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~~Patricia Ferguson~~  
Minister for Tourism, Culture and Sport  
Scottish Executive  
Victoria Quay  
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21 February 2007

Dear Minister

I hope you will excuse my writing to you personally. I wanted to clarify the question I asked you yesterday at the Consultation Meeting about the Draft Culture Bill, and also quite separately to let you know about a project I am involved in that may be of interest.

My question came out less positively than I meant it to, and I would like to apologise if I seemed to question your, or indeed the First Minister's, commitment to culture. Indeed your address answered many questions I had concerning the draft bill and I was very pleased to hear the commitment expressed in what you said. My point is that, whereas the First Minister's St Andrew's Day speech in 2003 seemed to be full of positive enthusiasm for culture and its importance, the bill seems to give no *positive* encouragement to local authorities to change their attitude to culture and to raise their ambitions. I agree with you about not wanting to control from the centre, but I wonder if there is any form of incentivisation that can be built in to encourage a new approach to culture?

On a similar point, it would be great to see in the bill encouragement for other departments or agencies to change their attitude to culture. The excitement I felt following the St Andrew's Day speech came from a sense that culture would be informing and driving policy in all areas: health, housing, transport, education and so on. Whilst the requirement on local authorities to report on their cultural planning and cultural entitlements will help, if there is not a belief in the power and importance of culture at the very top of other departments and agencies, the local authorities and cultural agencies will find it very hard to ensure that culture is in the driving seat. Is it possible for the bill in some way to require that other departments within the Scottish Executive demonstrate their commitment to culture and show how they are expressing it in their actions? This might also help ensure that your or the First Minister's

successors, who may be less interested than you, follow up on your commitment.

I hope these suggestions are helpful and expressed in a more positive manner than I managed to find yesterday morning! I will feed them into the Joint Board's deliberations regarding its response to the Culture Bill.

Quite separately, I wonder whether I can tell you about an exciting project I am beginning work on in Stirling, which has many links with the things you are talking about, and about which in due course it might be interesting for you to learn more.

Liz Moran, Director of the Macrobert Centre in Stirling, has asked me to scope out a project to engage more young adults in the arts and with the Macrobert. I am therefore working on a long-term project whose aim would be to engage *every single* young adult in Stirling with high quality performing arts, new media and film. Such an ambitious target could transform not only the Macrobert but also the city, as targeting those who are hardest to reach will require the Macrobert and all its partners to change their ways of working and their attitudes to young adults. Achieving it will require action from and also benefit not just arts organisations, but also the local authority, Stirling University and local and national agencies. It should deliver the intrinsic and the instrumental benefits that we are all seeking from artistic and cultural activity. It is therefore in microcosm much like what you are trying to do in Scotland more widely.

At present I have only just started work on this project – which is provisionally entitled **2034**, looking ahead to the Stirling of the young adults' future – but I hope I can keep you informed about it and perhaps talk to you about it in due course. I will also copy this letter to Greig Chalmers, for his information.

I look forward to seeing you at the Joint SAC/Scottish Screen Board away-day next week.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Currie', written in a cursive style.