

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Australian Cultural Fields

Professor Tony Bennett of the Institute for Culture and Society, together with an international team,* is examining the forces changing the production and consumption of contemporary Australian culture. This interdisciplinary project is funded by the Australian Research Council through its Discovery Projects grant scheme.

'Over the last two decades contemporary Australian cultural production and consumption has changed a great deal', says Professor Bennett. 'The increased use of digital media, as well as changes in migration and multiculturalism and the shifting presence of Indigenous culture, have all affected the relationship between culture and nation. These changes can be attributed in part to Government policy. The publication in 1994 of *Creative Nation* was a landmark in the development of Australian cultural policies. It recognised not only culture's importance to national identity but also its economic rationale, and that culture is broader and more pluralistic than the arts alone. This project investigates the shaping of Australian art, literature, media, music, sport and heritage by the changing national and transnational environment since 1994. It pays particular attention to distinctive forms of cultural capital relating to ethnicity and the presence of Indigenous culture. This will help assess the effects of previous cultural policies, and inform future policy-making.'

The project has a multi-method approach. Archival research will be conducted within relevant arts, government and industry agencies, and statistical analysis will draw on resources relating to cultural production and consumption. A national survey will analyse contemporary cultural participation, taste and knowledge, and key government, cultural industry and agency personnel – as well as survey respondents and their partners, and cultural and political elites – will be interviewed.



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As well as contributing to the international development of cultural theory, *Australian Cultural Fields* will have significant consequences for how various organisations can relate to Australians from different socio-cultural backgrounds. Its findings will be of direct benefit to the industry and government agencies responsible for developing, implementing and assessing Australia's cultural policies.

Project Title: Australian Cultural Fields: National and Transnational Dynamics

Funding has been set at: \$735,050

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