach must be a continual focus moving forward, ensuring that a comparable investment in developing the sectoral infrastructure is balanced with investment aimed at building up the export capacity of the creative and cultural industries.

THE PIVOT TO DIGITAL

5 MORE SUPPORT IS NEEDED TO INCREASE AND ASSESS DIGITAL CAPACITY THROUGHOUT THE SECTOR.

While the ‘pivot to digital’ was adapted by many in the culture sector throughout the pandemic, this strategy did not work for everyone. Artists and organisations in rural communities, for example, did not have equitable access to high speed internet that allowed them to participate in this revised marketplace.

“I had to tape my set at home, drive to the local school, and upload my performance from the parking lot because my internet is so bad.”

Digital performances or offerings simply weren’t possible for some. Theatres, for example, understood that virtual productions would pale in comparison to live events. We cannot assume that digital is the answer to, or the future of, everything for the culture sector.

For those who did opt to participate in this new digital landscape, many found themselves having to learn a brand new skillset, buying new equipment to create high quality content, and spending time applying for digital-specific one-time-only project funding. In fact, many stakeholders said that through the process of virtual adaptation “a new kind of discipline has emerged.” Many also believe that the future of the sector will be a hybrid future, blending live performance with digital offerings. Government must be prepared to invest in this future.

In doing so, however, it is imperative to develop responsible assessment tools to measure the success of virtual offerings. We must be weary of making funding for digital initiatives contingent only on metrics gathered from major tech platforms. Again, the culture sector is primed to play a key leadership role in developing avenues and ideas to help ensure that ‘success’ in this process of digital transformation isn’t simply numbers-based. Whether through a lens of inclusive economic growth, qualitative assessments linked to quality of life indicators, or engaging with the understanding that culture offers innumerable intangible benefits to people across the province and beyond, the sector can not only help recast digital-focused initiatives in the future, but also be crucial to shaping their focus and priorities.

WELL-BEING OF THE SECTOR

6 INSTITUTE MEASURES TO REBUILD THE VITALITY OF THE SECTOR AND REPOSITION CULTURE AS A PRIMARY ECONOMIC DRIVER FOR RECOVERY.

A prevailing, worrying concern across the culture sector is that, when recovery happens, the workforce will not be there to match the demand. This is particularly true in the live sector where technicians (stage managers, sound engineers, lighting designers, stage carpenters, etc.) fell through the cracks of federal and provincial support systems. Many fear that a large part of this pool of highly specialized talent who are crucial to the day-to-day activities of the sector will not return. They expect a generation gap to emerge and envision an uphill climb to train newcomers to the field. A similar gap is expected to be felt in volunteerism. Throughout our consultations, both scenarios were described as “emergency situations.”

Broadly, much needs to be done to encourage a younger generation to participate in the culture sector at all levels. Increased arts education in schools, mentorship programs, pathways to accessible support, and a louder voice championing the viability of culture on the whole were all identified by stakeholders as ways to make this happen.

Government also has a key role to play in choosing to put culture front and center in its recovery efforts. In the short-term, live events, performing arts, and cultural activities will be key drivers in attracting visitors to the province and in encouraging Nova Scotians to spend money here at home. The amount allocated for tourism and marketing to stimulate the economy during this recovery period should therefore be matched with investment in the culture sector.

“It’s big, and bold, and it’s going to cost money.”

However, to make sure this is successful, culture sector investment must also include measures to help rebuild public confidence. Marketing tools, communications strategies, and awareness campaigns will need to tell prospective audiences how their safety will be addressed. Moreover, the province will need to help presenters, artists, and organisations prepare for this through funding for COVID-related infrastructure upgrades that ensure public safety moving forward, providing avenues to fund additional staff (on site COVID safety facilitators), and being willing to insure/underwrite the risk of holding events.

In the long-term, increased investment across the sector also fosters the potential to increase our capacity of cultural offerings overall, making Nova Scotia an even more appealing place not only to visitors, but also to prospective new businesses, emerging professionals, international students, and more.

While direct support for the cultural sector and the cultural industries is paramount, a large number of stakeholders also expressed their desire for government to move towards broader, socially-focused initiatives as a way to alleviate some of the pressures this sector faces. Working with an interdepartmental approach to establish universal basic income, increase social assistance and mental health services, create more robust sick leave programs, and commit to affordable housing would not only benefit the culture sector, but indeed the province as a whole.

CONCLUSION

This engagement with the creative-cultural community represents a substantive and grounded addition to our collective strategies to revitalize and relaunch a sector that can contribute real-world efforts to see Nova Scotia become a national leader in inclusive, innovative, and diverse economic growth. The broad and deep nature of the consultations means that buy-in is already in place - recovery efforts rooted in these recommendations will be widely supported, welcomed and championed by the creative-cultural community.

The sector has clearly signaled to us that it is ready to play a central role in the economic and cultural development of the province. Building upon existing policy foundations such as the Culture Action Plan, and now grounded in a broadly agreed upon engagement, the sector has spoken with a unified voice and is eager to play a part in 'building back, building better' so that all Nova Scotians can celebrate a new story of inclusion, creativity, people-centric growth, and economic development. We have always been a province of storytellers, and now as we emerge from the difficulties of a global pandemic, we are ready to help lead the province in crafting a new story – one that includes all voices, all communities.

