



Expanding Cultures

Arts and Local Government Conference

July 24-27 2007

Chapel off Chapel, Prahran, Victoria, Australia

CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS REPORT

Helen Baker and Peter Redden

City of Yarra

City of Stonnington

On behalf of the Conference Committee, we thank delegates for attending the 2007 *Expanding Cultures* conference. We were delighted with the success of the conference and the goodwill and networking engendered between those attending.

The most successful arts and cultural projects in our communities are those that take a collaborative approach; when we come together and share and develop ideas in a fair, open and honest way. This is how the *Expanding Cultures* conference program was developed, a collaboration between the Cities of Stonnington, Yarra, Melbourne, Moreland, Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley, Boroondara and Port Phillip. The conference was born out of a series of discussions held between the arts managers of these eight inner city councils around the issues of concern facing local government and the arts.

The Cultural Development Network worked with the councils with enthusiasm and commitment in developing a program that built on the momentum and issues explored at previous conferences hosted in Victoria including; the *Fourth Pillar of Sustainability in 2004*, the *Art of Dissent* in 2002 and the *Arts and Community: New Century New Connections* conference in 1999.

We were privileged to host distinguished international guests, Jordi Pascual from Agenda 21 for Culture: United Cities and Local Government, Barcelona; Jude Bloomfield, independent researcher from the UK; and the Honourable Nanaia Mahuta, Associate Minister for Local Government, New Zealand, whose positive and enthusiastic contributions connected us more strongly with the latest thinking about culture and communities around the world. We valued too the presentations by speakers from all around Australia; those who came from local government workplaces, but also state government workers, artists and arts workers and many others. These diverse presentations contributed to the success of the conference, and provided further learning opportunities for all delegates.

Our thanks to the Cultural Development Network; John Smithies, Director; Kim Dunphy, Manager and Elodie Hodgkins, Conference Assistant who were the major force in realising the conference. Also the conference coordinating committee members;

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Odilla O'Boyle, Event Coordinator, City of Stonnington; Anne-Maree Pfabe, Unit Manager Arts and Culture, City of Moreland; Angela Bailey, Artist and Alice Park, Senior Arts Officer, Arts Victoria, who contributed significantly with their time, ideas and expertise throughout the conference development process. We thank all host councils and Arts Victoria for their financial, staff and resource contributions to the conference, especially the major sponsor and our host, the City of Stonnington.

We hope participants were enriched and invigorated by the discussions and new connections made at the conference, and that the *'Expanding Cultures'* program has contributed to a stronger, better connected and informed cultural development sector in local government, with links that are useful throughout the state, the country and the world.

One of the goals of *Expanding Cultures* was to encourage and facilitate a future program of conferences hosted by other council networks that respond to the needs of their communities and regions. A regular conference program would build and sustain a significant momentum by the presentation of leading ideas, exemplary projects and academic papers related to themes selected by hosting councils. We hope that we may see future conferences initiated by other councils at which we can meet again, and actively encourage other groups of councils to consider taking a leadership role and hosting a conference in their region



Helen Baker and Peter Redden

Co-Chairs

Conference Coordinating Committee

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