



Expanding Cultures

Arts and Local Government Conference

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MAKING THE LINK: DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS THE WESTERN REGION

**Lisa Arnott, Cultural Planner, Maribyrnong City Council
and Dean Michael, Arts and Culture Co-ordinator, Brimbank City Council**

Abstract

The purpose of this presentation is to share the learning and partnership approach that supported the development of the Western Region Cultural Development Network (WRCDN), the Interlock Project and Western Region Arts Network (WRAN). The Western Region Cultural Development Network (WRCDN) has existed for over four years and was conceived in recognition that Melbourne's west, while rich in artistic activity, was without a coordinated approach to the development of the arts across the region. The network comprises of arts and culture officers from the municipalities of Brimbank, Hobson Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham.

Through initial research undertaken by the WRCDN it had been identified there was a need to develop effective ways to build links between the arts sectors, the community, arts facilities, business and tourism. Initial findings suggested that a regional arts network would contribute to a sense of place, whilst assisting in the development of an identity for the arts community and artists living and working in the west. The seed of the Interlock Project was planted. In 2005 the WRCDN successfully received funding for the Interlock Project from Arts Victoria's Community Liaison Officers and Professionals in Residence program, to engage a Community Liaison Officer. The project was also established to develop a sustainable network across the region (WRAN: Western Region Arts Network), support ongoing local partnerships and increase professional opportunities for artists and arts organisations in Melbourne's Western region.

Questions we will be leading with in this presentation include:

What are the opportunities and constraints in working in partnership across six municipalities?

What benefits can networks create to support opportunities for the arts community?

What was learned

Presented on behalf of AimWest

OVERVIEW

- Reasoning
- Arts Victoria funding



- 18 months duration
- Six municipalities – Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley, Wyndham
- Proposed results:
 - a Western network of artists
 - a website
 - training

OUTCOMES & LEARNINGS

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR ARTISTS

- including IT skills, business and strategic planning skills
- confidence to deal with the broader arts community

SUSTAINABLE NETWORKS

- WRAN - a network for artists, run and supported by artists in the Western Region
- credible identity as artists in the western area and sense of cohesion
- greater familiarity with available resources
- pathways into organisations and associations
- linked into networks for future employment opportunities
- professional understanding and experience of the broader arts sector

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

- Art in Public Places (part of the Williamstown Festival)

EMPLOYMENT

- including commissioned artwork and tutoring

EXISTING NETWORKS

- perceived competition between the local network and the newer, broader network

COLLABORATING PARTNER COUNCILS

- strengthened the Council network and network between Councils and artists
- greater access to available artists and groups

PARTNERSHIPS

- collaboration with the Victoria University campus in St Albans to provide training

***Lisa Arnott** is a professional artist and cultural community development practitioner who is currently Cultural Planner at Maribyrnong City Council. Lisa was the Coordinator of the Interlock Project which supported the development of the Western Region Arts Network. Lisa originates from Scotland where she managed a variety of arts and cultural organisations and projects including Studio 11, Craigmillar Community Arts, the Workers Education Association and Scottish Education for Action and Development.*

***Dean Michael** is the Arts & Culture Co-ordinator for Brimbank City Council and was the Interlock Project manager on behalf of AimWest (then known as the Western Region Cultural Development Network). Dean has also worked for organisations including Arts Access, the Macedon Ranges Shire Council and VicHealth. In “a previous life”, Dean was a theatre maker and performer, working mostly in the community arts sector including producing self-devised work.*

deanm@brimbank.vic.gov.au

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Nanaia Mahuta is a Maori New Zealander of Waikato-Maniapoto and Ngaapuhi descent. She is currently the Minister of Customs and Youth Affairs, and Associate Minister for Local Government and the Environment. She represents the Tainui electorate, closely aligned to the Tainui confederation of tribes of Waikato, Maniapoto, Raukawa and Hauraki. Employment, Housing, Health, Education and Treaty Settlement are the key issues facing the. Since being elected to Parliament Ms Mahuta has been a member of the Regulations Review, Electoral Law, Transport & Environment, Maaori Affairs, Education & Science, Local Government & Environment Select Committees. In 1999 she became Parliamentary Private Secretary for Education and Local Government. Nanaia works with Maaori and Iwi in her electorate to find creative solutions to age-old problems and long-term sustainable opportunities that involve Maaori, Local Government, Central Government, business and community sectors

mmahuta@ministers.govt.nz www.newzealand.govt.nz

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