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● REBECCA Hossack.

Australian culture in for a boost

AN Australian-born London art dealer has been appointed Australia's cultural development officer in London, a position that caused mirth and sarcasm in the British press when it was advertised.

An Australian High Commission spokesman confirmed Rebecca Hossack will take up the position in December. Ms Hossack, from Melbourne, runs two London galleries and is a graduate in law and fine arts.

She arrived in London to study law in 1980, before moving to Christies, who posted her to Venice. On returning to London she opened a gallery in Windmill Street, W1, followed by a second, with an adjacent sculpture garden, in Piccadilly.

Her job is to promote a wider appreciation in Britain of the scope and depth of Australian culture.

When the position was advertised in late July, there was an outbreak of sneering from a British press that likes to think Australians are innocent of any culture outside sun, surf, sport and beer.

"So they do give a XXXX for culture," said the *Daily Telegraph*.

The Express wheeled out Australia's best-known cultural attache, Sir Leslie Patterson, also known as Barry Humphreys, who raged at his prospective usurpation: "XXXX the lot of 'em, they're a bunch of pooftas and pillow-biters".

The *Daily Telegraph* continued its aggravation to the end, revealing Ms Hossack's appointment before the High Commission was ready to announce it.

The paper's verdict: "One tough Sheila".

See next week's *SX Magazine* for an in-depth profile of Rebecca Hossack, and her plans for promoting Australian culture to a sceptical British audience.