Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities Through Arts and Creativity:

AUSTRALIA

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"Don't you ever, ever, ever let that gallery close."

> — Local restaurateur to former Lord Mayor of Bendigo
> and gallery board member Rod Fyffe,
> after the spectacular success of a special exhibition

Garma Festival of Indigenous Culture, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory

Photo: **Garma Festival of indigenous Culture, Arnhem Land, Northern Territory: Re-storying indigenous culture for indigenous and non-indigenous people**

Yolngu culture in northeast Arnhem Land – a heartland of Aboriginal culture and land rights – is among the oldest living cultures on earth, stretching back more than 40,000 years. The Garma Festival is a celebration of this Yolngu cultural inheritance, designed to encourage the practice, preservation, and maintenance of traditional dance (bunggul), song (manikay), art, and ceremony. In addition to the cultural festival, Garma also provides a significant cultural exchange event, a key educational forum, and an award-winning model for authentic Indigenous tourism. *See Case Studies.*

Quotation: Quoted in *The Age* newspaper. http://www.theage.com.au/national/gallery-fashions-a-stylish-reputation-with-smashhit-show-20090321-951u.html?skin=text-only, accessed March 22, 2009

Abstract

This paper explores the contribution of the arts and creativity to the development and revitalization of rural and remote communities in Australia. A search of the Australian literature indicates that arts and creative initiatives are significant for the development of rural and remote communities in the economic, environmental, social, and cultural domains. The "creative industry" model is particularly dominant in research investigating economic impacts of arts and creative initiatives, while a community cultural development approach is reflected in literature and activity that seeks or values social outcomes, including health and well being, social inclusion, and educational achievements. Also examined are arguments that ascribe value to the cultural dimension in its own right, in which the intrinsic value of arts and creativity for rural and remote communities is recognized. This view leads to the consideration that the economy should support arts and creativity rather than the other way around.

Factors that seem pivotal in building long-term sustainability for arts and creativity in rural communities include:

- Appreciation of local culture, history and heritage, local people, assets and characteristics;

- Enthusiastic local leadership, positive attitudes, local entrepreneurship and investment; and

- Right timing and a focus on retaining young people through employment, recreational, and educational initiatives.

The research examined for this paper points to numerous factors that might support initiatives in other communities. The most fundamental of these is the necessity of government commitment (at all levels) to the value of cultural dimension in planning and public policy. Other factors include the need for recognition of the value of local cultural product and practices, more support for arts in communities, especially through networks of regional arts development officers and assistance for volunteers (including training), and reduction of bureaucratic obstacles. Also suggested are better funding programs, including long-term investment and less onerous application processes, as well as data collection about arts activities and outcomes at a local level.

Résumé

Cet article se penche sur la contribution des arts et de la créativité à l'essor et à la revitalisation des collectivités rurales et éloignées, en Australie. Un examen de la documentation australienne révèle que les arts et les initiatives créatives sont déterminants pour l'essor des collectivités rurales et éloignées, tant dans les secteurs économique, environnemental et social que culturel. Le modèle des « industries créatives » prévaut dans la recherche portant sur les retombées économiques des arts et des initiatives créatives, alors que l'angle du développement culturel communautaire est plus présent dans la documentation et sous-tend les activités qui privilégient ou qui valorisent la dimension sociale tels la santé et le bien-être, l'inclusion sociale et le rendement académique. Par ailleurs, ce mémoire fait également état d'arguments qui revendiquent l'importance de la dimension culturelle à part entière, et qui reconnaissent la valeur intrinsèque des arts et de la créativité pour les collectivités rurales et éloignées. Cette perspective donne lieu à un point de vue selon lequel l'économie devrait appuyer les arts et la créativité, et non l'inverse.

Parmi les facteurs qui semblent décisifs pour assurer la vitalité à long terme des arts au sein des collectivités rurales, notons :

- la reconnaissance de la culture locale, de son histoire et de son patrimoine, de ses habitants, de ses biens et de ses particularités;

- un leadership local inspiré, une attitude positive, la présence de l'entreprenariat et des investissements locaux;

- une bonne synchronisation et des efforts ciblés pour retenir les jeunes, en leur offrant de l'emploi, des loisirs et des occasions d'apprentissage.

La recherche effectuée dans le cadre de cet article révèle de nombreux facteurs qui pourraient servir à appuyer les initiatives mises de l'avant dans d'autres collectivités. Parmi ceux-ci, le plus indispensable demeure l'engagement des gouvernements de tous les échelons, à privilégier la dimension culturelle au sein de leur planification et de l'élaboration de leurs politiques publiques. Parmi les autres facteurs qui comptent, notons la valorisation des pratiques et des produits culturels locaux, un appui communautaire accru au secteur des arts locaux, plus particulièrement par l'entremise de réseaux de gestionnaires responsables du développement régional des arts, ainsi que la mise en place de mesures d'appui à l'intention des bénévoles (notamment de la formation), et un allègement de la bureaucratie. Par ailleurs, on y propose également la mise en place de programmes de financement plus adéquats, notamment par le biais d'investissements à long terme et de modalités de demandes moins contraignantes, ainsi que la collecte de données concernant les activités artistiques et leur portée locale.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Definition of *rural* and *remote*

For this paper, two different characteristics were used to determine which communities could be considered *rural* and *remote*, and therefore relevant for consideration: population density and access to services. Population density is the main consideration of the internationally recognised OECD definition, with regions considered *rural* if more than 50% of the people live where the population density is less than 150 persons per square kilometre (OECD, 1994). In contrast, the Australian ARIA (Accessibility/Remoteness Index of Australia) considers remoteness in terms of the distance a person must travel to access services (Australasia Economics, 2004). The communities this paper will primarily consider are those that could be considered rural or remote according to either of these definitions, although some reference will be made to larger regional centres.

1.2. Issues for rural and remote Australia

Most citizens of Australia live in metropolitan centres heavily concentrated along the southern and eastern coast. However, one-third of Australians live in rural and remote areas (ABS, 2001a), of which 29% are in regional areas and 3% in remote areas. In total, more than 6.7 million Australians live and work in non-metropolitan Australia (AIHW, 2008). Figure 1 portrays Australia according to ABS remoteness categories.[1]

The successful functioning of Australia's society and economy depends on rural and remote areas, for it is there that much of the food, water, oxygen, and resources on which the nation relies, are drawn. While a great deal of land beyond the coastal fringe of Australia is

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[1] http://pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/44059/20041119-
0000/www.oipc.gov.au/publications/KeyIndicatorsReport/15AttC(ARIA).pdf

unhabitable or desert, the rest is comprised of small communities within vast areas of wheat, sheep and cattle farms, timber plantations, and in areas with rainfall and irrigation, crop farms, orchards, and vineyards. The current mining boom has led to a surge in economic opportunities and development in remote areas. New industries, with much scope for development, include energy production through windfarming and carbon fixing initiatives such as tree plantations. Future as yet underdeveloped possibilities include desalination plants, carbon geosequestration, and solar energy harvesting.

Despite the vital contribution of rural and remote regions of Australia to the nation's survival, many commentators recognize a crisis faced by these communities (Dunn & Koch, 2006). Issues considered include stagnant or declining standards of living in rural Australia – including income, health, education, aged care, access to services, infrastructure, and housing (Sarantakos, 1998; Mills & Brown, 2004). Rural and remote communities experience disadvantage, by definition through their reduced access to goods and services, but also in employment opportunities and income. They include some of Australia's lowest socio-economic areas and have lower overall education achievement. Very remote areas have the lowest levels of school completion, with 48% of the population leaving school at Year 10 or earlier (AIHW, 2008).

Many rural areas are experiencing declining populations, caused in part by the "brain drain" of young people to cities (Alston & Kent, 2001). This in turn exacerbates the ageing of communities (Mission Australia, 2006). Indigenous people, who are more concentrated in rural and remote regions, experience very significant disadvantage, with health and social indicators considerably lower than for the Australian population as a whole (NACCHO, 2007; ABS, 2008). Increased proportions of younger Indigenous people live in smaller towns and remote areas with lower living standards and less opportunity (Mission Australia, 2006). Also making a negative impact are loss of social and financial capital, the "rationalisation" of both public and private services (Collits, 2000), and economic restructuring and policy reform (Baum, O'Connor & Stimson, 2005; Tonts & Atherley, 2005).

Figure 1. **ABS Remoteness Area Boundaries**
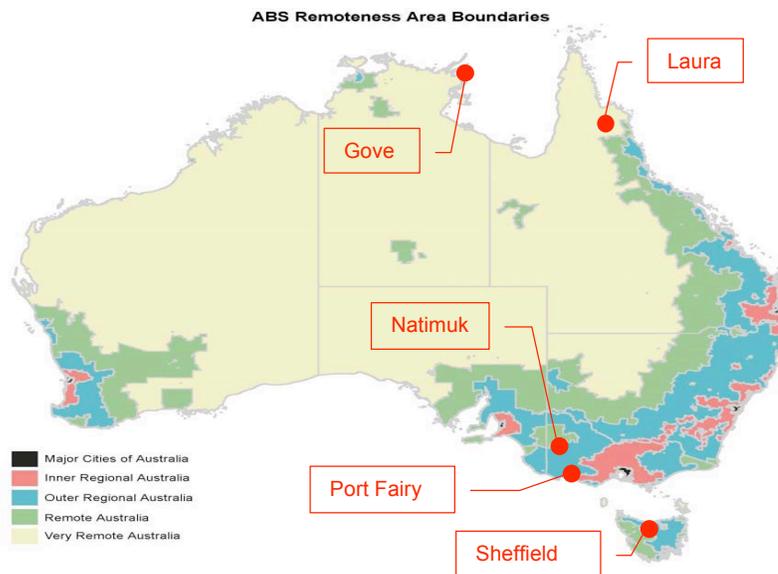
Dots indicate locations of case studies.

Economic, social, and environmental changes affecting Australian agriculture have led to concern for the sustainability of family farming, and rural communities can no longer expect economic security and sustainability from traditional agricultural enterprise (Rogers & Walker, 2005). The disastrous outcomes of climate change are being experienced most deeply in regional and remote areas, when lack of rainfall, reduced riverflows, soil salinity, increased temperatures, and related disasters – like the unprecedented bushfires in rural Victoria in early 2009 – contribute to a struggle for existence that impacts whole communities.

2. The contribution of arts and creativity to rural and remote communities in Australia

As a result of all these considerations, the well-being of people living in rural Australia has become an issue of major national significance. Creative solutions are necessary. Commentators such as Keller (2000) suggest that small rural communities will need to "create" a new future – embracing change and adopting new forms of innovation – if they are to survive or prosper. Many writers recognize the possible contribution of the arts to the revitalization or re-imagining of these communities (Smiles, 2006; Dunn & Koch, 2006).

There has been, until relatively recently, an absence of thorough research in this field as noted by authors including Williams (1995), Matarasso (1997), Kingma (2002), and Mills & Brown (2004). An inquiry into the impact of the arts in regional Western Australia concluded that there is a tendency for government to underestimate the importance of the arts, which is reflected and exacerbated by the lack of empirical data at a regional level (Government of Western Australia, 2004). This finding stresses the need for research into the arts and its contribution to the social needs of rural people on a national level (Marceau & Davidson, 2004). Smiles (2006) comments that most research on social impact has not been applicable to rural and remote areas because they necessitate highly specific models, partnerships, and strategies.

However, there is evidence of a growing reversal of that trend, commensurate with the increased interest in evaluation of the contribution of the arts to many areas of human experience. Research on arts and cultural development in regional and rural communities is being undertaken all around Australia by researchers from different disciplines and settings. Economic geographer Chris Gibson from the University of Wollongong, New South Wales, and social ecologist Martin Mulligan at RMIT University, Victoria, have been leading figures, approaching the issues from totally different perspectives. Other research has been instigated by governments, notably that of Western Australia, and arts organizations, particularly Regional Arts Australia.

Regional Arts Australia's paper, *Cultural Development in Rural and Remote Areas*, provides a discussion and analysis of an annotated list of resources and approaches to definitions of *rural* and *remote* (Smiles, 2006). This document responds to the interest of arts agencies for information about how the arts support, affect, and shape rural and remote communities and how the role of the arts in sustainable cultural, social, and economic development is being explored.

Regional Arts Australia was also the driving force, with the Australia Council, of *National Directions: Regional Arts* (Dunn & Koch, 2006), a research project that explored issues around the development and maintenance of a viable regional arts industry and a vibrant cultural life. This study involved a nationwide consultation with Australians from regional areas concerning the nature, challenges, and opportunities of their work in and aspirations for the arts in their communities and towns. It revealed

> a landscape of contrasts as wide as the country itself: some pastures rich, some seared; resources plenty, resources poor; some work rewarded, some fruitless; hope held and hope lost. Above all, it resonates with the voice of people who are united in winning a fair "share", in applying their resourcefulness and to bringing the benefits of the arts within reach of their families and communities. A constant thread of belief in those benefits runs through the report with participants' references to identity, opportunity, confidence, place, future, resilience, community, engagement, ownership, sustainability and so on. These are people who need no convincing that the arts "can make a difference". (Dunn & Koch, 2006)

The following summary of the literature will be examined within a four-pillar framework (Hawkes, 2001) that considers arts and creative initiatives in rural and remote Australia with respect to the economic, social, environmental, and cultural dimensions of public policy and planning.

2.1. The contribution of arts and creativity to economic viability

Many authors have framed the contribution of arts to rural regeneration in terms of economic outcome. Those taking this approach have predominantly been economists and economic geographers, like Chris Gibson from the University of Wollongong and Jane Andrew from the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research in South Australia. Local government has long been driven by economic considerations, as exemplified by the commissioning of a report that investigated the economic contribution of the arts to the local area by small regional shire of Glenelg in western Victoria (Campbell, 2007). This report and others indicate that the arts can contribute significantly to local economies, and is valued and valuable for this reason. Some detailed research findings appear below.

Tresize (2007) reports that active investment and strategic support of the arts in regional areas can result in the return of the investment three times over. Job creation is a major aspect of this (Kingma, 2003a; Anwar McHenry, 2009), with arts generating between 6% of the total region employment and up to 22% of total non-farm employment (Tresize, 2007). Other benefits include greater productivity of businesses (Kingma, 2003a) and increased tourism (McHenry, 2009). Cultural industries are making a significant and growing contribution to employment and production in regional areas, and Western Australians are spending an increasing amount of their household income on cultural activities (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2004).

Creative industries is a framework around which much research interest is being generated, embracing the concept that some arts and creative businesses have the capacity to be self-funding or contribute to the large economy. These are "industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property" (Department for Culture

Media and Sport, 2001, p. 5). A research project about creative industries in Darwin, which is both a capital city and extremely remote in terms of its proximity to the rest of the Australian population, affirms the major role that the creative industries can play in building and sustaining vibrant communities. This includes their function as magnets for small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs), talented employees, and extensive networks that value-add in otherwise isolated areas and contribute to regional regeneration and reputation building (Lea et al., 2009).

The following examples indicate the variety of economic contributions of arts activity in regional areas, ranging from income of workers associated with the arts programs and tourists to provision of local employment. Campbell (2007) identified that cultural heritage attractions were the major factor in attracting tourists to the rural regions of Portland and Heywood in Victoria, while in Wangaratta, Victoria, the 2008 Festival of Jazz attracted an estimated 32,000 visitors to the town over the four days of the Festival[2]. Muir (2003) examined the positive economic impact of new cultural facilities on regional towns. In Maryborough, in rural Queensland, touring performances to that regional town in 2001-02 resulted in an estimated 2,660 cast and crew-nights being purchased, at an average of $110 per person per night.

A study into the screen industry of the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales concluded that 7,280 people, or 6.1% of the labour force, were employed in the creative industries there. An additional 1,069 people worked as core volunteers and 1,525 people worked in support roles; and 6,220 students were involved, making the total number of all people involved in the creative industries in the region 16,000. Eighteen screen producers recorded a combined annual expenditure of $7 million, with $3.6 million being spent directly in the region in 2005, and employed around 223 people, with 110 of these being locals (Henkel, n.d).

While these indications do indicate a significant contribution of arts to economic outcomes, other factors are also given priority by researchers and practitioners in other disciplines. Hawkes (2001) describes the growing awareness of wide range of alternative ways of viewing and analysing the performance of a society, with these new frameworks based on a consciousness about what makes a society that reflects and fulfils the aspirations of its citizens. Development theories also now consider many factors beyond the economy. Amartya Sen, Nobel Prize winner for economics, does not argue for the value of economic development as an end in it own right. Instead, his seminal work, *Development as Freedom* (Sen, 1999a), presents the concept that the expansion of freedom is both a primary end and principal means of development. Sen believes that development should involve the removal of the "unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency" (p. xii). As long ago as 1991, the World Bank understood development to include "other (than economic) important and related attributes … notably more equality of opportunity and political and civil liberties. The overall goal of development is therefore to increase the economic, political and civil rights of all people" (p. 31). These alternative perspectives include the consideration that the economy should serve to advance the experience of the people, rather than economic goals being solely of value in their own right.

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[2] www.wangaratta-jazz.org.au/docs/

2.2. Arts and environmental sustainability

Issues of environmental sustainability are of increasing concern to rural and remote communities in Australia who are experiencing the greatest impact from climate change. The relationship between environmental sustainability and the arts is a new and growing area of scholarship, with David Curtis of the Institute of Rural Futures at the University of New England in regional New South Wales a leading figure. Curtis (2007) suggests that visual and performing arts may be valuable in influencing environmental behaviour positively, on both individual and community levels, as the arts can "aid engagement and participation by a broad cross section of the community, and … provide powerful vehicles for community mobilisation, empowerment, and information transfer" (p. 15). In an article in the *Australian Landcare* journal, Curtis elaborates on ways that the arts can advance the aims of the Landcare program by aiding communication about landcare, improving the facilitation of workshops, and making landcare projects more memorable. Landcare programs in turn can make a significant contribution to rural regeneration, as the rehabilitation of the physical environment achieved through such projects can contribute to ongoing economic livelihood of residents, especially farmers experiencing threats to viability from salination of waterways and erosion of land. Other researchers investigating the relationship between arts and environmental concerns include Annie Bolitho, whose PhD research examined how creative approaches can assist in re-establishing communities' connections to water (Bolitho, 2003).

In rural and remote communities throughout Australia, arts projects are increasingly being undertaken to raise awareness of and increase community engagement in the finding of solutions to environment concerns. In the small town of Bega, New South Wales, the *Clean Energy for Eternity: Art and Environment Project* sought to mobilize community action around energy issues through creative arts action (Hunt, 2007). The Wetlands and Waderbirds Festival held in Murray River country in rural South Australia is an arts and nature celebration of the annual migration of wetland and migratory birds into the coastal wetlands of the region (www.wetlandsandwaders.com). This festival has dual purposes, increasing tourism to the region, and increasing awareness of the value of the flora and fauna of the local area and issues around water management, an increasingly serious problem.

A conference of the Ecological Society held in regional New South Wales in 2003 featured an arts program. This programming innovation had dual purposes: to encourage scientists to reflect on the use of alternative methods of communicating their science to society, and to assist the community's understanding of complex scientific information (www.ecolsoc.org.au/2003/arts.html). A national arts and ecology forum held in Noosa, regional Queensland in April 2008 involved professionals representing the arts, landcare, geology, ecology, research, agriculture, environment, community, and cultural sectors. Participants of that event made a submission to the Australia government's *Review of the National Innovation System* advising that innovation policy should be aligned with cultural policy and infused with concern for ecological sustainability: "If Australia is to develop unified innovations policy it should acknowledge and support the knowledge-making and transformative roles of the creative arts" (Childs et al., 2008, p. 2**).**

This relationship between arts and environment was explored in the Cultural Development Network's *Small Town Big Picture* project, undertaken in a cluster of small rural towns in Victoria in 2002-2003. Social researcher Maureen Rogers set out to work with communities to create a series of local indicators of sustainability through a process of community consultation. The project methodology was upended, however, with the addition of a

significant arts component, used especially as a tool of community engagement. The final result was an unprecedented success with an outstanding participation rate in the project, exemplified by the attendance of 50% of one town's entire population at the project's launch. The upshot was that this researcher, new to the arts at the beginning of the project, commented that she "couldn't imagine working with communities ever again without arts involvement" (Rogers & Spokes, 2003, p. 12).

2.3. Social equity achieved through arts and creative initiatives

While economic outcomes have been a significant focus of research about the arts in rural and remote areas in Australia over the previous decades, more recently the contribution of arts to cultural and social well-being outcomes have been prioritized. Smiles (2006) comments that this focus has predominated recent forums and conferences. State and local governments in Australia are increasingly considering this contribution of the arts, led by the pioneering work of organizations such as VicHealth. This state health authority devotes significant resources to projects and research exploring the relationship between arts and social inclusion, health and well-being (www.vichealth.vic.gov.au). The national arts authority, the Australia Council for the Arts, has also made the relationship between arts and well-being a focus through initiatives such as the publication of the book *Art and Wellbeing* (Mills & Brown, 2004) that featured case studies of many rural and remote areas where the arts have made a contribution.

The Government of Western Australia (2004) suggests that the arts in regional communities provide an inclusive base from which communities can develop tolerance and understanding, in turn helping to foster and strengthen the identity of a town or region. This view is supported by the Sustainability Strategy developed for that state, comprised primarily of rural and remote communities, which asserts that "arts and culture are central to the identity of a healthy and vibrant society," allowing the exploration of issues and providing the "creative edge" necessary when communities are confronted with new and difficult problems (Government of Western Australia, 2003, p. 250).

The framework for much of this type of work is a *community cultural development* or *community arts* approach in which communities and artists work together exploring issues of mutual interest through the arts. Benefits of arts engagement valued in this framework extend to the overall health and well-being of societies and communities, particularly as they struggle to deal with economic, social, and environmental crises (Hawkes, 2001; Sonn et al., 2002; Boon & Plastow, 2004; Mills & Brown, 2004). As well, individuals considered disadvantaged or "at-risk" may experience particular benefits. For example, the arts can provide an accessible and socially acceptable platform for self-expression for people who are both in the criminal justice system and those who are at risk of entering it. This is particularly true of Indigenous people, especially those from regional areas, who are over-represented within the criminal justice system (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2004).

One theme identified frequently in the literature is the contribution of arts participation to the strength of rural communities (Alston & Kent, 2001; Anwar McHenry, 2009). Anwar McHenry's literature review provides evidence of enhanced participation and creativity in public decision-making, strengthening community capacity, identity, and sense of place (Anwar McHenry, 2009). Kingma (2003a) has identified the transmission of information, building of relationships, and boosted productivity of community organizations as results of arts and creative initiatives in regional communities. Alston & Kent (2001) also report that

arts practice and strategy can work to preserve viable populations. Gibson (2008) addresses perhaps the most significant population concern for rural Australia, that of youth out-migration. He observes that while formal job creation may be limited through creative activities, some of the impacts of youth migration to cities could be mitigated by enriched regional social life and mediating perceptions of the advantages and drawbacks of rural versus urban life.

2.4. The role of the arts in civic engagement

Within the social domain, the issue of civic engagement, or the active involvement of citizens with decisions about their future, can also be considered. The arts have often been utilized as a means of engagement of rural communities in civic activities, making a political statement or protest (Hanna, 2002), raising awareness of an issue, or working towards collaborative solutions (e.g., Mills & Brown, 2004; Brennan-Horley, Connell & Gibson, 2007; Lea, 2009; Ruane, 2007; Cleveland, 2007).

For Indigenous communities, especially those based in rural areas, arts can often be the most meaningful tool for engagement and expression around important issues. American author Bill Cleveland, in his book *Arts and Upheaval*, documents the way former soldiers and members of the Aboriginal community worked to heal the social, environmental, and health impacts of atom bomb testing conducted at Maralinga in remote South Australia in the 1950s and 1960s (Cleveland, 2008). Cultural performance provides an opportunity for civic engagement for Indigenous communities, through providing space for representation and identity formation, political engagement, and critique of the dominant culture (Slater, 2007). This function is particularly prevalent at festivals primarily initiated and run by Indigenous individuals and organizations. The Dreaming Festival held in regional Queensland, for example, provides "a lens through which Indigenous cultural politics can be examined" (Slater, 2007, p. 573). The Garma Festival, described in detail in the case study included in this paper, provides a significant opportunity for Indigenous communities of the remote Top End of Australia to re-engage and revitalize their traditional cultural practices.

The Cultural Development Network has identified a dearth of literature about the links between creative communities and civic engagement, and conceived the Generations Project to address this topic. This three-year nationwide arts project involved collaborations between artists, communities, and local government accompanied by a research component. The five participating councils covered a wide demographic and geographic diversity across Australia; Dalrymple Shire in rural far west Queensland; three regional cities of Wangaratta, Greater Geelong, and Latrobe in Victoria; and one outer metropolitan council of Liverpool in New South Wales. Each council identified an area of significant concern for their municipality as a focus. These included issues of community identity in an environment of globalized culture; energy production in the context of climate change; Indigenous sovereignty on leasehold land; country becoming city and changing identity; aging; schooling; imagining futures; and having a future. RMIT University researchers Martin Mulligan and Pia Smith are currently engaged in data collection with communities and artists, with the final report expected by the end of 2009. The "Regenerating Community" Conference, to be held in Melbourne in September 2009, will particularly focus on the civic engagement capacity of the arts,

especially within regional and rural communities. The findings and art outcomes of the five Generations projects will be featured.[3]

2.5. Arts and cultural vitality

When arts and creativity are considered within the economic and social dimensions, the contribution is instrumental, a way of achieving some other valued goal. Within the cultural dimension, however, arts participation can be considered in terms of its intrinsic value, with the experience being worthwhile in its own right for individuals and the community. McCarthy and colleagues (2004) suggest that people are not drawn to the arts for their instrumental effects, but because of the meaning, pleasure, and emotional stimulation that they provide and that these intrinsic effects are satisfying in themselves. Hawkes (2001) comments that "we can learn from history that society makes or discovers meaning through its arts" (p. 24). Kingma (2002) argues that

> the arts give expression to culture, which, in turn, embodies society's values. More than this, the arts as an expression of culture, becomes a storehouse of perceived values and an expression of the 'beautiful' as opposed to the 'useful' in our society. Arts in the community challenges and stimulates artists, providing fertile ground for the growth of new ways of expression. (p. 1)

The literature provides many examples of the way cultural initiatives have enriched rural and remote communities. Muir studied the impact of new facilities on the cultural life of regional communities. In the small town of Port Lincoln, South Australia, the establishment of the Nautilus Theatre increased opportunities for local residents to enjoy the arts. The number of Commonwealth and state-funded arts performances in the region over the following 18 months rose from 1 to 40 (Muir, 2003). Kingma (2002) discusses a series of case studies of community cultural development projects funded by the Australia Council that foster the arts as a creative occupation in its own right.

Social researcher Martin Mulligan has directed several recent investigations about the arts in regional communities in Australia, leading him to argue strongly for the value of the cultural dimension for its own sake. He comments that regional arts should not be thought of "as an 'industry', but rather as a response to, and expression of, community needs and desires" (2007, p. 37). He argues that communities will be stronger if they are more "culturally vital," and that "our economy should support an investment in cultural vitality rather than the other way around" (p. 35). This opinion echoes that of Greek philosopher Aristotle who believed that, "wealth is evidently not the good we are seeking; for it is merely useful for the sake of something else" (United Nations Development Program, 1990, p. 9).

In their evaluation of the Regional Arts Development Program implemented by Regional Arts Victoria, Mulligan & Smith (2007) examined the contribution of a program that employed officers with a regional arts development role across Victoria. Regional arts development officers were found to have made significant impact on their local regions in drawing down funding and co-ordinating federal, state, and local government initiatives. But it was their contribution to a more vital cultural life through support of networks and artists, including

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[3] http://www.cdn-generations.net.au/overview.htm

regional arts networks, which the researchers identified as the most valuable community contribution of the program.

This section has discussed research evidence for the contribution of the arts to revitalization or regeneration of rural and remote communities in Australia considering economic, social, environmental, and cultural impacts. The next section introduces some of the recent major reports and the factors that researchers have named as critical ingredients or common themes for the building of culturally vital rural communities.

3. Critical ingredients or common themes necessary to build long-term vitality for the arts in rural communities

3.1. Regional Arts Australia report findings

This section describes in detail findings from the Regional Arts Australia's 2006 report because of the breadth and depth of this project's reach. The most extensive consultation ever undertaken in Australia, it considers the input of 830 regional residents from 250 different places throughout the country. Dunn & Koch (2006) identified priority areas for strategic planning and action for regional arts as follows:

- Community capacity building: how the arts can be better recognised and equipped as an effective medium for developing more sustainable communities

- Strengthening regional centres: how the arts can respond to current issues, the need for strong identity and social cohesion in regional centres large and small

- Supporting arts development and practice in Indigenous people and communities: how the arts can contribute to positive futures for Aboriginal people

- Engaging young people: how the arts can contribute to more fulfilling lives for regional youth

- Supporting the development of cultural tourism: how the arts can contribute to greater economic growth and diversity through tourism.

The study identified the strengths of regional arts in Australia. The most fundamental of these is the

> deep attachment of regional people to their place, the natural environment and their communities ….that finds expression in cultural activities both sporting and artistic…Hundreds of regional, rural, remote and very remote communities have established an arts landscape as distinctive and as 'Australian' as the country itself. (p. 11)

Assets of regional communities identified in this report include strong appreciation of the arts as a medium for:

- Finding and proclaiming unique identity,

- Exploring and resolving community issues,

- Celebrating heritage and crystallising aspirations, and

- Engaging young people in community life and development (despite the challenge that such an ambition represents when contemporary culture and "big-city" attractions are so strong).

Factors that this research uncovered as significant for the success of arts development in regional Australia include:

- **Peak body activity:** the unique regional arts programs established and maintained by peak body Regional Arts Australia, its member organizations, and the Australian Government

- **Presence of artists:** the growing number of professional artists in regional communities who have great ability, experience, innovation, creativity

- **Arts supporters and volunteers:** thousands of arts supporters and arts volunteers who work on exhibitions, festivals, community cultural development projects and youth arts activities, and support artists in their development and in their capacity to work in their communities.

- **Better funding support, especially cross-government:** communities do not seek handouts, but look instead for stronger investment in the arts as a means of achieving sustainable and inclusive development of their communities as a whole. Cross-government support is critical to the expansion and development of the arts in regional communities – national, state, and local governments. (Dunn & Koch, 2006)

This project also explored obstacles to the development of arts and creativity in regional Australia communities, including:

- **Lack of appropriate facilities** for creating and presenting arts activities.

- **'Resource poor' nature of communities** that have insufficient money, services, and facilities to overcome the tyranny of distance and the tide of economic and community decline. The long tradition of regional communities sustaining themselves is under threat as drought, fire, flood, youth migration, and the removal of services take their toll.

- **Challenges of changing populations:** young and old move out, "sea-changers," hobby farmers, and new workers move in. This leads to a need for different community dynamics and new ways to promote acceptance and inclusion.

- **Lack of status for arts:** engagement in and support of the arts in the country can lack the status and attention that sporting activities attract.

- **City-centric approach of funders and gatekeepers:** sponsors, governments, and arts companies are often cluttered with 'big-city' arts issues and opportunities.

3.2. Other research findings identifying critical themes

Researchers Kenyon & Black (2001), in a report about rural regeneration published by the Rural Industries Support and Development Corporation, discuss issues of significant for rural revitalization in Australia. While their work is not specifically focussed on arts, their findings have much relevance to the current topic. They discuss the importance of a "new approach to rebuilding" that is gradually being adopted by governments and development agencies. In this approach, development occurs through communities working from the "bottom up" and "inside out," rather than the traditional model of "top down" and "outside in" (p. 2).

These researchers describe the significance of facilitators who can lead communities into and through regeneration. In doing so, they identify a number of roles for facilitators:

- energiser, creating an atmosphere of energy, excitement, optimism and positiveness
- broker, linking communities to experiences, networks, methodologies, tools, information and resources that may be relevant to their needs and aspirations
- coach; optimising the knowledge confidence and experience of community participants by demystifying concepts procedures and strategies, facilitating group discussions and helping the group overcome stumbling blocks and conflicts
- champion; promoting the community and its revival effort to the wider world (Kenyon & Black, 2001, p. 2)

And finally, they stress the importance of five factors in the renewal process:

- an expression of healthy dissatisaction with the status quo and a willingness to explore and experiment with developing innovative solutions and options
- demonstration of positive mindset and opportunism
- the use of appropriate community planning and development processes
- implementation of a comprehensive and locally owned and resourced local economic development agenda
- presence and renewal of local leadership (pp. 19-20)

Other factors considered vital were identified by Richards (2006a): a focus on retaining young people through employment, recreational, and educational initiatives and building on local culture, local history and heritage, local people, assets, and characteristics.

4. Recommendations from the literature

Analysis of the Australian literature provides a range of actionable ideas for rural and small towns in other places.

4.1. Regional Arts Australia study

The recommendations for future development of arts in regional communities from Regional Arts Australia's recent study (Dunn & Koch, 2006) are listed in full here, given their significant contribution to the current discussion. These authors considered the following findings vital for immediate consideration in Australia:

Recognition of regional arts

- Preparation and distribution of reader friendly resource materials explaining the support available for regional arts activity around Australia and the decision-making processes that serve major programs. These materials should include summary statistical information on the regional arts sector and its value.

- Review of funding decision processes to ensure appropriate community representation and promulgate information on that process (including details of funding panel members).

- Gathering of qualitative and quantitative data on regional arts activity and impacts for general promotion of the regional arts sector.

Local government regional arts partnerships

- Collaboration with local government to develop a consistent arts and cultural policy for adoption nationally.

- Collaboration with local government to identify opportunities for the creation of community arts spaces for use by artists and community arts organisations.

- Establishment of an annual "Excellence in the Arts" award for regionally based Local Government Authorities.

Promoting and profiling regional arts

- Collaboration with the Australia Council to find ways to promote and extend information and training to assist regional artists and facilitators in developing media skills.

- Collaboration with regional media networks and business to develop an arts promotion campaign.

- Investigation of advocacy training as a new module for the Creative Volunteering Skills Development program.

- Holding of a national focus day on which to celebrate the diverse range of regional arts activity across the nation, with a Regional Arts Capital to be selected each year

for showcasing existing arts activity and facilities and for special development funding (corporate funding involvement to be investigated).

- Investigate the establishment of an awards program which recognises outstanding regionally based arts volunteers.

Extending the network of regional arts

- Development of a framework for use by communities in building alliances with sporting clubs towards a collaborative approach to promoting arts and sport as complementary cultural activities.

- Development and negotiation of arts support strategies to be promoted and assisted by regional libraries.

- Investigation of methods to promulgate advisory information on partnership building for the arts sector.

- Investigation of the creation of a youth element in funding programs.

- Development of strategies for regional arts engagement in related health, education and employment programs.

- Development of a funded mentor program with professional artists.

Indigenous arts development

- Initiation of discussions with DCITA (National Dept of Communication Information Technology and the Arts) to clarify existing Indigenous arts funding arrangements and disseminate information to communities through State and Territory members of Regional Arts Australia.

- Collaboration with the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination to identify the potential of Shared Responsibility Agreements and Regional Partnership Agreements to increase the level of Indigenous arts and cultural activity.

Developing arts facilities in regional Australia

- Development of strategies for mapping arts and cultural infrastructure and assessing costs/benefits.

- Development of a national policy for arts facilities development.

- Identification and exploration of models of successful community capacity building through the arts (including social, economic and cultural impacts) as a means of promoting support amongst stakeholders and funding agencies, with emphasis on new government/corporate/ community partnerships promoting further development.

4.2. Synthesis of recommendations

The following section synthesizes recommendations from the literature for actions necessary to build long-term vitality for the arts in rural communities into six major themes:

- Commitment from government to cultural vitality dimension of planning and public policy

- Recognition of the value of local cultural product and practices

- Support for arts in communities, especially networks of supporting professionals

- Better funding support, including long-term investment and less onerous application processes

- Data collection about arts activities including outcomes at a local level

- Awards for good practice

Commitment from government to cultural vitality dimension of planning and public policy

The action considered likely to lead to the most significant change is a commitment from government to the value of the cultural vitality dimension of planning and public policy. These comments are directed to the three levels of government; federal, state, and local. Dunn & Koch (2006), for example, comment that the creation and support of contexts for sustainable local communities should be a major policy direction of governments in Australia. The Community Development and Justice Standing Committee (2004) research found a perception that local government tends to seem more committed to sport than the arts and that arts organizations believe they are the most vulnerable to budget cuts in times of fiscal restraint. Mulligan & Smith (2007) provide suggestions for local government, commenting that the best hope for sustainable regional arts sectors is if councils made a commitment to cultural vitality as part of their core business. They warn, however, that this will not be an easy transition, with time and patient effort needed to bring about the needed shift in attitudes and priorities.

Recognition of the value of local cultural product and practices

The importance of regional communities recognizing and valuing their own culture, including locally generated cultural products is very significant. While this may be challenging and may take some time to achieve, it is an essential factor in the development of sustainable local culture and employment for local artists (Mulligan & Smith, 2007). Mulligan & Smith predict that ongoing government investment in regional arts makes it possible for more artists to work outside metropolitan centres, and many prefer to do for lifestyle reasons. Radical changes in information technologies over the last 30 years has also made it easier for practicing artists to live and work in rural and regional communities, so it is likely that the pool of practitioners in rural communities will slowly increase over time.

Support for arts in communities, especially networks of supporting professionals

Networks are needed to provide arts services, resources, and support to communities (Mulligan & Smith, 2007). Suggested networks include a decentralized network of arts officers within easy reach of all communities to enable regional communities to develop arts projects that reflect their own unique experiences. The West Australian state government committee considered the lack of such a network of regional arts development officers as the

single biggest obstacle to regional communities achieving equal access to arts funding, touring programs, and government support (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2004). Their recommendations were that many of the problems facing a dwindling volunteer base in regional arts organizations would be overcome with such a network of locally based arts professionals.

Support for volunteers, given the significant role they play in the creative life of their rural and remote communities, is essential (Smiles, 2006). Volunteer organizations are often expected to complete tasks that are often beyond their expertise and demand excessive time commitments. These pressures are leading to a decline in the number of people prepared to give of their time and skills for their community. Without more regionally based support, there will inevitably be a long-term reduction in the number and quality of arts-based activities in regional Australia.

Support structures within each region, such as that available within the Sport and Recreation fields, would make a substantial difference to arts development in regional areas: support with onerous funding application processes, the identification of new funding sources, help with project management, assistance with the burden of public liability insurance. This support should include a form of training that is held close to where people live and employs a flexible model of delivery to meet the specific needs of different communities (Smiles, 2006).

Better funding support, including long-term investment and less onerous application processes
Long-term investment in the arts, not seed funding, is required especially to encourage interest in local product (Mulligan & Smith, 2007). A more collegiate approach to regional arts funding, including alignment in application and reporting requirements is suggested to reduce the burden especially of volunteers (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2004). Percent for Art schemes represent an effective way of stimulating creative activity, providing work for local artists and beautifying the local environment. Encouraging developers to participate in such schemes will, in the medium- to long-term, increase the value of the built environment and will develop the community's artistic and cultural base (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2004).

Data collection about arts activities including outcomes at a local level
Collection data about outcomes of arts activities, and consideration of these in implementation of activities, is essential (Mulligan & Smith, 2007; Dunn & Koch, 2006). Undervaluing of the arts is both reflected in and exacerbated by a lack of empirical data in the fields of arts and culture at a regional level. Figures that show employment rates, household spending, and levels of production are not available at the regional level and therefore it is difficult to make definitive statements about the economic impact of the arts on regional communities. Until this deficiency is rectified, it will remain possible for governments to ignore the arts as a core activity in favour of other, more statistically supported priorities (Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, 2004)

Awards for good practice
Awards for good practice are a strategy suggested by researchers Mulligan & Smith (2007) and Dunn & Koch (2006) for increasing the value and profile of regional and rural arts activity.

5. Conclusion

This paper has explored the contribution of the arts and creativity to the development and revitalization of rural and remote communities in Australia. Findings from the Australian literature indicate that arts and creative initiatives are significant for the development of rural and remote communities, in economic, environmental, social, and cultural domains. The "creative industry" model and its primary consideration of the contribution of the arts to local economies was introduced, as was the community cultural development approach that values mainly social outcomes of arts activity in communities, including health and well-being, social inclusion, and educational achievements. Also examined were arguments that ascribe value to the cultural dimension in its own right, in which the intrinsic value of arts and creative opportunities for rural and remote communities is recognised. This view leads to the consideration that the economy should support arts and creativity rather than the other way around.

Factors that seem pivotal in building long-term sustainability for arts and creativity in rural communities include appreciation of local culture, history and heritage, local people, assets, and characteristics; enthusiastic local leadership, positive attitudes, local entrepreneurship, and investment; and right timing and a focus on retaining young people through employment, recreational, and educational initiatives.

The research examined for this paper points to numerous factors that might support initiatives in other communities. The most fundamental of these is the necessity of government commitment (at all levels) to the value of cultural dimension in planning and public policy. Other factors include the need for recognition of the value of local cultural product and practices, more support for arts in communities, especially through networks of regional arts development officers, assistance for volunteers (including training), and reduction of bureaucratic obstacles. Also suggested are better funding programs, including long-term investment and less onerous application processes, as well as data collection about arts activities and outcomes at a local level and awards that recognize and acknowledge excellence.

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Annex A.

Case studies/projects – leading examples illustrating how rural communities have been revitalized or sustained through arts and creative activity

The following seven case studies are grouped thematically, providing information about activities relevant to small rural towns and remote, including Indigenous, communities.

- Community rebuilding after natural disaster of bushfires

- Promulgation of Indigenous culture through cultural initiatives

    Re-storying indigenous culture for indigenous and non-indigenous people, Garma Festival, Northern Territory

    Recognizing the value of indigenous cultural heritage and living cultural traditions, Cape York, Far North Queensland

- Special places: built, natural and cultural environment

    Successful festival builds on local culture, Port Fairy, Victoria

    Townsfolk take action to regenerate as a "Mural Town" Sheffield, Tasmania

    Creative community is generated through space and place for artists, Natimuk, Victoria

    Building on buildings, Rural Art Deco, Ranfurly, New Zealand

Regeneration of rural communities after bushfire

Creative responses to bushfire

Summary: This case study examines the contribution of creative responses to recovery from bushfire, an ever-present possibility for many areas of remote and rural Australia. These include organisational responses and artistic projects engendered in local communities.

Context: The magnitude and frequency of bushfire damage is increasing around Australia, as much of the country becomes hotter and drier as a result of climate change, compounded by changes in land management and usage since European settlement. Communities in the southern part of Australia, most recently in Victoria, have just experienced their worst ever fires. Serious damage was wrought through the loss of permanent buildings: homes, public facilities, shops and businesses, and many human and animal lives.

A range of creative responses to bushfire trauma has been engendered around Australia over recent years. The need for creative rituals through which people experience and deal with loss is described in the following comment from government researchers considering a memorial after fires in the Australian Capital Territory in 2002/03:

> When a community experiences a disaster, spontaneously developed rituals,
> symbols and memorials are used to give expression to people's feelings of shock
> and loss. Later, the development and sanctioning by the community of more
> formal rituals and memorials which acknowledge and give meaning to what
> people have been through can also provide comfort.[4]

Creative responses to bushfire come from all areas of the wider community: initiatives led or sponsored by government, those driven by community organizations or members, and those instigated by artists working with and through their communities or in their own practice. Several examples are described below.

- A government led initiative for a bushfire memorial was felt to be an appropriate response to serious fires in the ACT region in late 2002. Ideas for the form of this memorial were developed through an extensive community consultative process and

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[4] *A Bushfire Memorial for the ACT: Community Consultation Discussion Paper,* 11 June 2004, p. 3

the final installation included 500 images from 80 families and individuals, and inscriptions from 160 people used on bricks for the curved entry wall.[5]

- In the tiny rural town of St. Marys, Tasmania, (population 600) community member Jan Sparkes instigated a community bushfire recovery initiative *Re-Gener-8*, in December 2007 after a devastating three-week fire the previous year. Sparkes was motivated by a belief that documenting local knowledge, stories, and experiences from the bushfires and acknowledging community resilience would contribute to the ongoing healing process. The project involved a collaboration between residents, the local Council, and the University of Tasmania's Department of Rural Health and resulted in several activities including art exhibitions, music, a mural painting, and the launch of the book complied by the community containing stories, interviews, poems, images, humour, and hints from community and various organizations' experiences during the fires.[6]

- Community-based artists Anna and Marita Smith worked with their local community to create a performance work response to the fire related trauma they observed after bushfires in 2005. The *Fire Up* project involved a broad cross-section of local people from several small rural communities in the south east of Victoria (Foster, Toora, Welshpool, and Fish Creek). Project participants, including five schools, two choirs, ten local artists and musicians, and seniors groups worked closely with many accomplished local artists and the Smiths as choreographers. Renowned children's author Alison Lester, botanical artist Celia Rosser, and others all contributed their expertise to the process, to create a multi-artform performance presented as part of the Prom Coast Seachange Festival in 2007.[7]

- Regional Arts Victoria responded to the fires that swept Victoria in early 2009 with a range of creative initiatives:

  o On the ground assistance to support community arts projects that can boost morale and contribute to community reconnection and recovery,

  o Employment of a Regional Arts Development Officer position to work directly in bushfire affected towns, providing administrative support, developing contact information databases, helping write grants and managing small projects, and assisting to get small cultural organisations back on their feet.

  o Contribution to a cultural working party, along with staff from several peak arts organizations and Arts Victoria to co-ordinate efforts regarding support programs, and to ensure that arts and culture remain on the agenda as the towns and communities impacted by the fires enter the rebuilding phase.

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[5] artsACT, Department of Urban Services, *A Bushfire Memorial for the ACT, Community Consultation: Final Report,*
www.arts.act.gov.au/pages/images/Bushfire%20Memorial%20Comm%20Consult%20Final%20Report.pdf accessed 10.2.09. www.arts.act.gov.au/pages/page106.asp

[6] *Regeneration of a rural community – Bushfire and recovery.*
http://fcms.its.utas.edu.au/healthsci/ruralhealth/newsdetail.asp?lNewsEventId=2702accessed 10.2.09

[7] http://kinesismagazine.com.au/dance/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=64&Itemid=1 accessed 11.2.09

o   In partnership with the Department of Sustainability and Environment (DSE) and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) RAV developed an interactive web-based noticeboard entitled *Storyboard*, to enable fire-affected Victorians to post photos and stories of their experience, provoke some story-telling, and also provide vital information the CFA and DSE can use as a primary resource in their assessment of the fires. It will also direct people to other sites that are providing complementary functions such as "photo-recovery" and matching offers of help with people who need goods or assistance.[8]

The instigators led these responses because of their belief in the power of arts and ritual to bring people together with a positive and common goal, to contribute to community's reformation after the fires. These beliefs are supported by evidence for the contribution of arts to successful healing and recovery from trauma. Coulter (2008) documents outcomes of art therapy addressing trauma including safe expression of anger, and release from traumatic visual images and explicit memories. Dance movement therapist Amber Gray is internationally recognized for her work assisting recovery from different kinds of traumas through arts activities including drumming and ritual movement (Gray, 2005). Visual artist Anne Riggs' (2008) research examines the contribution of visual art-making to participants' capacity to recover from grief and loss resulting from trauma.

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[8] www.rav.net.au/about-us/news-media/story/7/

Promulgation of Indigenous culture through cultural initiatives

© Yothu Yindi Foundation / Garma Festival. Photographer: Stephen Cherry

Arnhem Land, Northern Territory: Re-storying indigenous culture for indigenous and non-indigenous people. Case study of the Garma festival

Summary description: The Garma Festival of Indigenous Culture, in remote Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, Australia, provides cultural and economic regeneration for Indigenous communities of the region. It also provides non-Indigenous Australians with unique learning experiences of Indigenous culture, within a framework and environment managed by traditional owners.

Main features: promulgation of Indigenous culture amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, tourism, employment, and training

Factors: Indigenous ownership of event, strong leadership, long-standing tradition of cross-cultural artistic experiences, talented artists

Context: This case study examines the Garma Festival, a relatively recent initiative that since 1999 has developed into one of Australia's most significant Indigenous festivals. Garma, organized by the Yothu Yindi Foundation, a not-for-profit Aboriginal corporation, provides intrinsic and instrumental benefits to Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants. All revenue generated from Garma supports the aims of the festival, which are:

- Encouraging and developing economic opportunities for the local Yolngu people through education, training, employment, and enterprise development

- Sharing knowledge and culture, thereby fostering greater understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians

- Nurturing and maintaining Yolngu cultural traditions and practices

Yolngu culture in northeast Arnhem Land – a heartland of Aboriginal culture and land rights – is among the oldest living cultures on earth, stretching back more than 40,000 years. The Garma Festival is a celebration of this Yolngu cultural inheritance, designed to encourage the practice, preservation, and maintenance of traditional dance (bunggul), song (manikay), art, and ceremony. The festival site at Gulkula has profound meaning for Yolngu, as it is where the ancestor Ganbulabula brought the yidaki (didjeridu) into being among the Gumatj people.

This site is very remote, reachable only by flights from Darwin or Cairns a few times a week, or a 1,400 km drive over unpaved roads from Darwin, the capital city of the remote top end of

Australia. This remoteness adds to the unique experience of the visitor, as this land can be visited by permit holders only and is therefore ordinarily out of bounds for non-residents.

In addition to the cultural festival, Garma also provides a significant cultural exchange event, a key educational forum, and an award-winning model for authentic Indigenous tourism.

The Festival is attended annually by capacity audiences; about 1,400 each of Indigenous people from the local region throughout Arnhem Land, the Northern Territory, and Australia, and Balanda (white people) who come primarily to attend the educational forum and experience Indigenous tourism in this unique location. Garma has won several awards including the 2004 And 2005 Brolga Awards For Major Festivals and Events and the 2005 Skal International Eco-Tourism Award.

There are significant benefits for all types of festival participants. For example, teachers identify numerous benefits for the young Indigenous people participating in the special music programs, including enhanced confidence in performance situations; increased motivation to pursue musical studies to higher levels; and self-esteem derived from successful achievement and respect for peer musicians from various tribal groups, gained through observing, listening, and reflecting on different cultural contributions.

Researcher Lisa Slater (2006) writes, after her visit to Garma in 2005, that the festival can "help foster anticolonial thinking: moving beyond assimilationist logic by conceptualising spaces of recognition and exchange that encourage the maintenance of difference" (p. 31). "Garma Festival fosters a new intercultural dialogue that disrupts the assimillationist fantasy of a harmonious homogenous Australia. The principles and practices of Garma offer a model and a cultural space for negotiating a new public ethos that recognises the contemporary pertinence of Indigenous thought and encourages a reimagining of Australian democracy" (p. 34).

For this author, a white Australian cultural development worker, the experience of immersion in the striking bush setting, the very well-organized conference activities and campsite, the stimulating forum program, the great sense of co-operation and positive collaboration between Indigenous and other Australians, and the opportunity to witness a full range of highly developed Indigenous cultural practices combined to make participation in this event a very memorable experience and a significant learning opportunity.
www.garma.telstra.com/

Laura, Cape York, Far North Queensland: Recognizing the value of indigenous cultural heritage and living cultural traditions

Summary: This case study features the tiny remote community of Laura in far north Queensland where revitalization of the local community as a result of the recognition of the value of indigenous culture. Two initiatives are central to this process: **Quinkan and Regional Cultural Centre** that features cultural heritage and the Laura Dance Festival that acknowledges the living culture.

Main features: natural and built environment, Indigenous history and living culture

Factors: unique Indigenous cultural heritage, unspoilt natural environment, distinct Indigenous and non-Indigenous "cultural" practices

The tiny town of Laura on Cape York in far North Queensland (population of 100) and its surrounding district has an impact far beyond that of its size. This is largely because of the area's great cultural significance that has only recently been recognised by non-Indigenous people.

The district is home to world famous Aboriginal art galleries featuring dramatic prehistoric rock paintings. These have been identified as at least 15,000 years old and are listed by UNESCO as among the top ten rock art sites in the world. The paintings and engravings contained in the numerous galleries are a pictorial record of ancestral spirits, Quinkans, and through them represent the laws, socialization, spirituality, and cultural practices that are at the core of Aboriginal life and identity and their connection to the land. Rock Art from the region provides an amazing pictorial record of Aboriginal integration with the Australian landscape for a period of at least 27,000 years.

The Quinkan and Regional Cultural Centre in Far North Queensland was established in 2004 to showcase the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage of the area as well as the natural environment. Local communities sought to improve employment opportunities by developing tourism and promoting arts at the Centre, through guided tours of the rock art galleries, and selling a range of regional Aboriginal arts and crafts. The Centre is owned and operated by the local community and was established with support of the Qld. Heritage Trails Network. This Network, developed over four years from 2001 to 2004, is a $110 million joint initiative of the Queensland and Australian Governments that links together 43 heritage and cultural sites, museums, natural attractions, and cultural centres.
www.heritagetrails.qld.gov.au/default.html

The project has involved close consultation with the four traditional owner groups which are connected to the Quinkan sandstone region, and is a partnership between the Cook Shire and the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments.
www.quinkancc.com.au/
www.heritagetrails.qld.gov.au/attractions/laura.html
www.theaustralian.news.com.au/story/0,25197,24891708-5013571,00.html

Thousands of national and international tourists make the Centre and the region a destination, especially during the time of the biennial Laura Dance Festival, the largest traditional Indigenous gathering in Australia. This festival began in the early 1980s when communities in the Cape York region decided to reunite for a weekend of song, dance, and celebration. It is held on the Ang-gnarra Festival Grounds, on the site of the traditional "Bora" grounds where the local Kuku Yalanji Aboriginal people had congregated since time immemorial. The most recent festival, held in June 2007, involved more dance groups then ever before and was attended by more than 3,000 visitors, artists, and locals.
www.laurafestival.tv/home.html
www.indigenoustourism.australia.com/news.asp?sub=0671

Also featured in the region is the Laura Heritage Trail, which features history of the region since European settlement, particularly relics of the gold and railway era.
www.quinkancc.com.au/

Special places: Built, natural, and cultural environment

Port Fairy, Victoria: A successful festival builds on local culture

Summary description: The small rural town of Port Fairy in Victoria, Australia, has revitalized over the past 30 or so years to become a lively cultural hub, attractive to tourists and residents alike**.** Factors contributing to this success include the unspoilt and very scenic natural environment, the well-designed and preserved built environment, and shared Irish heritage of many members of the local community. A year-round series of well-attended cultural events has developed around these assets, most notably the award winning Port Fairy Folk Festival, which attracts more than 20,000 people each year.

Context: In the small rural town of Port Fairy, Victoria (pop 3,000) reduced opportunities from changed farming and fishing opportunities led to downturn for the community, until revitalization through cultural development occurred over the past 30 years. The town has evolved into a lively cultural hub, attractive to tourists and residents**.** Younger people, including many professionals who work in the town or region, choose Port Fairy as a long term home, balancing the population of non-resident holiday home owners and a number of older residents, many of whom are retired farmers from the larger farming district of the region.

Several factors contribute to the success of the cultural development initiatives. Notably these are the unspoilt and very scenic natural environment, well-designed and preserved built environment, and shared Irish heritage of much of the local community. A year-round series of well-attended cultural events has developed around these assets, most especially the 33-year-old Port Fairy Folk Festival. This festival grew out of an idea proposed to the Port Fairy community by Jamie McKew of the Geelong Folk Music Club. McKew recognized the synergy between the ambience of the town in which his grandmother lived and the genre of the music his group wanted to promote, and suggested the presentation of a festival. The idea was gradually adopted by the local community and is now well supported by the Moyne Shire Council, local service clubs, community organizations, and residents who contribute significant volunteer time, while also enjoying significant benefit. The festival attracts top international acts and crowds of more than 20,000 people annually. It contributes significant economic benefits to the local community through direct spending by festival-goers in local businesses and fundraising initiatives by community organizations. Primary schools raise up to $20,000 annually through creative initiatives, such as the provision of bed and breakfast accommodation in the school buildings.

The Festival provides significant other cultural benefits to the community as well, contributing to the sense of a creative and vital place. For example, schools throughout the region enjoy an annual artist-in-resident program, visits from festival performers, and opportunities for high-profile creative and performing opportunities.

Because of the tourism infrastructure that has developed to meet the demands of this significant event, the region has become an ideal location for other events. A year-round program has gradually evolved, all catering for slightly different markets of cultural tourists and locals. These include the Koroit Irish festival, a celebration of the region's Irish heritage; a series of winter weekends, themed "Comedy," "Art & Jazz," "Food & Wine," and "History & Heritage"; a book fair that includes author readings and signings, presentations, practical workshops, sales, and displays; a Spring Music Festival of classical and contemporary ensemble music; and the most recent addition to the program, the Tarerer Festival, a celebration of Indigenous cultures.

www.port-fairy.com/
www.portfairyfolkfestival.com/
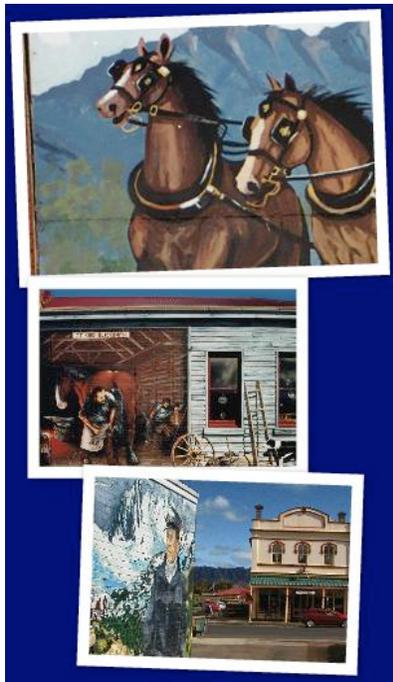
Sheffield, Tasmania: Townsfolk take action to regenerate as a "Mural Town"

Summary: This case study describes a deliberate economic revitalization strategy undertaken by community members in the tiny town of Sheffield, Tasmania. Townspeople were inspired by the community of Chemainus, Canada, to become a "mural town," a strategy that has been successful in attracting significant numbers of tourists and ongoing program of cultural activity.

Context: Sheffield, Tasmania (population 1,200) was a prosperous small town until 1963, when it was the centre for activity for dam building for the Tasmanian HydroPower Development Scheme. When this work was completed, the town declined, despite the physical beauty of the surrounding pristine World Heritage Area. In 1985, residents and business people gathered to consider possible regeneration initiatives. Fortuitously, the night before the meeting, a documentary on the small town of Chemainus, Canada, was aired, describing that town's success in becoming a tourist destination as a "mural town."

Sheffield residents decided to use Chemainus' idea as a model for their own action, and the first mural was commissioned in 1986. Since then, more than 47 murals have been painted on the walls of the town and surrounding areas, each depicting something of the history of the region. This strategy has been successful, with mural art proving a turning point for the economic prosperity of the region. Just as had occurred in Chemainus, Sheffield soon reaped the benefits brought by a blossoming tourism industry. The murals have attracted an

estimated 120,000 people to the town every year; leading to more trade, more shops, more accommodation and restaurants, more jobs, more residents, and more funds in the community. As a project instigated and driven by the community itself, in response to self-identified challenges, the murals are considered by locals to provide a sense of purpose and self-esteem to the whole town, in addition to their economic benefits.

The interest in murals engendered through this strategy has led to the establishment of another significant event, the annual week-long Mural Fest. Attracting participants from the region and further afield, the Mural Fest has become a recognized event on tourist schedules.
In 2008, the region successfully hosted "The Global Mural Fest & Conference," attracting 150 delegates from around the world. The project and murals have been documented as an audio tour, commissioned by the Kentish Council to guide visitors around the murals. As a result of these two initiatives, the whole Kentish Municipality has become known as "Tasmania's Outdoor Art Gallery," and townspeople describe Sheffield as "a little town with BIG ideas."
www.muralfest.com.au/
www.cradleinfo.com.au/pages.asp?code=32
www.sheffieldmurals.com.au/
www.discovertasmania.com/destinations/north_west_coast/sheffield
www.smh.com.au/news/Tasmania/Sheffield/2005/02/17/1108500205951.html

Natimuk, Victoria: A creative community is generated through space and place for artists

Summary: This case study describes Natimuk, a tiny rural town in northwestern Victoria that has recently experienced a significant cultural revival owing to the growing community of artists who have made the town their home and workplace. Factors that attract artists to the area include the availability of cheap housing and studio space, the unique physical environment close to the rock-climbing mecca of Mt. Arapiles, and the presence of each other. The biennial Nati Frinj Festival is a focus for much of the creative energy of the region, but Natimuk artists also export their work and ideas across the country and the world.

Context: Natimuk is a tiny rural town (population 500) in the northwest of Victoria, Australia, near Mount Arapiles. At the beginning of the twentieth century it was a bustling community

with more than 70 shops and industries, including a flour mill and steel foundry. After it was bypassed by the interstate highway and railway, the town's development slowed, and until recently has been very quiet centre, retaining much of its original character as a Lutheran community. The longstanding drought has also severely impacted this community, with the lake that was formerly the centre of summer life – used for swimming, windsailing, and fishing – now completely dry.

However, the town has recently enjoyed a renaissance due to two related factors: the region's popularity as a rock climbing destination and as home base for a diverse range of artists. In the 1980s, Mt. Arapiles began to be known by climbers from all over the world, who are drawn to its spectacular cliffs and more than 2,000 climbing routes. Many of these rock climbers, also artists and partners of artists, have chosen to live near Mt. Arapiles, as the availability of cheap housing and studio space makes a possible a lifestyle that includes time for rock climbing and artistic practice. Artist Robert Grenfell believes there is a close connection between rock climbing and the arts because of the risks and creative flair required for both pursuits. Several practitioners actually make art that involves climbing, like aerial dancer Jillian Pearce whose company, Y-Space, is renowned for their high-altitude creative work and Simon Barley of Bambuco whose work with giant bamboo structures takes him all around the world.

The presence of artists makes a creative environment that in itself attracts other artists, animators, filmmakers, dancers, aerialists, conceptual artists, shadow puppeteers, performers, scriptwriters, poets, writers, wood craftspeople, printmakers, photographers, sculptors, multi-media artists, musicians, and painters. Practitioners and companies now based in Natimuk include:

- *TransVision Arts*, a company that performs socio-critical theatre and develops forum theatre projects exploring social issues with adults and young people

- *Play at Being* company that uses contemporary theatre performance to question the nature of existence, through work with puppets, theatre, projections, digitals images, shadows, VJ software and music, and innovative performance spaces (including an agricultural shed and a large, delicate, white inflatable cube) *www.natimuk.com/html/play_at_being.html*

- *Transcience*, the creation of award-winning animator Dave Jones, who developed a style of work using the internet and Flash animation so that he could relocate permanently from the city. He now has several international awards for his animated short films and online games, and has been shown at the Melbourne Film Festival. *In My Day*, the short film Jones created with pupils at Natimuk Primary School, won Best Animated Short Film in the 2005 Melbourne International Film Festival.

- *The Goat Gallery*, that features monthly exhibitions of local artists including Anthony Pelchen, whose work has hung in the National Gallery in Canberra, and Jill McLeod, who recently won a final place in Metro 5, the nation's richest art prize for people under 35.

- *Skink Press*, the publishing arm of the Nati Frinj, which publishes the creative works of Natimuk and creative works on Natimuk.

- Regular dance festival *Gaining Momentum*, that began as a contact improvisation workshop

It has been suggested that the artists in Natimuk comprise a "school" in the sense of the *plein air* or the Heidelberg school of location-based artistic oevres. What binds these artists together is not a shared form but a shared inspiration: the wish to create art and live in this Wimmera environment. Like other schools, this group derive inspiration from each other. www.natimuk.com/html/natimuk_school.html

Much creative energy is centred around the Nati Frinj, a biennial arts festival started in 2000 by local artists who needed an event to attract funding for projects they had planned. The Frinj involves up to 4,000 people these days, including local residents, and aims to contribute to Natimuk's evolution as an artistic mecca and its developing reputation as a place of fine and surprising art events. The Nati Frinj features the large-scale multi-media performances, featuring aerial artists and huge projections on the giant wheat silos in the town. *Space and Place* was the first of these, a collection of poetic images that play with the extremes of the Wimmera, a performance that explored relationships to land and space, and what gives us our sense of place.

More traditional, community-based organizations are also based there, such as Arapiles Community Theatre that has staged successful musical theatre productions and is now extending its vision to support performing arts in a variety of genres as well as arts within other disciplines such as the visual arts and film.

Other factors that contribute to the success of the Natimuk artistic community are the ongoing support of the local council, Horsham Rural City, and peak body, Regional Arts Victoria, especially through its Regional Arts Development Officer program.

Unlike the previous case studies, where an instrumental outcome such as increased tourist revenue is a major value of the artistic endeavour, in the case of Natimuk, it is the art itself that is the outcome.

Natimuk and region have become a richer place by virtue of the arts being part of the environment.

www.natimuk.com/
http://trafficlight.com.au/highlights/index.php?action=show&highlightid=6
www.theage.com.au/news/Arts/A-matter-of-scale/2005/01/10/1105206048297.html
www.smh.com.au/travel/high-art-20081113-5zy0.html?page=-1

New Zealand: Regeneration through "building" on built environment

Rural Art Deco Maniototo, Ranfurly, New Zealand

Photos: Left: The Green House, Ranfurly (Image: Ian Dougherty). Centre: The 1948 Centennial Milk Bar building doubles as an Art Deco museum and as a base for an artist-in-residence programme (Image: Ian Dougherty). Right: Art Deco Weekend.

Summary: This case study describes the small town of Ranfurly in rural New Zealand that built on its unique asset of primarily Art Deco-style architecture and reinvented itself as a cultural tourism destination. While organizers recognize the significant economic benefits of the project, they also recognize social and environmental outcomes such as increased pride in local area and valuing of the built environment.

Context: The small town of Ranfurly (population 800) in rural New sZealand was established in 1898 as a railhead for the Central Otago railway line. New buildings were erected to accommodate the town's enhanced status as the main centre of the Maniototo region. Other new buildings appeared as a result of a succession of fires in the 1930s. Many of the town's new edifices were constructed in the fashionable Art Deco style of the time. Their relative cheapness suited the state of economic depression, as did the way in which moulded shapes, relief decorations, and vivid colours could be easily used to beautify the buildings.

However, from the late 1980s, Ranfurly experienced decline and closure. The rural economy slumped and the railway line no longer carried trains. The local council transferred headquarters to another town and government agencies such as the post office closed. Businesses went the same way, including the town's only petrol station. When the local sawmill shut down, 26 families left town.

In 1999, locals identified the need for a revitalization strategy, and the opportunity of a key asset in the handsome Art Deco-styled buildings. Headed by local politician Edna McAtamney, a community-based project was established to manage and develop this cultural heritage resource. Through this initiative, most of Ranfurly's Art Deco buildings were restored with discounted paint supplied by local shops and manufacturers.4

The derelict 1948 Art Deco Centennial Milk Bar was transformed, largely by voluntary labour, into an Art Deco museum featuring exhibits from the Maniototo area. The Museum has attracted 35,000 visitors since it opened in 2000, and achievements include the production of an *Art Deco Walk* brochure that showcases the town's architecture. The annual Art Deco Weekend every February attracts up to 8,000 visitors, which is more than visit the town

during the entire six-week Christmas holiday period. Festival participants dressed in the art deco theme enjoy a variety of activities, including a car rally, jazz and cabaret event, Gatsby picnics, a piglet race, and duck shoot.

Indicators of the substantial economic well-being generated by this initiative include the refurbishment of about 20 buildings in the town, new tourist-oriented businesses including a backpackers lodge in the former post office building, guest houses (one with an Art Deco theme), several additional home stays, a couple of cafés, a couple of second-hand shops (one specialising in Art Deco objects), Art Deco tours in vintage cars, and a craft shop. The petrol station has re-opened, the disused railway station has been turned into an information centre, and the railyards and goods shed are being converted into an Art Deco agricultural machinery display. The previous housing surplus has become, over five years, a housing shortage. The interest in tourism has in turn encouraged the conversion of the ribbon of former railway land into the Otago Central Rail Trail, which brings a steady procession of hiking, biking, and horse-riding visitors to the town.

While organizers recognize the significant economic benefits of the project, they also recognize social and environmental outcomes. As Edna McAtamney says,

> The social benefits have been even more outstanding. It's really great to see your community standing up, instead of people walking along the street, shoulders down. … And the process of becoming tourist attractions and tourism facilities has also enhanced the long-term prospects of Ranfurly's Art Deco buildings, which comprise a unique feature of rural New Zealand.

www.historic.org.nz/magazinefeatures/2003summer/2003_summer_ranfurly.htm
www.maniototo.co.nz/art_deco.htm

Annex B.

Organizations supporting arts and creativity rural and remote communities in Australia

Regional Arts Australia and state bodies

Regional Arts Australia is the peak body for the Australia-wide network of regional arts organizations delivering arts programs in regional Australia: Country Arts SA, Country Arts WA, Queensland Arts Council, Regional Arts NSW, Regional Arts Victoria, Tasmanian Regional Arts, and the Northern Territory Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts.

Regional Arts Australia acts on behalf of the communities and artists of regional, rural, and remote Australia in representing and resolving at a national level the issues, concerns, and resource needs pivotal to the development and maintenance of a viable regional arts industry and a vibrant cultural life.
www.regionalarts.com.au/raa1/default.asp

Activities include:

Regional Arts Australia's 2006 national conference, "The Pacific Edge," September 2006
Regional Arts Australia, hosted by Queensland Arts Council, Mackay, Queensland

Regional Arts Australia biennial conference, "The Pacific Edge," features a wealth of local arts and cultural activities, provides debate and discussion on the current concerns of arts in regional communities, showcases and celebrates the achievements of artists involved in regional arts practice, and provides an opportunity to celebrate and become immersed in Australia's regional arts.

The conference program was devised around the current key priority areas identified in Regional Arts Australia's national policy document *2006 National Directions: Regional Arts*.

- Building strong communities
- Connections across the Pacific Rim
- Young people with creative futures
- Art as a powerful agent for change
- Indigenous people and communities
- Reaching new audiences
- Arts partnerships and collaborations
- Innovative communication

Previous conferences have been in: Mt. Gambier, South Australia in 1998; Esperance, Western Australia in 2000; Albury, New South Wales in 2002; Horsham, Victoria in 2004
www.qac.org.au/htm/2006RAAConference.asp

www.regionalarts.com.au

Regional Arts Australia's 2008 national conference, "Art at the Heart," 3-5 October 2008
Regional Arts Conference, hosted by the Northern Territory Government, Alice Springs
www.artattheheart.com.au/ah/1.asp *(accessed 23/02/09)*

A total of 950 delegates, including 192 conference presenters and 254 festival artists from a diverse cultural backgrounds and geographic areas from regional and remote Australia, met in the desert town of Alice Springs for Regional Arts Australia's sixth biennial conference *art at the heart*. The conference provided artists, arts workers, and arts volunteers the opportunity to gather, discuss, perform, and celebrate the arts and cultural achievements of regional Australia. Approximately 45% of presenters were Indigenous and the Artistic program featured a rate of 40:60 Indigenous to non-Indigenous artists.

Thirteen people from across Australia received the prestigious new national Regional Arts Australia Volunteer Award at a ceremony under the stars at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station on Saturday 4 October during the art at the heart conference dinner. The awards are brand new and are designed to give volunteers national recognition for their contribution towards the arts across regional, rural, and remote Australia.

The conference explored key areas of interest for the arts in regional and remote Australia through the themes:

- Place and identity
- Arts partnerships, collaborations, and exchanges
- Sustaining participation in the arts
- Creativity, innovation, and change

Regional Leadership Forums (2004 and late 2005)
Queensland Arts Council and Southern Cross University, Queensland, Australia

A series of community conversations conducted during 2004 to foster debate and interaction with the creative thinkers of regional Queensland. The Regional Leadership Forums brought together a broad cross-section of volunteer and professional arts workers, local government councilors, staff and mayors, as well as practicing artists.

Discussions ranged widely across themes of isolation, access, partnerships, and effective use of resources.

www.qac.org.au/htm/RegionalLeadershipForums.asp

Cultural development or community arts peak bodies in each state:

Cultural Development Network Victoria – www.culturaldevelopment.net.au

Community Arts Network Western Australia – www.canwa.com.au

Darwin Community Arts – www.darwincommunityarts.org.au

Community Arts Network South Australia – www.cansa.on.net

Community Cultural Development NSW – www.ccdnsw.org/ccdnsw/default.php

Arts Nexus, Far North Queensland – www.artsnexus.com.au/index.htm

Arts Access Australia supporting arts for disability
www.artsaccessaustralia.org

and state bodies including:

Accessible Arts NSW – www.aarts.net.au

Arts Access Darwin – www.darwincommunityarts.org.au/node/30

Arts Access SA – www.artsaccess-sa.org.au

Arts Access Victoria – www.artsaccess.com.au

Disability in the Arts, Disadvantage in the Arts, Australia WA – www.dadaawa.org.au

Arts Ability ACT – www.actartsofficers.org.au

Arts Access Central Australia – http://inciteya.org.au/?section=artsaca

Access Arts QLD – www.accessarts.org.au

Arts Action Tasmania – www.artsaccessaustralia.org

Rural Cultural Research Program

Project Coordinators: Prof Kate Darian-Smith and Dr Chris Gibson

This three-year (2006-2008) program of activities in rural cultural research included workshops, symposia, and masterclasses. Outcomes included a substantial web-based resource database, grant applications, and publications.

The overarching aims of the program were:

- To bring together scholars from cultural studies, history and geography whose research interests fall into "rural cultural research"

- To explore new interdisciplinary models for rural cultural research: How can we define the methodological, interpretative, and political parameters of this field of interdisciplinary cultural research?

- To enrich partnerships between universities and rural communities, and between universities, communities, and relevant cultural institutions

- To initiate new interdisciplinary research partnerships between metropolitan and regional universities, encompassing the support of postgraduate and early career researchers, including those in non-metropolitan locations

- To open up Australian-based research in rural cultural research to international comparisons and research links, and in doing so encourage Australian-based research to have international impact

This project examined how people make sense of their lived experience and locality, and how this is shaped by and influenced by government policy and planning (e.g., in relation to transport, communications, and consumption infrastructure; migration patterns; cultural activities, festivals, and creative industries; and so on).

The research examined new, continuing (or changing) discourses of rurality, including:

- Progress and sustainability
- Equity and access
- Community
- Rural idyll (including sea changing and tree changing)
- Cosmopolitanism
- Aesthetics/landscape

Such discourses are framed within wider understandings of the interconnections between rurality, suburbanism and urbanism, and between localized and national "belonging," citizenship, and identity.

Rural Cultural Research Website: Resources and Database
A database of resources and publications, and researchers working in the field (currently under development)
www.uq.edu.au/crn/projects/rural.html

Annex C.

Events and projects

Awakenings Festival, Horsham, Victoria, Australia

This festival is Australia's only regional arts and disability festival. It has been running for 10 years. The festival runs for 10 days and features workshops, outdoor activities, and theatre performances. In 2004, the festival combined with Regional Arts Australia's national conference Meeting Place in Horsham.
www.awakenings.horsham.net.au

Northern Exposure, Pilbara Region, Western Australia

This arts enterprise development project has been running since 2002 as a partnership with the Western Australian Rio Tinto Future Fund and three remote Pilbara WA Indigenous communities, Punmu, Parrngurr, and Kunwarritji. Outcomes of the project include long term artist residencies and skills development programs for fibre textiles, digital photography, dance, and music.
www.artsaccessaustralia.org/makingthejourney/northern_exposure.html

The Otago Arts Guide, Otago, New Zealand

The result of an initiative involving five local authorities in New Zealand, the Guide maps the whereabouts of Otago's artists and creative practitioners and profiles Otago's creative industries sector to local and international visitors.
www.otagoartsguide.co.nz

ArtsConnect9, an initiative of the Arts Centre,

for Victorian regional students in Year 9 to experience the very best their Arts precinct in Melbourne has to offer. Program partners include:

- The Arts Centre & the Alfred Brash SoundHouse
- ACCA – Australian Centre for Contemporary Art
- ACMI – Australian Centre for the Moving Image
- NGV – National Gallery of Victoria
- SLV – State Library of Victoria

www.theartscentre.com.au/artsconnect9

Northern Rivers Screenworks, Northern Rivers region, New South Wales, Australia

Northern Rivers Screenworks is the screen industry office for the Northern Rivers region of New South Wales. Established in 2000, the organization was established to serve the needs of screen industry practitioners in the area. The organization holds regular creative industry development workshops, in partnership with Arts Northern Rivers, the Northern Rivers Regional Development Board, Northern Rivers Screenworks Ltd., and the North Coast Entertainment Industry Association.

These workshops aim to help individuals and organisations to create practical strategies to strengthen the area's creative businesses and improve market access. www.screenworks.com.au

Kim Dunphy

Kim Dunphy is Program Manager at the Cultural Development Network (CDN) in Melbourne, Australia. CDN works to support the cultural vitality of communities throughout the state of Victoria, through four main activity areas: networking, public programs, projects and advocacy. Kim and colleagues have recently completed a major research project for the Victorian State Government, examining ways that participation in the arts for people with a disability can be increased. CDN recently acted as guest editor of a recent edition of the *UNESCO Journal for Multi-Disciplinary Research in The Arts* on the theme of "Creative Local Communities: Cultural Vitality and Human Rights." Kim is also a PhD candidate at Deakin University in where she is exploring the outcomes of community-based arts programs, especially those initiated by international aid programs in Timor-Leste.