

STATEMENT BY THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

I'd like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to make this statement.

The report by the Comptroller and Auditor General has set out a number of lapses and failures in compliance by NCAD. We acknowledge and accept those findings. We regret those failures, clearly – both that they were allowed to occur in the first place, and that such customs and practice built up over a period and that legacy was not reformed in a timely fashion.

I would stress that while the report paints an accurate picture of the situation at the time of its writing much progress has been made since then. The College fully accepts the recommendations in the report and the failings have now been comprehensively addressed by management and the Board.

It is important to note the backdrop for this report: the College was going through a period of substantial change in the education sector, resulting in significant challenges and new pressures for a College of our scale and capacity. From 2008 onwards, at a time when the continued existence of the College was under question, the College focused on sustaining its provision of excellence in Art and Design education for increasing numbers of students in Ireland. This focus was successful and our student numbers increased by 33% over that period. However, sufficient attention was not paid to reform of procedures and compliance issues.

In responding to the Comptroller and Auditor General, NCAD's management and current Board (appointed 2012) have worked to transform how the College does business while maintaining, of necessity, a focus on the positioning and the development of the College, as a national institution, in relation to stated national objectives.

Specific steps that we have taken in response to this report, include the introduction of new policies and procedures for procurement; reconfiguration of our audit process; and the completion of new tenders for a range of goods and services. Also, the College will be completely up-to-date with accounts audits by summer of 2015.

Thank you.

Professor Declan McGonagle
Director
NCAD

January 2015.