

Tories reveal action plan ‘in progress’ to guide cultural policy

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Sport, Culture and Heritage Minister Cathy Cox. Scott Billeck/Winnipeg Sun/Postmedia Network

A two-year review of the province’s arts industry brought forth an action plan by the Pallister government on Tuesday but no new investments for a sector that brings in \$1.6 billion per year.

Entitled *Our Way Forward: Manitoba’s Culture Policy and Action Plan*, the 19-page report is focused on being the framework that will guide the decision-making process for the province over the next five to 10 years, said Sport, Culture and Heritage Minister Cathy Cox at the Manitoba Museum on Tuesday.

The report, the first of its kind in nearly three decades, lays out five priority areas, including fostering economic development, understanding and promoting the value of culture and creativity, ensuring diversity, inclusion and accessibility, support culture in

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If it sounds vague, that's because it is, with no real specifics in the report on how government plans to achieve those goals.

"It's a plan in progress," Cox said. "What it is an action plan. It really was developed to ensure, that over the next five-to-10 years, we have the ability to make decisions that are going to benefit the arts and culture sector. It's vibrant. It's booming. We want to make sure it remains effective and remains a big part of Manitoba."

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Cox said during the review, the province has committed dollars to various areas, including a 20% increase to the sport, culture and heritage in the 2019 Budget, \$5 million in grant money to the Manitoba Museum, \$10 million to the Royal Aviation Museum and \$15 million to the Inuit Art Centre.

NDP leader Wab Kinew wasn't convinced. He said you can see a government's priorities in where they spend their money and said his discussions with people from the arts sector include more questions than answers for the Pallister government.

"Unfortunately, those groups are probably still going to be waiting for answers even after this review because the review was very much written in bureaucratic language and management speak," Kinew said. "But it doesn't really provide answers for (questions) like, what are you doing for film? What are you doing for music? What are you doing for dancing? What are you doing visual arts? And so on down the list."

Last Thursday's budget brought with it a doubling of the film tax credit to \$31 million while also eliminating the so-called "sunset clause."

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