Regional Arts Australia

Stats and Stories:

The Impact of the Arts in Regional Australia

Ruth Rentschler and Kerrie Bridson – Deakin University
Jody Evans – Melbourne Business School
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Executive Summary

Stats and Stories: The Impact of the Arts in Regional Australia is a research project undertaken by academics in the Business School at Deakin University, led by Professor Ruth Rentschler, funded by Regional Arts Australia and the Australia Council for the Arts.

About The Research Project

In reviewing a wide range of literature on regional arts, including national and international academic studies, reports and ABS statistics, the researchers identified important themes that highlight the value of regional arts across Australia. They found that regional arts activities support the strengthening of community connectedness, social inclusion, civic pride and community identity as well as providing opportunities for regional development and economic regeneration. Some of the key ideas that emerged from the project are outlined here.

Our Need for Community

The faster that globalisation develops, the more people feel the need to connect with their local community. Linking people through the arts builds health, confidence and self-esteem. Arts activities can have significant positive impact on both individuals and communities and strengthen their engagement and resilience.

People often contribute to their community when they are provided with resources and infrastructure for connecting with each other. Providing physical places in which people can meet such as galleries, performance spaces or art centres is a key strategy in supporting community connectedness. Another strategy is developing partnerships with government, business and other organisations. Creating and supporting local, national or international cultural networks which share information and training is also an important tool for connecting people and communities.

Valuing Diversity

With one quarter of Australians born overseas many regional areas are linguistically and culturally diverse. This creates potential benefits for production, innovation and creativity. Participation in multicultural arts activities leads to the promotion of trust and acceptance. The positive recognition and expression of diversity through a range of art forms is important in creating a cohesive society.

In 2014 the Australia Council for the Arts found that 92% of people surveyed agreed that Indigenous arts are an important part of Australian culture. Indigenous artists practicing traditional and contemporary art are supporting better understanding and reconciliation across the regions.
For example, BighART’s Namatjira project beginning in 2009 showcased a variety of arts projects and community development initiatives that celebrated Albert Namatjira’s life and legacy. The project boosted civic pride and community identity for the Namatjira family and Western Arrente communities in Central Australia. It included an internationally acclaimed theatre production play, a documentary film, workshops and a number of art exhibitions.

With performances and exhibitions in Australia and London which received critical acclaim, the project reached a wide audience and provided the opportunity to raise awareness of social issues from within Western Arrente communities.

**Feeling Part of Society**

Problems such as unemployment or family breakdown are alleviated when people feel included in society. Social inclusion is a determinant of mental health and well-being. The arts play a vital role in reaching and engaging people. They provide social opportunities and entertainment alongside other activities such as sports or gaming.

Volunteering is a key activity that brings people together and creates social capital. Most arts organisations in regional areas rely on volunteers, and provide the opportunity for people to engage and connect. Volunteering builds networks, skills and professional experience and has positive effects on people’s physical and mental vitality.

**The Value of Civic Pride**

Civic pride in a community can improve social behaviour and encourage people to care for the neighbourhood and the environment. A community which prides itself can generate a feeling of well-being for residents, which in turn boosts internal and external perceptions of a region.

The arts provide many opportunities for individuals and groups to generate civic pride. Public celebrations and local festivals engage people and enable community self-determination. Festivals and arts events give regional communities an opportunity to communicate the vision and values of a place and help a regional community to form a strong and distinct shared identity.

Public art projects engage people. They often create a physical expression of local cultural values.

**The Value of Local Groups**

Many regional arts activities and organisations are small, local and community-focused. Local community choirs, small theatre or dance groups, a gallery society or a group of artists all serve the local community, creating a sense of community identity.
The critical importance of the role of these community associations involved in visual arts and crafts, music, theatre, dance and other arts is widely recognised by community development, health and academic institutions.

**Touring Arts Activities**

Other regional arts activities may be ‘imported’ through inter and intra State touring. Major performing arts companies play a critical role, as do other workshop experiences presented by professional artists. Such activities may attract visitors from beyond the immediate region and provide an economic flow-on effect. When Bendigo Art Gallery staged the Grace Kelly Style Icon exhibition, it attracted an audience of over 150,000 people in a town with a population of less than 100,000 people, and contributed over $16M to the local economy.

**Arts Projects Can Re-Define Locations**

Rural, regional and remote locations are unique, complex and a significant part of Australian identity, defined in part by history and landscape. Many are now adversely affected by shifts in local economies and populations. Arts activities and projects can re-define such locations in new and positive ways, providing both residents and visitors with a strong sense of a community’s unique identity. The First Coat mural festival and project in Toowoomba has been credited with reducing vandalism from tagging and graffiti, changing the nature of the CBD, attracting tourists and bringing the region to national and international attention.

**Increasing Employment and Regional Incomes**

In regional areas the arts provide a means of income for artists and art workers, and for owners and employees of local businesses and services. Investment in the arts provides opportunities for improvement to the local economy, generating arts-based employment, arts-based cultural tourism, event-based spending and construction of arts infrastructure.

**Art Play a Role in Regional Development**

Governments contribute to regional development by supporting employment and wealth generating economic activities. Regional development funding for arts projects can revitalise a local area – a rural town, an urban precinct or an abandoned industrial site.

Developing, operating and maintaining physical infrastructure creates jobs. For example, when $8.5M was invested in the Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre it created 130 jobs during construction and now employs about 38 locals in full and part time positions.
**But Not Just Buildings**

Financial contributions to regional development may also support activities and projects which develop a creative economy – one in which culture and commerce converge.

Regional areas with cultural infrastructure or creative clusters are attractive to people seeking to relocate from cities. Having a range of arts organisations and events is critical to attracting and retaining professionals to a region, including doctors, nurses or teachers together with people employed in architecture, design, media and entertainment or local professional artists.

This group can contribute to a regional economy by developing creative industries, providing important services, providing employment in small and medium enterprises and, in addition, may provide on-going skills development and training. Schools, TAFEs and universities offering arts education support a regional area’s ability to maintain such a creative population.

**The Value of Festivals and Events**

Festivals have been identified as a key source of economic regeneration that leverage the cultural heritage of a region. Festivals and other regional arts events attract audiences, increase tourism, increase visits to other local attractions and provide a flow on effect for economic activity in local shops, restaurants, cafes and accommodation.

Arts programs or festivals that encourage visitors to stay longer provide greater opportunities to increase spending in regional areas.

Arts events attract visitors who may otherwise have limited awareness of the area. Arts events and venues such as galleries or performing arts centres contribute to a perception of a unique destination, thus increasing the attraction of places. Places with cultural attractions and creative industries can attract particular demographic groups with disposable income, either as visitors or new residents.

**Why We Should Support Regional Artist Activities**

Beyond the experience of the artistic product or performance, the arts provide spaces and avenues for people and communities to access creative experiences, and provide opportunities for networking and self-expression. Providing access to a range of social events, festivals, exhibitions, theatrical productions and music concerts supports the creativity and morale of a local community.

Arts activities in regional areas provide a catalyst that benefits the community by bringing people together. The development of artistic and cultural talent in conjunction with community ownership of grass roots cultural projects aids sustainable change, promotes consistent and coherent regional identity and strengthens the local economy.
Overview

Stats and Stories: The Impact of the Arts in Regional Australia

Stats and Stories: The Impact of the Arts in Regional Australia is a groundbreaking project funded by Regional Arts Australia and Australia Council for the Arts that calls for new ways to identify and respond to Australia’s vast land, diversity and differences, including its challenges and opportunities in regional Australia, using the arts as the vehicle.

The Stats and Stories project covers five themes and five case studies. The five themes were developed from the literature on the regional impact of the arts. One case study is written on each of the five themes.

The five themes are:

1. Community connectedness
2. Economic regeneration
3. Social inclusion
4. Civic pride and community identity
5. Regional development

The five case studies are:

1. Animating Spaces
2. Silver Ball Screening Festival
3. In the Saddle; On the Wall
4. BighArt
5. First Coat

The research project was undertaken by academic staff at Deakin University in the Business School. The project was led by Professor Ruth Rentschler, and Dr Kerrie Bridson at Deakin University, as well as Associate Professor Jody Evans at Melbourne Business School. Research support was provided by Claudia Escobar, Emma Winston and Nick Cooke.

For more information about the project please contact John Oster, Executive Director, Regional Arts Australia john.oster@regionalarts.com.au
Theme 1: Community Connectedness

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Fast Facts

Diversity

300+ People from different ancestries reside in Australia.¹
67% Recent arrivals spoke a language other than English at home.²
51.8% Australians have at least one parent who was born overseas.³
49.2% are Australian born with parents Australian born.⁴
49% Longer-standing migrants speak English at home.⁵

Cultural and Creative Industries Outranking Other Sectors ⁶

The following statistic highlights the estimated aggregate gross value to the Australian economy compared to the contribution of other industries.

$86.0b Estimated gross value added to Australia’s economy through cultural and creative activity in 2008-2009 (6.9%), compared with retail (4.9%), education and training (4.6%) and agriculture, forestry and mining (2.5%).

Arts ⁷

85% Australians think the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life.
66% Australians think the arts have a big impact on the development of children.

Culture ⁸

96% Australians express a strong sense of belonging to the community.
94% Australians take great pride in the Australian way of life.
94% Australians believe maintaining the Australian way of life and culture is important.

Volunteering

6.1m Australians undertook some sort of voluntary work during 2010.⁹
403,900 Australians undertook voluntary work for heritage and arts organisations.
54% Donors to the arts contribute through volunteering.¹⁰
27% of the Australian population either volunteered or donated money to the arts within the past 12 months.\(^{11}\)

54% Australian arts contributors volunteered at an arts organisation.\(^{12}\)

39% Australians contributed to the arts through monetary donations.

25% Australian contributors donated to the arts through crowd sourcing methods.

24% Australians contributed to the arts through subscription or membership programs of an arts organisation.

41% Volunteer rate in the arts outside capital cities.\(^{13}\)

38% Volunteers in Australia work full-time.\(^{14}\)

44% Volunteers in Australia work part-time.\(^{15}\)

51% Volunteers are employed full-time and work within a professional or managerial role.\(^{16}\)

**Community Connectedness**

73% People enjoy diversity (including multiculturalism) in their local area.\(^{17}\)

59% People feel safe walking along down the street after dark.\(^{18}\)

35% People believe volunteering strengthens communities.\(^{19}\)

**Discrimination**\(^{20}\)

26% Overseas-born with a non-English speaking background experience discrimination.

18% Australians have experienced discrimination because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion.

14% Australians report experience of discrimination at least once per month.

16% Born in Australia experience discrimination.

11% Overseas-born with an English speaking background experience discrimination.

**Education**\(^{21}\)

29% Australian females aged 18-64 hold a bachelor’s degree or higher.

23.1% Australian males aged 18-64 hold a bachelor’s degree or higher.
10.1% Increase in females aged 18-64 attaining a bachelor’s degree or higher 2001-2013.

5.7% Increase in males aged 18-64 attaining a bachelor’s degree or higher 2001-2013.

“It is remarkable that this high degree of diversity has not led to social segregation. On the contrary, Australia’s migrants are extremely well integrated by international standards.”

“Australia predominantly receives migrants who were qualified and capable of easily integrating into society. This is unlike Europe where for decades, countries such as Germany and Britain failed to select their migrants carefully. Migrants who entered European countries with poor language skills and qualifications found themselves dependent on the welfare state.”

“Settling migrants and refugees in regional Australia has become a major policy purpose for Australian governments, both Commonwealth and state.”
Introduction

“Social cohesion operates not in the abstract, the realm of the ‘nation’, but at the community level, where people of different backgrounds and cultures make their lives.”

Community connectedness strengthens engagement and resilience, especially given the challenges of a global world. Linking local communities through arts activities that connect them leads to improved community networks and capacities. One of the paradoxes of the global world is that the faster globalisation develops, the more people require local community connectedness. In short, community connectedness provides four key strategies to strengthen localities:

1. Community engagement that enables people to agree on local priorities for action
2. Partnerships with local and other levels of government, businesses and organisations
3. Networks to strengthen ties locally, nationally and internationally by information sharing, training and development.
4. Physical places to meet such as arts centres, galleries, community halls or recreation facilities.

Community connectedness through the arts can have significant positive impact on both individuals and communities across a range of areas. It has also been discussed that regional areas have significant challenges in economic development, inequity and community identity due to globalisation and migration.

When looking at community connectedness and the role the arts play to foster and nurture understanding and respect it is also relevant to review examples of connection between communities. In the Mid-West region of Western Australia, the arts were viewed by those interviewed as a means for connecting communities, linking divisive and disparate groups. As such, they engage local people, providing solutions to local problems as a means of addressing inequity experienced as a result of globalisation.

Access to social events and other activities such as festivals, theatre productions and music concerts, were seen as essential for maintaining the morale of the local community.

Beyond the experience of the artistic product, the arts provide spaces and avenues for individuals and communities to access creative experiences, opportunities for networking, self-expression, a sense of achievement, economic opportunities and supplementary income provision. In this way, the arts become a vehicle to increased social and civic participation to build resilience to inequity as they strengthen community connectedness, essential for health and wellbeing.

Community connectedness examines opportunities and challenges for the arts in regional areas including boosting health, engaging in the community in various ways and volunteering which can increase social capital within a region.
Definition

Community Connectedness…

…Refers to interaction that a person has with others in their community and the community as a whole. Community connectedness provides the opportunity to engage, which enables people to achieve shared goals. Community connectedness is linked not only to the health of individuals but to the health of communities. Community engagement has meant different things for women and men. In some engagements, women and men contribute equally, but in other areas, such as volunteering or giving support, women and men engage differently.\textsuperscript{34}
Background

With one quarter of the Australian population born overseas and a further one fifth with a parent born overseas, Australia is a popular choice for migration. However, migration brings diversity and diversity brings challenges to security, safety, settlement and a sense of belonging, potentially affecting community connectedness. With negative stories in the spotlight, such as refugee queue jumping, drowning at sea and local terrorism, participating in the arts in regional and rural communities is one way to create positive bonds with all Australians. We know little about community connectedness in the arts in regional and rural communities. It provides a first step to greater understanding and inclusion of all people in this diverse, vast land. Further, rural, regional and remote locations are unique, complex and a significant part of Australian identity: defined in part by history and landscape; affected by shifts in economics, government policies and population drift; and challenged by access to healthcare, education and employment opportunities. Community connectedness programs and projects in the arts in rural, regional and remote locations can define locations in new ways.
Dimensions of Community Connectedness

Community connectedness has three dimensions which impact the arts in regional Australia: individual and community health; community engagement; and volunteering.

**Individual Community Health**

*Wellbeing*

Individual and community health is engendered by diversity and creativity, which can be used as seedbeds for urban and regional dynamics. Diversity provides a major opportunity within rural areas to bring people together who may not normally work with each other reflecting the changing demographics of society.

Diversity is a condition distinguished by a dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, trans-nationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants who have arrived over the last decade. Diversity creates potential benefits for production, innovation and creativity.

Creativity is about self-expression. The arts provide platforms for self-expression. Artists, visitors, audiences, spectators and the local community contribute when they are involved and provided with resources and infrastructure necessary for connecting with each other.

“Investment in community connectedness through the arts also guarantees that creative practitioners are able to operate with cultural integrity supported by the personal infrastructure that a creative practitioner needs.”

**Exclusion and Marginalisation**

People who are excluded or marginalised reduce community sense of connectedness. Investment in community connectedness using the arts as the vehicle reduces social isolation and builds health, confidence and self-esteem. Diversity reduces ethnocentric attitudes and fosters trust through bridging relationships and being relevant.

Exclusion and marginalisation can be alleviated through strategic projects. Exclusion or marginalisation in communities can lead to racism and prejudice, which emerges as a potential cost of diversity in regional areas. Extreme examples of resistance to diversity may present as riots or open clashes. Conflicting interests and values present multiple, disparate maladaptive reactions within a community context.

Further, marginalisation and exclusion can become entrenched over generations. The treatment of different generations over time imposes a duty of care on the present generation in managing capital that is to be passed on to future generations. Intragenerational equity (i.e. equity within the present generation) implies equal access to both tangible and intangible cultural capital across social classes, income groups, and locations.
For example, public art is a component of community connectedness, fostering pride and contributing to heritage development.43

“Strategically executed public art raises awareness of issues such as racism, gang violence, and environmental degradation. Creating opportunities for diverse peoples to participate through public art strengthens community fabric and informs them about the creative impulse.”44

Community Engagement

Community engagement is aided by education, both formal and informal, and changes with demographic differences. Arts and education have proven to be a successful mix when addressing social issues. A case study conducted by Vertovec in 2007 in Europe showed that most of the tendencies to be trusting and ethnocentric across Europe were amongst men, older people, lowly educated and unemployed, whereas at the country level hardly any indicators for migration or diversity proved to be significantly related to community connectedness.

The overall conclusion of the study highlights that for Europe, ethnic diversity is not a threat to community connectedness. However, lower educational attainments, low incomes and unemployment are associated with the perception of negative implications of diversity.45

Sense of Belonging

Community engagement through the arts provides opportunities to create a sense of belonging. Audiences connect to and value creative ideas. At the same time creative ideas need to respond to the motivations and activities of audiences and to the context of the community in which those audiences participate. Audiences create relationships with performers, as they perform in various contexts.46

The notion of performance thus offers an alternative theoretical framework for the microanalysis of audience practices. Therefore, the interactive relationship between audiences and performers is embraced as part of community connectedness.

Trust

Trust is inherent in community engagement. Arts develop networks of alliance and advocacy.48

Other industry networks that are more formal are useful but catalogued as impersonal and too structured; they are more like professional development organisations than actual networks.49 Policies and strategies provide support for sports and arts organisations and practitioners who provide platforms for the establishment and maintenance of networks.
Festivals have been identified as key source of economic regeneration that leverage the cultural heritage of a region and use existing networks of community members, building trust.

Trust can be boosted by envisaging a new ‘civic realm’ promoting social co-operation and continues to present challenges to local governments when faced with the development of robust, socially cohesive policies. For example, the Australian Government acknowledged the importance of developing understanding and connection to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language and culture through public policy.

The importance of trust for linguistically and culturally diverse communities is exemplified by Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV). Accommodating diverse communities enables the nurturance of artists leading to the expansion of career opportunities enabling improved social integration.

MAV develops contemporary policy frameworks that enable diversity through participation and representation of all Australian cultural sectors leading to the promotion of trust in diverse communities.

**Upward Mobility**

Upward mobility is available when outsiders with new ideas collaborate with locals, using art to bring people together, building strong networks and providing creative ideas, while reducing social isolation, population drift, agricultural restructuring, unemployment and rural decline. Upward mobility overcomes health, mental and social problems that have negative impacts on people and community quality of life, sense of well-being and development.

The arts 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, taking them out of a downward spiral.

Upward mobility brings long-term social capital and strengthens production and innovation within the region, helping people better themselves. The role of the arts for regional upward mobility is relevant when designing cultural policies and local planning strategies.

The arts are seen as providing tools that promote mobility through a common language, which furthers societal development.

**Volunteering**

Volunteering is an activity where people give their time pro bono in order to help other people, organisations or a cause. Much of what we understand about volunteering has come from sociology, sport and museums.

Volunteers are used in the arts in events, festivals, galleries and museums, performing arts centres, to name a few. Often, they are crucial in the production of the arts activity itself, including large scale events such as the Cultural Olympics. At international events, such as
the Olympics, for every dollar invested $21 is created in comparative worth through volunteer efforts.

Volunteering is explained by individual level motivations as well as societal level factors such as the importance of social ties and organisational activity. ⁵⁹ For example, volunteers can have the internal motivation to become fans, such as occurs at the Elvis Festival in regional NSW, ⁶⁰ following the event at their own cost. As a fan volunteer, there is excitement, nostalgia, friendship and camaraderie for the individual as well as group support and dynamics that keeps motivation high. In these ways, volunteering builds a sense of community connectedness.

As volunteering has positive impacts on people who volunteer as well as those helped by volunteers, volunteering is argued to be beneficial to health and well-being. It aids satisfaction with life, boosts self-esteem, health, and achievement, functioning and reduces mortality. Further, volunteering has been argued to reduce the likelihood of drug abuse and school truancy.⁶¹

“In this context, volunteering has positive effects on people’s physical and mental vitality, purposeful behaviours, providing a sense of control, and greater social involvement.” ⁶²

Arts organisations within regional areas rely on volunteers, offering opportunities for marginalised individuals to engage and connect with their community, whilst building networks, skills and professional experience.
Endnotes


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Theme 2: Economic Regeneration

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Reasons to Visit Regional Destinations

58%  Domestic day and overnight trips are to regional destinations.¹

$34b  Spent by visitors in regional areas during 2013.²

57%  First-time visitors to a region state an event is their main reason for visiting.³

Boosting Regional Employment

176,560  Jobs are created each year in the planning and operation of festivals in nonmetropolitan Australia.⁴

2,800+  Rural festivals in Australia per year.⁵

4  Full-time jobs on average are directly created in festivals during the planning stage.⁶

13  Full-time jobs are created on average in the planning stage of festivals.⁷

12.6  Part-time jobs on average are created at the time of operation.⁸

99,448  Jobs are directly created on average in the planning and running of festivals collectively in Victoria, Tasmania and NSW.⁹

310,723  People within Australia are employed within the arts and cultural industry.¹⁰

6%  Increase in regional employment through investment in the arts.¹¹

22%  Increase in total non-farm employment through investment in the arts.¹²

Audiences and the Economy

38%  Australians attend visual arts and craft events.¹³

86%  Australians attend at least one cultural event or performance each year.¹⁴

$10b  Economic activity is generated by rural communities in Victoria, New South Wales & Tasmania.¹⁵

45%  International tourists enjoy seeing Aboriginal art, craft and cultural displays.¹⁶

32%  International tourists visit Aboriginal galleries.¹⁷

22%  Domestic tourists visit an Aboriginal cultural centre.¹⁸
Regional snapshot: Grace Kelly: Style Icon exhibition, Bendigo Art Gallery, VIC

152,500 Audiences visited the Grace Kelly: Style Icon exhibition in Bendigo, a town of less than 100,000 people.\textsuperscript{19}

$16.3m Contributed to Bendigo’s local economy due to the Grace Kelly: Style Icon exhibition.\textsuperscript{20}

“Active investment and strategic support of the arts in regional areas can result in the return on investment three times over.”\textsuperscript{21}

“Economic Regeneration is not only concerned with growth and property development and finds expression in prestige projects and place-marketing \textsuperscript{22} but also is not simply about bricks and mortar. It’s about the physical, social and economic wellbeing of an area; it’s about the quality of life in our neighbourhoods. In relation to the physical, this is as much about the quality of public realm as it is about the buildings themselves.”\textsuperscript{23}
Introduction

Economic regeneration explores how and where the arts impact regional Australia. The dimensions examined include: place marketing; widening opportunities; encouraging investment; growing the economy; improving people's lives; tackling disadvantage; community strategy and policy; tackling industrial decline.

Opportunities identified include: the arts and tourism, the arts and employment, event-related spending and regional value. Some of the main challenges identified for economic regeneration include displacement of residents, sponsorship, long-term under-investment and unstable employment.
Definition

Economic Regeneration…

... Entails concerted action to address challenges and problems faced by the community of a particular place, including through marketing of place. It’s about widening opportunities, growing the local economy, and improving people’s lives. Hence, it increases employment, encouraging business growth and investment, and tackling economic disadvantage.

It contributes to community strategy in advancing an area’s economic wellbeing, and underpins cost cutting approaches to tackle deprivation as a result of industrial decline.24

The arts provide a total hedonic experience, prompted by an arts event that enables visitors to engage with the region in multiple ways.
Background

Against a backdrop of rural and regional decline, the arts are being used as cornerstones of economic regeneration, framed around tourism to generate income in uncertain times for regional communities. They provide non-traditional means of income, linking cultural tourism to economic growth and attracting particular demographic groups with disposable income.

Revitalisation of communities comprises economic and physical elements. Economic elements generating income through business growth, tourism, marketing of place, and growing the local economy. Economic regeneration provides insights on how the arts develop regions economically, individually and for the community, generating income and regenerating the community. For example, 58% of all domestic day and overnight trips in Australia in 2013 were to regional destinations, where visitors spent $34 billion.

Physical renewal manifests itself through public policy targeted at strengthening rural neighbourhood economies by leveraging the gentrification cycle, thus overcoming disadvantage.

Arts events and festivals are a major driver of physical renewal, providing an increase in regional tourism, with 57% of first-time visitors to the region giving an event as their main reason for visiting. Similarly, three-quarters of event attendees would not have gone to the destination on this occasion if not for the event.

While the arts are part of the tourism experience, they are not only about making money. Gentrification has noticeable effects on housing market renewal and public consumption within the gentrified area. As this theme suggests, the arts are about regenerating community and activating the local economy by hiring services, attracting audiences, increasing tourism with visitors staying in hotels and B&Bs, eating in cafes and restaurants and going shopping in local stores.

Additionally, the transformation of derelict industrial precincts contributes to boosting the regional economy that improves the vitality and quality of rural and regional environments. A complex system of interactions containing both socio-economic and physical factors aid adaptive efforts of economic regeneration and enhance interactions between community members.
Dimensions of Economic Regeneration

There are eight dimensions of economic regeneration addressed through the arts: Place marketing; Widening opportunities; Encouraging investment; Growing the economy; Improving people’s lives; Tackling disadvantage; Community strategy and policy; Tackling industrial decline.

Place Marketing

Economic regeneration is about place marketing. Place-making—including branding—enhances the overall perception of a destination’s image. The internal and external perception of a destination’s image contributes to both global and local competitiveness resulting in growth through wealth creation and inward investment. Economic growth within regional areas compliments a destination’s naturally attractive environment, which helps with the ‘place-shaping’ efforts.

Place marketing is a means of establishing communities as tourist destinations. Typically, vibrant communities are open to new ideas and diversity and are able to communicate the identity of the place through street life and successful use of natural and human resources. The arts generate business opportunities, jobs and attract tourism dollars that increase the desirability of a place as somewhere to live or visit.

Arts events contribute to a regional economy by attracting visitors that would otherwise have limited awareness of the area. Attendees of arts events contribute to the economic environment of a region through interaction with people, venues, cafes, bars, and institutions. Arts programs that encourage visitors to stay longer provide greater opportunities to showcase attractions and increase spending within a regional area.

The arts provide an opportunity for regional areas to market their uniqueness and create a sense of place. Festivals allow marketing of a region to be a celebration of nature, local produce and industry and create images that may linger in the national imagination.

A study looking at arts events and festivals in regional Australia found that promoting or showcasing a region or locality was the aim of 14% of festivals and another 10% of festivals are based around celebrating or showcasing local produce.

Arts events and festivals within a regional setting engage with audiences by advertising a rare experience, unique to a time and place. A case study conducted by Curtis explored the Wangaratta Jazz Festival as an example of a festival that has strengthened a regional community by positioning the festival as a unique attraction. The festival creates a sense of place through its marketing that does not exist anywhere else in Australia. Festivals within a regional setting offer an alternative to existing efforts to attract visitors.

Festivals can place or keep towns on the map, and are a way to market them, often more effectively than official branding strategies.
Widening Opportunities

The arts play a role in widening opportunities for employment within rural and regional areas. A study of festivals in regional Australia found that 176,560 jobs are created in the planning and operation of festivals in nonmetropolitan Australia. Investment in the arts sees opportunities for arts workers, artists and volunteers, contributing to the livability of a regional area. For example, increased opportunities for volunteers sustains a region’s workforce by encouraging more people to move towards employment within the region.

Similarly, local creative industries strengthen regional areas that have seen a decline in traditional industries. Creative industries produce arts projects that attract media attention and boost a regional area’s profile, thus sustaining local jobs and businesses through increased visitor spending.

Encouraging Investment

The arts provide opportunities for investment through a number of means. Arts activities are often supported by government investment, private sector sponsorship or philanthropy.

Thinking strategically about the purpose of the arts provides an opportunity to encourage investment from these sources. Investment from government, sponsorship or philanthropy injects money into the economy that can be spent on creating jobs for local people.

Art sponsorship, as an additional example, can be an effective marketing strategy for the arts in regional areas. Sponsors of arts events are associated with ‘quality of life’ and ‘environmental engagement’, whilst promoting their product or business. Art sponsorship encourages business partnerships and boosts the local economy.

The arts invest significant resources in sponsorship and generate an estimated return of $2 for every $1 invested in fundraising. There is a concern when local communities experience economic hardship, such as drought, that the arts in regional areas may suffer in terms of reduced sponsorship from local business.

Growing the Economy

Growing the economy can be helped through the arts. For regional communities, a strategic approach to cultural regeneration can have an impact on the economy. A study on festivals in regional Australia found that festivals and arts events have a ‘flow-on-effect’ where the surrounding communities benefit from hiring local expertise and sourcing local services and materials from an array of small businesses that are functionally connected to the festival.

The economy can be grown by investment and strategic support through the arts. For example, investment and strategic support of the arts in regional areas can result in the return of the investment three times over. The arts are key in promoting regions and significantly contribute to local spending.
In regional Victoria, the SheppARTon Festival in 2005 saw an average of $250 for accommodation, $130 for food and beverages and almost $200 in other expenses per festival attendee spent in secondary services surrounding the festival.46

Event-related spending is one of the major economic benefits that the arts provide in regional areas. Arts events and festival attendees generate significant income for theme-related local businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and retail stores.47

Arts events and festivals also provide incentives to local businesses and build capabilities to supply local goods and services.48 While events cannot not produce a substantial direct profit alone, they facilitate collective financial benefits for a regional community.49

**Improving People’s Lives**

People’s lives can be improved through an arts-led recovery. Cities and towns have been regenerated by the arts, such as the gentrification of Glasgow in the UK. For Glasgow, a major event with an arts focus led to a ‘radical transformation of the city’s image’ where associations of place developed from images of gangs and unemployment to an attractive placement for business, shopping, and culture.50

Gentrification can stimulate economic development, boost morale and minimise crime but has been criticised for displacement of low-income earners, rural decline and youth unemployment.

Arts and cultural activities may contribute to the moral improvement of communities and improve people’s lives but a balanced approach needs to be taken in assessing how to implement economic regeneration to prevent the downside from occurring.

**Tackling Disadvantage**

Cities, towns and regions have cycles of employment and growth driven by agriculture, manufacturing and services, sometimes one after the other. When a region is in transition from manufacturing to services, for example, the arts can assist in tackling industrial disadvantage caused by decline. If the economy booms due to a culture-led economic regeneration, low income residents and local businesses may be displaced.

For example, housing values have shown to increase in areas that have invested in the arts and culture.51 Local amenities, including those made up of the arts and culture, play a significant role in the value of localities. However, this strong relationship between housing prices and cultural vitality raises concerns for the survival of small local business and rising house prices and rents for low-income residents.52

The benefits of the arts and culture in regional areas will be ineffectual if economic impact fails to allow for the character and appeal of the region to remain consistent. Strategies for regional development through the arts should aim to improve the lives of original residents and enhance their opportunities, rather than pushing them out.53
Tackling disadvantage through the arts sees a pattern of ‘unstable equilibrium’ amongst creative and cultural industry employment. The creative worker has limited opportunities for stable employment due to the ‘rise of the creative subcontractor and the downgrading of creativity. There is criticism that the arts have a ‘garage mentality’ and ‘not enough of them want to be Microsoft…. They do not live to build the business.’

However, creative industry workers are passionate and driven by cultural factors, often wanting to drive change to tackle disadvantage. This passion impacts on the compromises they are willing to undertake for these roles.

Economic regeneration may have unanticipated growth in certain areas and displaces residents responsible because of the cultivation of the area’s heritage sites. Such implications make tackling disadvantage through the arts more important than ever. There are additional concerns regarding the displacement of residents where challenges persist in seeking to reduce social isolation.

Community heterogeneity brings special challenges, especially when they are socially and materially structured in ways that limit access to power, creating constant struggles. It is called commodification. In commodification of ‘the rural’ there have been links to property market rises and to subsequent social displacements and exclusions.

**Community Strategy and Policy**

Community strategy and policy is led by entrepreneurial leaders at board and executive levels in municipal, non-profit and business organisations.

They are crucial to economic regeneration as they are instrumental in developing community strategy and policy that is implemented at the local level. Community strategy and policy lead to change in the way things are done, providing opportunities for new ideas and operations.

Pro-activeness entails doing what is necessary to bring an entrepreneurial concept to fruition. Effective development within a regional area is achieved through a team approach to governance, where culture-related institutions are invited to participate and a collaboration between Chair, board, CEO and key stakeholders occurs.

Innovative and pro-active leaders enhance regional governance, leading to calculated risk taking that informs new ways of working. Hence, new ideas come to the fore and new activities are undertaken, bringing in new audiences to regions that need them in order to develop.

Policy is wider than the arts, but includes cultural policy as a means of providing strategic thinking to harness activities into a framework for action. It can be developed in concert with economic policy and social policy.

Cultural policy provides a means of leveraging resources at a local, state or national level, providing a strategic argument for change and development. It provides a region with a means of promoting both high and low culture that covers theatre, festivals, public art, visual art and music, for example, making the intangible tangible, through key marketing tools.
Additionally, cultural policy reflects the development and promotion of flagship cultural projects and leverages a ‘Place Marketing’ (see above) approach to community identity. Policy can then be translated into practice through strategic plans that lead to tangible cultural projects.
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Theme 3: Social Inclusion

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Demographics

22.9m Estimated population of Australia.
60% Increase in Australia’s population from net overseas migration 2001-2012.
40% Natural increase in Australia's population 2001-2012.

Employment

11.6m+ Australians are employed. The workforce is highly concentrated on the Eastern seaboard, with more than three quarters employed in the three most populous states (New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland).
6.3% Unemployment rate in Australia in November of 2014. In Australia, the unemployment rate measures the number of people actively looking for a job as a percentage of the labour force.
6% Reduction in persistent family joblessness 2002-2010.

Education

75% Australians aged 20–24 years have completed a Year 12 certificate.
18% Increase in post-secondary school qualification attainment of Australians aged 25-64 1997-2012.

Inequality

1.5m People aged over 15 years have low economic resources and high financial stress.
640,000 Australians experience multiple and entrenched disadvantage.
590,000 Children under 15 lived in jobless families in 2011.
100,000 People were counted as homeless on Census night in 2006.
73% Australians agree that gap between those with high incomes and those with low incomes is too large.
42% Australians disagree people living on low incomes in Australia receive enough financial support from the government.
54% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders aged 15-24 are fully engaged in education and/or work.
Ethnic Diversity

84%  Australians agree that multiculturalism has been good for Australia.\textsuperscript{13}
25%  Australian population was born overseas.\textsuperscript{14}
20%  Australian population has one parent born overseas.\textsuperscript{15}

Satisfaction and Wellbeing \textsuperscript{16}

75%  Australians are satisfied with their life.
79.5 yrs.  Average life expectancy for males.
84 yrs.  Average life expectancy for females.
68%  Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average of self-reported good health.\textsuperscript{17}
85%  Australians have a higher rate of self-reported good health than the OECD average.\textsuperscript{18}

Arts \textsuperscript{19}

85%  Australians think the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life.
66%  Australians think the arts have a big impact on the development of children.
8%   Increase in visual arts and craft participation 2009-2013.
7%   Increase in creative participation 2009-2013.
Introduction

“The arts play a vital role in social inclusion, which incorporates cultural as well as social, economic and political systems that are inter-related, and determines the social integration of its people.”

Australia has increasing ethnic diversity and a changing landscape. It is confronted with challenges to develop inclusive communities that understand, recognise and integrate social inclusion effectively. Little attention has been paid to how to integrate social inclusion into the community. Hence, there is racial discrimination and racial tension, sometimes leading to violence and abuse. Such phenomena highlight the importance of understanding social inclusion. The arts can be a force for promoting social inclusion, thus creating greater harmony in society.

On the positive side, Australia is perceived as a stable, democratic, pluralist nation with a skilled workforce and a strong, competitive economy. Its success in embracing social inclusion has been an example to the world in part due to immigration policies and programs that welcome people from all over the world who are qualified and capable of integrating into society.

However, most work on social inclusion has occurred in the social, economic and political aspects. There is less understanding of social inclusion in a cultural framework.

The arts play a vital role in social inclusion, which incorporates cultural as well as social, economic and political systems that are inter-related, and determines the social integration of its people, leading to social inclusion. Social inclusion is an active process by which the personal and structural impacts of socio-economic disadvantage are addressed.
Definition

Social Inclusion...

...Entails a society where all people feel valued, their differences respected, and their basic needs met so they can live in dignity. Social exclusion is the process of being shut out from the social, economic, political and cultural systems which contribute to the integration of a person into the community. It is a determinant of mental health & wellbeing.24

Social inclusion is often described as a ‘human right or moral imperative.’ It refers to policies or programs designed to remove barriers to participation in mainstream society. Social inclusion provides a society ‘in which all Australians feel valued and have the opportunity to participate fully in [its] life.’ Hence, social inclusion alleviates social problems, such as unemployment, discrimination, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime and family breakdown.25
Background

“The arts play a significant role in community engagement, in health and well-being, in social inclusion of communities of all kinds and in reconciliation and the life of people in regional communities.”

Through social inclusion, the arts are used as a way of reaching and engaging with people in regional areas, providing entertainment, light relief and facilitating communication among community members, government, and industry, and engaging with stakeholders, artists and audiences.

The arts play a significant role in community engagement, in health and well-being, in social inclusion of communities of all kinds (including youth, Indigenous, the aged, those of different cultural and geographic origins, and the socially marginalised) and in reconciliation and the life of people in regional communities. Therefore, the role of community associations involved in craft, music, and other artistic and creative practices that have the potential to bring disparate groups together, without requiring a minimum number of participants, is receiving attention in community development, health, and academic settings.

Arts and craft groups bring disparate groups together, particularly when there are limited alternative social opportunities or existing historical, racial or family divisions. For example, touring shows and concerts bring a lot more people out of the woodwork. The arts draw a different crowd of people who would not normally engage in sport or racing, or join a group, or be involved in a committee.

In this sense, the arts provide both social opportunities and entertainment value by engaging with different people in different ways.
Dimensions of Social Inclusion

Social inclusion consists of seven sub-dimensions: Feeling valued; Respecting differences; Human rights and moral imperatives; Policies and programs; Removing barriers to participation; Systemic discrimination; Crime reduction.

Feeling Valued

Interpersonal life is loaded with both opportunity and peril. Feeling valued by others allows people to satisfy deep-seated and fundamental belongingness needs including partners, family, friends, neighbours, work colleagues and immediate local community.

People need to feel they belong and this connects with the need of feeling valued. The arts provide pathways to enable people to feel valued. This is relevant in regional, rural and remote areas where people can feel more isolated. The arts provide opportunities to marginalised groups in these areas.

Networks in the arts and outside them provide access and opportunities to share ideas and develop. For Indigenous communities living in regional areas, arts networks provide a means to engage with community members, government, and industry.

The arts can enhance civic agency and play a significant role in establishing egalitarian ethos. For example, the making of art can help individuals to define their identity, discover agency, and challenge themselves to take responsibility as citizens both in an established or new community context.

“The ability to be truly creative, to imagine that which is not there, and to have the skills to bring what is imagined into being is a fundamentally empowering capacity, one that gives people agency and opens possibilities for mobility.”

Respecting Differences

Australia contains a high degree of diversity and is described as a multicultural society. The source of diversity is immigration where large numbers of individuals and families are admitted from other countries.

Immigrants maintain some of their customs regarding food, dress, recreation, religion and associate with each other and with settled communities, in order to maintain practices but also to see them fuse into mainstream society.

“An increasing number of countries now contain sizeable immigrant communities, but it is the New World ‘countries of immigration’ which have the greatest experience in this area particularly Australia, Canada and the United States.”

But even so, the latest Mapping Social Cohesion survey by the Scanlon Foundation found 19% of Australians were discriminated against because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or
religious beliefs in 2013 - up from 12% in 2012. It was the highest level since the survey began in 2007.  

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in resettling refugees in regional areas of Australia. There is a growing need to promote and maintain respect for differences, while values and traditions commonly accepted by refugees may not be accepted or understood elsewhere. It is common for ethnic groups, especially the newly arrived, to naturally be interested in the arts from their own culture, suggesting there are opportunities for arts practitioners and organisations to extend their reach by ‘connecting ethnic groups’ and ‘enabling them to overcome cultural divisions.’

Similarly, other marginalised groups such as the GLB marginalised community within regional areas experience cultural divisions. For these communities, ‘negotiating a sense of belonging in and to Australia is a contested and complicated process.’ In comparison to Australian metropolitan cities, rural areas are seen as sites of ‘gay/lesbian oppression and absence.’

As a pluralist society, cosmopolitan ethics are emerging among significant minorities growing on a worldwide sense of community that are identified in four ways: the anthropological consciousness that recognises unity in diversity; the ecological consciousness that recognises singular human nature within the biosphere; the civic consciousness of common responsibilities and solidarity; and the dialogical consciousness that refers both to the critical mind and to the need for mutual understanding.

The arts provide avenues to include people in a pluralist society, so that they encounter mutual respect within different cultural outlooks. They provide a means for inclusion and respect in instances where minority groups are isolated and disconnected from the wider community.

“The pluralist picture of the world enjoins us to recognise that there are diverse and incompatible conceptual and moral frameworks, belief systems and values, without there being an overarching criterion to decide which provides the ‘truth’.”

**Human Rights and Moral Imperatives**

Human rights and moral imperatives underlie social inclusion initiatives, which are consistent with federal and state legislation and policies. Human rights argue that stigmas need to be removed in order to include everyone in the community. Stigma is associated with disadvantaged groups within communities and results in social isolation. Stigma occurs when a group of individuals are labelled as having undesirable characteristics that develop into stereotypes, and those labelled experience discrimination.

‘Disadvantaged communities can experience stigma as a result of health, disabilities, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity that then affects employment, housing, education and illness experience stigma, delaying their access to timely treatment, reducing positive outcomes.’ Human rights of refugees and migrants are sometimes trammelled, especially if they cut across other areas of disadvantage such as mental illness. With refugees and migrants settling more and more in regional communities, respecting their human rights and understanding their moral imperatives is part of social inclusion.
The arts can help to educate and connect individuals to address issues of stigma, thus protecting human rights and moral imperatives.

“There is good evidence that the creative arts have a role in promoting the mental health and wellbeing of participants and challenging stigma against people with mental health problems to promote social inclusion.”

Policies and Programs

Social inclusion occurs when policies and programs provide strategies and structures to bring people together. Australia is a country where people born in a non-English speaking country are less likely to creatively participate in the arts: 38%, compared with 48% for those born in English speaking countries. Hence, developing policies and programs to bring people together, to stop feelings of being an outsider or of alienation promote social inclusion.

Further, social inclusion occurs when there is strong representation of an individual’s cultural heritage in the mainstream culture. Australia is a “fusion culture” where new habits, foods, lifestyles and artistic styles are eventually adopted and absorbed into the mainstream, developing something new. Policies and programs that help fusion occur more quickly promote social inclusion.

Policies and programs formalise the pride that individuals feel and encourage inclusivity. Diversifying cultural practices provides the Australian community, including refugees and migrants, with a sense of belonging, self-determination, and ethnic identity.

Policies and programs that include the arts have “a key role to play in creating a single shared identity within a diverse population as they can bring people together in ways that allow them to learn with and from each other.”

Social inclusion is what mostly drives recently established ethnic communities to participate in the arts, highlighting the importance of the cultural peoples can collaborate and develop knowledge and understanding. Policies and programs are a key tool to promote social inclusion.

Removing Barriers to Participation

Social inclusion entails removing barriers to increase participation and build sustainable communities that facilitate action and co-operation for mutual benefit.

Hence, a key part of creating social inclusion is to remove barriers to participation that may otherwise cause social isolation. Social isolation occurs when people do not feel connected to community.

Of Australia’s 20 million people, 66% live in capital cities, towns or other major metropolitan centres, the remaining 6 million people are spread out across 8 million square kilometers, living in what are referred to as rural or remote areas.
People living in rural and remote Australia can be socially isolated, due to less face-to-face contact with family, friends and other support networks.53

Experiencing social isolation can cause harmful thoughts, loss of self-esteem, fear and anger, social rejection, punishing the self, and exclusion.54

This social isolation can lead to suicidal behaviour and may contribute to the reasons behind suicide rates in rural and remote areas of Australia being significantly higher than the national average and very remote regions have suicide rates more than double that of major capital cities.55

Motivations to access mental health services can be a challenge due to limited mental health services offered in regional and remote areas.56

However, the possibility of social exclusion and the pain that accompanies it is ubiquitous. Across social contexts, perceived or anticipated rejection experiences not only exert an immediate influence on affect, cognition, and behaviour, but they also guide future interactions.57

Social inclusion entails enabling full participation in community life, part of which is engagement with the arts, their organisations and its diversity of cultural expression. Social inclusion entails ‘an inclusive environment where individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds are given an opportunity to participate in and contribute towards the socio-economic development of society.’58

The arts can assist marginalised individuals, such as low-income earners, older people and individuals with ill health and from diverse cultural backgrounds, through integrating them into business processes.59

Increased participation from marginalised groups improves self-esteem and confidence, leading to improved employment opportunities, higher income and better health. 60

“Community arts organisations have made a significant effort to include marginalised cultural groups from the community into the workforce.”61

Hence, the arts bring people together in a professional capacity to create art, rehearse, and take part in performances, contributing towards a collective sense of identity and place.62

**Systemic Discrimination**

Systemic discrimination refers to “indirect” or “effect” based discrimination in policies, practices or procedures or the way things are done.63 It can also refer to discrimination of a certain type (e.g. gender, race, disability, sexual preference) that is widespread, persistent and which entrenches inequality.

Systemic discrimination occurs where legislation, policies, procedures, practices, organisational structures or workplace cultures enshrine discrimination. It may involve allegations of a pattern of violations or a systematic failure to protect the rights of a group or individuals.64
Marginalised groups experience discrimination when efforts hinder diversity within communities. Cultural or intellectual differences can be overlooked and used as reasons for exclusion. Even though Australia has anti-discriminatory laws, racism and discrimination are reported in Australia.

To overcome discrimination, marginalised individuals and groups can celebrate their uniqueness and be given opportunities to share and collaborate their perspectives with majority groups through the arts.

Systemic discrimination is found in Aboriginal Australians and CALD communities who often experience systemic barriers to full participation in Australian life.

Equal Opportunity regulators across the country receive complaints of race-based discrimination in a variety of settings, including employment, education, provision of goods and services, accommodation, and clubs. The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission has found evidence of over-representation in low paid employment, underemployment, intimidation in the workplace and bias against promotion.

The sources of discrimination have been identified as attitudinal, ignorance, fear and lack of understanding of cultural differences, power and privilege. The arts provide programs for identity to take place, reducing systemic discriminations.

**Crime Reduction**

Social inclusion has been criticised as promoting violence and racial tension. On the contrary, when implementing policies and programs for social inclusion, using the arts as a vehicle, diversity can provide an opportunity in rural areas to reduce social isolation and build health, confidence and self-esteem in rural or regional communities, hence reducing crime, drug use or violence. It can limit racism and prejudices, resulting in fewer open clashes and riots.

Crime reduction can be costly to implement due to its negative perceptions, linking it to low education, low incomes and unemployment. However, it has community support as it creates inclusion through promoting safety and social harmony.

Arts interventions have positive social inclusion outcomes for crime reduction. A case study of a drama-based cognitive development program with violent offenders—the Pump Challenging Violence program—found ‘a positive impact on participants’ cognitive skills and capacity to reflect on personal behaviours, including criminal behaviours.’

“Arts programs have been shown to keep people ‘off the streets’ and have ‘positive psychological benefits that reduce individuals’ predispositions towards criminal activity.’

Hence, ‘engaging in the arts has been found to improve self-esteem, self-understanding and interpersonal communication, leading to an increase in the use of art in health care settings around the world,’ as well as criminal settings, as the two can be linked.

Sometimes people with mental health problems resort to crime due to a feeling of exclusion or inability to cope in the community. Bringing them into the mainstream through the arts is
one way to engage them. Arts engagement provides people with mental health problems with a means of communication and self-expression, providing more positive outlets for them and for the community.
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# Theme 4: Civic Pride

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Fast Facts

Civic Pride and Community Identity

55% Australians are connected extremely or very strongly to Australia as a whole.¹
46% Australians expressed connection to their locality or town.²
37% Expressed connection to their state and territory.³
28.5% Australian festival organisers aim to promote a place, theme or activity.⁴

Impact of the Arts on Australian Quality of Life ⁵

Australians believe that the arts can have a big impact on quality of life, though this is more confined to impact on individuals than on broader social connections. In 2013 people believe the biggest impacts of the arts are on:

66% Development of children.
61% People’s ability to express themselves.
59% People’s ability to think creatively and develop new ideas.
56% People’s ability to deal with stress, anxiety or depression.
52% Improved sense of wellbeing and happiness.

Arts Facts ⁶

96% Agree both the arts & sport can be enjoyed together.
92% Agree Indigenous arts are an important part of Australia’s culture.
85% Agree the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life
45% Believe community pride & identity has a big impact.
45% Believe the arts help shape and express Australia’s identity.

Snapshot of one state: SA and the arts ⁷

92% South Australians believe participation in the arts offers community benefits.
71% South Australians agree art & cultural groups play an important role in our community.
71% South Australians agree artists and other creative people are respected in the
community.

66% South Australians developed new social networks through their participation in the arts.

**Indigenous participation in the Arts**

22% Indigenous people participate in the arts and live in remote areas of Australia.

21% Indigenous people participated in writing or telling stories.

16% Indigenous people participated in music, dance or theatre.

14% Indigenous people living in non-remote areas participate in writing and telling stories.

**Migrants Living in Regional Areas**

30.8% Migrant youth state the easiest way to meet people is through recreational clubs (sports, arts, etc).

90% Migrants were made to feel welcome since moving to regional place of residence.

90% Australians feel proud when Australian artists do well overseas, signalling the capacity to promote national pride and identity.

72% Increase in social connectedness of migrants with children in a household.

55% Migrants developed strong social networks as a result of having children.

“At best, the interplay of skills and opportunity enabled in a wealthy, democratic society creates cultural products that define us to ourselves and represent us to the world, are tangible and symbolic, profitable and accessible, makes us proud and happy, reflective and imaginative, and encourage us to be empathetic and ambitious.”

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Introduction

How has civic pride and community identity been shaped? In what ways? To what extent have people influenced regions and places, using the arts as the vehicle? There are gaps between rhetoric and reality in shaping civic pride and community identity, with government policy being only one part of creating a sense of community. It also entails a sense of well-being and shared identity, bringing people together (often through arts events) and active citizenship.

In other words, civic pride and community identity occur at both the collective community and individual levels through successful execution of cultural policy that facilitates and promotes identity formation. Additionally, policy favouring the mapping of cultural infrastructure to preserve a community’s heritage contributes to the continued evolution of civic pride and community identity. It favours people-focused strategies at the grass-roots, targeting sustainable outcomes for regional communities.

Some challenges identified as threatening civic pride and community identity pertain to the community resilience, male-dominated culture and pressures to compete internationally.

The shift in discourse is from idealist to realist, from government to market, and from supply to demand. These shifts are not complete. The dualism within and between the subsidised sector and the wider creative industries shows a tension in embracing consumption which caters to the majority or rejecting it by focusing on the non-profit arts which contribute to social development. In this theme, we integrate approaches that work in regional areas.

“Culture is not created by government, but enabled by it. Culture is created by community.”

\[\text{\textsuperscript{15}}\]
Definition

Civic Pride and Community Identity...

... The individual efforts by all of us collectively leads to an improved sense of community, wellbeing and the outward improvement in the appearance of the municipality.\(^{16}\)

Civic pride is based upon an inclusive sense of being…that offers a single shared identity to a diverse population. Events have a key role to play in as they bring people together so that they learn with and from each other. Through this learning and sharing in active citizenship a core of shared civic values can be developed.\(^{17}\)
Background

“The constitution of identity is not only marked by an inward turning to ‘place’, but also the awareness of self and other.”

Civic pride and community identity possesses implications at both the individual and community levels. Civic pride and community identity at an individual level assists in the development of community knowledge and awareness of regional issues whilst building an understanding and tolerance from multiple perspectives.

Implications at the community level include a cohesive and consistent shared regional identity that communicates pride. Viewing Civic pride and community identity from multiple perspectives promotes the capacity to engage and establish new relationships. Similarly, existing relationships can be strengthened to create new sources of social capital.

Civic pride and community identity features robust discussion of the role of ‘creative cities’ and the interrelationship between arts and community. Creative cities are described as ‘unique’, ‘authentic’, ‘dynamic’ and ‘unsettling’. Diversity plays a pivotal role in forming local identity whilst maintaining cultural heritage and cementing loyalty.

Indigenous communities place family and culture central to their well-being and identity where resilience of the community rests on strong kinship between members. The promotion of civic pride within Indigenous communities instils ‘self-determination’ in people who are employed, volunteer or who are in training.

Dunphy attributes civic pride of Indigenous communities to cultural performance by providing a space for representation. In short, community development within an Indigenous setting disregards the traditional, western ‘top-down’ approach and relies on people working from the ‘bottom up’ or ‘inside out’.

Civic pride and community identity facilitates change and ongoing cultural expression, for example, in the provision of public goods, such as the installation of public art which leaves a community legacy. Indirect benefits create an appreciation of an artwork’s symbolic value and representation that cause pride during and after its developmental process.

Although ‘creative place-making’ facilitates civic pride, some see culture as drawing a distinction between social classes. Some see distinction between social classes as protecting advantage. Writers who take this position, see culture as “objectified.” Activities causing impact and identified as being a form of ‘objectified cultural capital’ include: paintings, films, food, books, performance and regional precincts. These art forms become embedded in community identity to enhance community position. Nonetheless, art forms do continue to evolve and accommodate additional perspectives and cultural traditions.

In order to overcome such perceptions of community identity, actions and activities can be made personal; and culturally impoverished spaces can be augmented through public art that symbolises active civic dialogue. Public art contains messages and meanings about the community and acts as a vehicle for identity expression whilst maintaining a high quality appearance and representing the integrity of the artist that boost civic pride.
Dimensions of Civic Pride and Community Identity

Civic Pride and Community Identity consists of six sub-dimensions: sense of community; well-being; outward improvement in community; shared identity; events bringing people together; and active citizenship.

Sense of Community

A sense of community is generated by building cultural capital through tangible and intangible assets, including universities, retail operations, reputation and transport infrastructure. The arts are rich in cultural capital, which entails education and training. In the arts, people develop by using their informal social and professional contacts, which also builds a sense of community. Aspirational goals when creating compelling cultural destinations develop an appreciation of place perceived as a rural utopia or idyll.

There are different types of communities. Culturally-autonomous communities embrace a sense of ownership and play an active role in creative ‘place-making’ where the promotion of creative enterprise and community-based art connects disparate members. Additionally, a sense of community fosters safe neighbourhoods, offers opportunities for professional and personal development, honours cultural heritage and history of place and provides a space for Indigenous representation.

Communities are also referred to as having a collective sense of identity. A collective sense of identity displays characteristics of uniqueness and authenticity where legacy and prestige become embedded in interlocking networks. Awareness of self and others becomes apparent through community solidarity, cohesion and loyalty leading to enriched relationships and a greater sense of community resilience.

Wellbeing

Well-being of individuals assists in providing quality of life for communities. Hence, it plays a role in developing civic pride and community identity by boosting internal and external perceptions of a region, town or place. Wellbeing balances community purpose, respecting its traditions and perspectives, whilst encouraging belongingness and empowerment. A community possessing these attributes enhances daily lives.

The arts provide opportunities to harness individual and collective capacities that create well-being within regional and rural areas. Opportunities can be presented to communities through personal and professional development programs focusing on strengthening identity and clarity of purpose regarding well-being.\(^\text{26}\)

Additionally, well-being is enhanced by participation in community identity strengthening programs, enabling a sense of community control and direction. An example of civic participation entails public celebrations and hosting local festivals.\(^\text{27}\)
Outward Improvement in the Community

Festivals play an integral role in community pride and identity, outwardly improving the community. The multi-purpose functions arising from festival culture enable a deeper understanding of self-identity, an ability to connect with others, community well-being and the expression of spirituality.\(^28\)

Festivals and arts events give regional communities an opportunity to communicate the vision and values of a place as a means of outwardly improving community. ‘These celebrations provide participants with a physical manifestation and better understanding of the relationships between residents, their environment, their neighbours and visitors.’\(^29\)

Festivals help a regional community to form ‘strong and distinct identities’ and improve the outward appearance of regional areas. ‘They can protect the natural environment, increase social equity and provide a vision for spectators and participants alike.’\(^30\)

Shared Identity

Creative organisations, visionary individuals, and the broader political culture achieve a shared identity.\(^31\) Shared identity is a defining characteristic between a society and an economy,\(^32\) using art as the vehicle. The development of communities through art places the focus on aesthetics to nurture enriched community relationships, positive emotions and the enhancement of daily lives through beauty, pride and identity.

Art affects the lives of myriad community members from one generation to the next.\(^33\) In short, art provides a continuation of the cultural heritage and leaves a legacy. In this way, art provides a narrative for people’s lives. Creating a shared identity provides benefits that include: social-belongingness; opportunities to interact and contribute to community development; a sense of accomplishment; the cultivation of community mindedness; and self-actualisation. These are big ideas. But they are realised through shared identity in the arts.

Shared identity honours diverse perspectives within a community requiring a pluralistic approach to community consultation and engagement. It takes decision-making to the grass-roots level, which includes members of disadvantaged and minority interest-groups, and is empowering for them.\(^34\) The arts can support these shifts occurring.

“Individual identities evolve by creating collective communities where people collaborate to achieve a shared sense of history.”\(^35\)

According to Curtis the arts should “assist people towards the expression and understanding of community values and identities.”\(^36\)

Changing perceptions of a region through evolving community-level identities can be achieved through the arts. The arts provide the potential to promote social responsibility, self-discipline, tolerance and acceptance of diversity.\(^37\) They celebrate community as symbols of renewal where people feel engaged, empowered and achieve a sense of community control.\(^38\)
The digital era presents numerous opportunities to leverage media platforms when reinforcing a region’s collective identity whilst honouring individual differences. The arts can be part of these changes.

With the emergence and proliferation of user generated content within the Web 2.0 paradigm, there are ‘distributed aesthetics’ in the form of symbolism, used to create shared identities within a virtual ‘networked culture.’

**Events Bring People Together**

Events bring people together. At the individual level, arts events encourage active participation within communities, providing opportunities for personal and professional development. Immersion within the community provides individuals with support: efforts that create civic pride.

Symbolic expressions of identity can be found through community celebrations, festivals and the installation of public art. Sustained impacts of these activities drive resident interest in creating sustainable living which revitalises communities, and empowers individuals, leading to a sense of well-being.

The arts hold events in public spaces. This implies that public spaces provide opportunities to be transformed into creative places. At the community level, people engage through events so that they develop a greater sense of ownership of the place where they live, work and play, which underpins engagement levels and translates into safer neighbourhoods.

The essence of ‘creative place-making’ mediates social cohesion, injects vibrancy within the area and connects disparate community groups.

A number of activities occur that create a safer environment. Examples include: community-based art, animating public spaces through the use of installation and performance, and recycling old infrastructure to create a platform for creative enterprise.

People are brought together through the guise of parades, museums, painting, dance, theatre and ceramics. These activities act as a platform to engage with the expression of diverse cultural heritages. Broader impacts transcend beyond the community-level and extend to a wider tourist audience, visitors, past residents and local workers.

Further, cultural landmarks and special events communicate community identity and a sense of pride. In order to improve perceptions about the arts within regional communities, traditional media communication tools can be leveraged, such as advertising, promotion and public relations.

Nonetheless, not everyone is on side all the time, meaning that bringing people together sometimes is a challenge. In a survey of arts events and festivals in regional Australia, 43% of festival organisers felt their event assisted their community to adapt to hardships within the region by lifting community spirit, providing a distraction to hardships, and facilitating social networking.
However, for ‘community building’ to occur risks need to be taken and success does not always come easily. Local communities may have concerns about the benefit that they will see as a result of a large scale event or festival and divisions in support may occur. In a survey of festivals in regional Australia, 39% of the local community expressed opposition to these events.  

In one regional city, two people stood for election to council in local government specifically to push the bandwagon of ‘bring back my gallery.’ They didn’t like the direction the gallery had taken in focusing on large, quality exhibitions which they felt neglected local community needs. Local concerns surround fair distribution of economic benefits, the need for a local voice and logistical problems around capacity within a regional area.  

To avoid the sense of inundating residents with crowds and disruptions, an inclusive approach can be taken. Inclusivity can be achieved by communicating the goals of arts events to ensure that residents feel there is a collective benefit of change.  

Increased involvement and leadership amongst residents can also allow them to become ‘agents of change’ rather than ‘victims of change.’

**Regional Event Portfolio**

An event portfolio builds a brand, enriches a region’s tourism product and image, and attracts increased visitation by offering events of different types and scales throughout the year. The relationship between sport and cultural events is symbiotic sharing common objectives, resources, and markets. The concept can be capitalised on through an event portfolio, where a region has a strategic patterning of events that complement one another through operational and thematic relatedness. A study of festivals in regional Australia found that a third of festivals were part of a wider network of events.

An event portfolio allows a community to create synergy among events. The impact of events can be sustained as long as each event in the portfolio complements or reinforces the benefits of other events.

There is a concern that human and built infrastructure in the regional arts sector is under pressure. To address this issue, an event portfolio including arts events and festivals can transfer knowledge in organising events, use connected themes among different events to maximise impact, and share resources and volunteer pools.

Daylesford’s ChillOut Festival is an example of a regional event that has positioned the region as the ‘gay capital’ or ‘gay heartland’ of country Victoria and rural Australia. ChillOut attracts around 16,000 visitors, making it the largest gay/lesbian festival in regional Australia. Motivations for rural visitors include the celebration of differences, alongside networking and community building amongst GLBTIQ people in country Victoria.

*To enable the arts to be a driver for regional development, programs that include both minority and majority groups can promote a celebration and acceptance of diversity.*
**Active Citizenship**

Active citizenship provides an opportunity to develop sustainable communities, placing people at the forefront of strategies. Viewing people as valuable assets in developing pride and identity has been suggested as a path towards a more sustainable future.\(^{56}\)

A sense of community is created through ‘active civic dialogue.’ Active civic dialogue provides a platform for interaction by cultivating a community mindset, such as volunteering. Ongoing consultation and vocalising diverse voices enables cross-cultural exchange that strengthens the bridges between neighbourhoods and neighbours, encouraging the development of human capital and greater political engagement where community members feel confident when critiquing the dominant culture to create improvements.\(^{57}\)

Grass-roots involvement in community arts and their organisations develops civic pride and community identity. Grass-roots involvement is deemed successful when it actively stimulates, strengthens and engages disparate neighbourhoods. The development of artistic and cultural talent in conjunction with community ownership of grass-roots cultural projects aids sustainable change, facilitates identity maintenance and strengthens the local economy.\(^{58}\)

Sponsoring and promoting the development efforts of Civic Pride and Community Identity can be interpreted through different lenses. The arts can be seen as an ongoing narrative where its historical importance and meaning is inherited from previous generations.\(^{59}\) From a historical vantage point, the celebration of self-governing, democratic political structures interwoven with art, commerce, sustainable architecture and civic values,\(^{60}\) creates pride and promotes identity.

Active citizenship has been criticised as homogenisation where communities focus on creating spectacles to attract volume as opposed to leveraging the creative capacity of community members and harnessing collective innovation.\(^{61}\) If that occurs, it undermines civic engagement.

Subjective interpretations of civic pride contain researcher bias and misinterpretation of findings that inadequately measure factors of success.\(^{62}\)
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# Theme 5: Regional Development

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Facts

Investment in the Arts

$1.6b  Allocated by the Australian Government for arts and cultural heritage in the 2013 budget.¹

$104m  Total art sales in Australia at auction in 2013, up from $95 million in 2012.²

85%  Australians think the arts make for a richer and more meaningful life.³

49%  Regional Australians participated in the arts in 2013, up from 39% in 2009.⁴

Place Building through Museum and Gallery Visits

46%  Domestic overnight visitors to Australia attend museums or art galleries.

36%  Day-trippers to Australia attend museums or art galleries.

29%  Overnight visitors to Australia attend historical and heritage sites.

21%  Day visitors to Australia attend historical and heritage sites.⁵

Education

89%  Australians think that the arts should be an important part of the education of every Australian.⁶

33%  Artists bring their creative skills to other industries.⁷

75%  Australians aged 20–24 years have completed a Year 12 certificate.

18%  Increase in post-secondary school qualification attainment of Australians aged 25-64 between 1997 and 2012.

98%  Employed and unemployed people have weekly contact with family and friends.

Cultural Infrastructure

76%  Agree that the arts can mean very profitable business, both at home and overseas.⁸

23.2m  Cultural and heritage visitors contributed approximately $28 billion in tourism expenditure to the Australian economy.⁹
Regional Snapshot: Percent for Art Scheme

“The scheme employs Western Australian artists to deliver exciting artwork for major new public buildings such as schools, police stations, and health services throughout Western Australia. The State Government percent for art policy requires up to one percent of the construction budget for new works over $2 million to be expended on artwork.”10

$11m+ Allocated to 203 art work projects, commissioning 200 individual artists and 400 artworks through the percent for art scheme in WA since its inception in 1991.

$1.5b Infrastructure building costs in WA.

$3.5m Allocated to regional projects in WA.

36% Projects are in regional WA.11

Cultural Tourism

25% Indigenous people agreed that a social outcome of cultural tourism related to recognition and cultural diversity.12

33% Sales within the cultural industries is attributed to tourism.13

36,178 Indigenous persons have been accounted for in tailoring the Northern Territory’s policy for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art industry.

$1 Support for the arts on average generates $6.40 in sales and $4.30 in return to producers.14

$500m Estimated to be the value of the Indigenous visual arts industry in 2007.15

40% Percentage of arts sales Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists give back into their art centres.16

Creative Industries

“Creative industries are distinguished from other industries in that creativity is used to create value for their consumers. They include cultural sectors like the visual and performing arts, as well as those sectors that are often dubbed digital media or multi-media including film and television, broadcasting, computer animation, web design and music. They also include architecture and urban design, industrial design, designer fashion, writing and publishing.”17

122,564 Registered businesses within the creative industries in Australia.18

$90.19b Total annual revenue from Australian creative industries.19

$32,666m Industry gross product of creative industries in Australia 2011-12.20
611,307  Total Australian creative workforce in 2011, a 19% increase since 2006.21

**Arts Programs**

**Regional Snapshot: Royalties for Regions, WA**

“Royalties for Regions is an historic agreement launched in December 2008 that underpins the State Government’s long-term focus on regional development throughout Western Australia.”

$12m Allocated in 2012-13 to facilitate the development and raise the profile of regional events in Western Australia as part of a $47.9 million program from 2011-12 to 2014-15.23

$7.9m Regional Event Program funding allocated to a Regional Tourism Marketing Program to drive domestic leisure visitation in Western Australia in 2012.24

$7.5m Allocated for the redevelopment of the Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre 2011-2012.25

**Regional Snapshot: Art Gallery of South Australia**

“Healthy tourism contributes to the economic and social well-being of all Australians, but focuses on the need to bring more such opportunities to the regional and rural areas of the country. It also notes it “has the capacity to reduce emigration from rural and regional areas and maintain regional capacities and services ... [by expanding on] ... cultural tourism themes, local festivals, heritage trails ... [and] ... the industry will need to develop in a manner that is environmentally sustainable and meets the needs and aspirations of local communities”. In other words, it supports a triple bottom line approach to regional tourism development.”

$4m Invested by BHP for the establishment of an Aboriginal Torres Strait Island visual arts festival to be held in 2015, supported by the State Government and Art Gallery of South Australia.26

90% Tourism businesses in Australia are small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SME’s).

40% SME’s are located in regional areas.

80% SME’s have fewer than five employees, and so can be classified as micro-businesses.

61% SME’s are family or individually-owned, with most of the remainder describing themselves as small companies.29
Inward Investment

Regional Snapshot: Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre

$8.5m Invested in the Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre (WPAC), which has been operational since 2009.

130 Direct and indirect EFT jobs created during the construction of the project.

70 EFT jobs are estimated to have been taken up by regional workers.
Introduction

The arts are a tool for regional development. By building quality infrastructure, the arts can develop and build tourism, boost employment and morale of people in the local community. While the arts may be considered by some to be at the periphery, with increasing globalisation, individuals and communities are recognising the importance of regional development using the arts as the vehicle.

Regional development adds to the quality of people’s lives in run-down, economically depressed regions, boosting their viability and vitality. Hence, by using a range of tools, people in the community are brought together, developing social and economic skills and fashioning their own future.

Regional development provides people with employment skills, opportunities for participation, a means of bringing people together and making a contribution to the regeneration of their community.

Regional development results in greater understanding of others, particularly those who are different from ourselves, and a stronger regional identity.
Definition

Regional Development…

… is a broad term but can be seen as a means of reducing regional disparities by supporting (employment and wealth-generating) economic activities in regions.

Regional development achieved objectives by infrastructure development and attracting inward investment. New approaches reduce regional disparities by helping lagging regions to catch up.\textsuperscript{30}
Background

Arts activities not only make money; they also provide a catalyst for engagement that benefits the community on other ways: by bringing people together and by providing a flow-on effect for economic activity in shops, cafes and accommodation.

Against a background of rural and regional decline, population drift to the cities and the closing of major facilities, development through the arts is a means of stimulating regions. Arts activities and events have flourished and diversified from traditional country fairs to festivals and blockbuster art exhibitions.

This theme summarises the key findings from the Stats and Stories: Arts Impact in Regional Australia project, which documents the extent and significance of the arts to rural and regional Australia.

Regional development activities uses the creative economy to converge culture and commerce through the cultivation of a creative class that innovates, thus bringing knowledge into regional economies. This enables the creation of jobs through small to medium enterprises (SME’s), possessing the capability of generating and exploiting intellectual property.

Additional activities form a ‘creative economy’ include ongoing skills development and training in conjunction with cultural asset mapping, such as identifying ‘creative clusters’ located in regional areas.

While some arts activities are more commercial or tourist ventures, others are small, local and community-focused. They operate to serve the local community as celebrations, creating a sense of community and identity. They use local expertise to support local organisations whether they be the art gallery, flower show or local small business.

While arts activities might be small, they engage grass-roots activity in local communities which build a vibrant sense of regional development over time.
Dimensions of Regional Development

Regional development has five dimensions which impact the arts in regional Australia: reducing regional disparities; supporting economic activities; infrastructure development; inward investing; new approaches to regional development.

“Cities of the future are ‘creative communities’ as they recognise that arts and culture are vital to a region’s liveability and to the preparedness of its work force.”

Reducing Regional Disparities

Developing Skills and Training

A greater understanding and appreciation of culture and the arts through education, both formal (school; university) and informal (training; communication with stakeholders), leads to innovation and entrepreneurial skills taught within regional areas, and an increased public interest in the arts.

Formal arts education enhances a regional area’s ability to maintain a creative class, including people in architecture and design, education, music, arts and entertainment. “This class of creative individuals,” Florida says, “share a common creative ethos that emphasizes individuality, creativity, difference and merit.”

Regional areas with a creative class and entrepreneurial thinkers have the opportunity to develop local expertise and businesses to employ them. According to Eger, cities of the future are “creative communities” as they recognise that arts and culture are vital to a region’s liveability and to the preparedness of its work force.

Karen Quinlan, Director of Bendigo Art Gallery, provides insight into the benefits of informal education on regional development. Quinlan explained that she “educated the public” to visit regional Bendigo by “finding something that they want to see, making a day or weekend of it and building the regional economy as well as developing a perception that the art museum contributes to making Bendigo liveable for people seeking to relocate.”

Supporting Economic Activities

Supporting economic activities provides a means of leaving a cultural legacy for regional communities. Economic activities include work, skills, training, regenerating urban, regional and rural areas and promoting people’s health and well-being.

Arts activities not only provide a means of bringing people together in communities but also providing the frameworks (through infrastructure development and activities that result from their building) to solving social issues of relevance to people in the community.

Cultural mapping can support economic activities. It identifies and promotes a region’s cultural heritage, including art galleries and museums which contain memories of past and
present and imaginings of the future, enabling individuals and communities to decide which ones to restore, maintain or preserve.

Maintaining and developing infrastructure creates jobs. Rural design and spatial planning appears as a popular strategy to alleviate the displacement of the cultural heritage of areas experiencing rapid expansion and growth.

Dynamic and flexible planning supports economic activities, whilst avoiding top-down, rigid structures. Planning well done captures the regional legacy or heritage while ensuring that quality infrastructure contributes to the evolving nature of neighbourhoods.

**Infrastructure Development**

Quality infrastructure develops regions. Debate about quality infrastructure centres around the idea of creative cities and the importance of cultural infrastructure. There is a connection between urban or rural space and the systems of local cultural production and consumption. Creative cities are seen as complex adaptive systems, which can mean focusing investment on projects or flagship development, as well as infrastructure, networks and agents engaging in cultural development.

For example, investing in quality infrastructure for libraries, museums or even state schools provides platforms for uplifting displaced people, boosting their morale and developing the region. Nurturing local arts and culture as part of infrastructure development, also provides skills development for local, health improvements, wellbeing and better quality of life.

With quality infrastructure comes income from the activities it brings, such as tourism. Hence, regional communities change. As regional communities may be affected by a turbulent environment and declining growth, innovative solutions are required. Innovative solutions often pertain to activities in the services sector, of which the arts are a part. Some express concern that government support is directed towards centres with growth potential and not to places that are suffering decline. Others don’t come along on the journey of change and renewal.

Environmental devastations such as drought, bushfires and floods within regional areas limit assets required for the arts to thrive in regional areas. Sponsorship from local business is lost due to economic downturn and community resilience becomes compromised resulting in a decline of skilled workers.

"However, the arts have proven to have an ‘in-built resilience to economic fluctuations’ due to low outlays, small amounts of sponsorship needed and affordable ticket prices for low-income residents."

**Percent for Art Programs**

Public art works have been commissioned in regional centres and towns around the world through the percent for art programs. Percent for art programs entail commissioning public
art work which is paid for by a one percent levy on developers who are building major infrastructure projects.

It is a misconception to believe that percent for art programs are only in cities. Many are in regions, small towns and rural areas, whether that is in Australia or in other countries, such as the USA. Further, public art programs seek to build relationships with communities beyond simply installing the art work.42

Hence, public art plays a pivotal role in the development of quality infrastructure within regional areas. The installation of public art attracts economic attention through the transformational effect of impersonal public spaces, offering opportunities for personalisation and enhancement.43

For example, state departments of transportation work in partnership with community development corporations to implement public art initiatives within regional areas. The act of consuming public art manifests itself through artistic events and the creation of physical infrastructure acting as landmarks for the arts.44

**Attracting Inward Investment**

Attracting inward investment means bringing business and businesses to an area from elsewhere in the country and from other countries. Careful consideration should be given to the costs and benefits of attracting inward investors.45

Attracting large manufacturing and service sector employers into communities is one of the most difficult, frustrating and riskiest of all local economic development strategies. This is partly because there are far fewer investors than there are communities seeking to attract them and many communities are prepared to offer massive incentives to inward investors. Foreign direct investors often prefer Greenfield, edge-of-town sites.

To accommodate these preferences, communities often over-ride their planning policies in order to attract the investment. This may bring with it considerable problems and may contribute to urban sprawl and transportation problems.

Attracting inward investment through the arts is less risky, lower cost but also lower income returns. Balancing the strategic needs of the local community is required in decision-making on these matters.

**New Approaches to Regional Development**

A new approach to regional development is emerging; one that promises more effective use of public resources and significantly better policy outcomes. This involves a shift away from redistribution and subsidies for lagging regions in favour of measures to increase the competitiveness of all regions.

Some key features of this new approach to regional development include:
A development strategy that covers a wide range of direct and indirect factors that affect the performance of local firms;

- A focus on specific regional assets, and less on top-down investments and transfers;
- An emphasis on opportunity rather than on disadvantage or need for support;
- A collective and negotiated governance approach involving national, regional and local government plus other stakeholders, with central government taking a lesser role.46

To achieve a new approach to regional development, appropriate community services are required. Appropriate community services help to attract talent, obtain high level facilities, and compete on an international level, all of which requires strategic decision-making.47

However, sometimes there is lack of coordination and strategic thinking at the regional level,48 which limits the provision of community services. The arts provide sites of strategic formation, providing support for ongoing government and philanthropic efforts to develop regional areas.49

The arts can absorb elements of global culture at the local level, as has happened with Bendigo art exhibitions. Or the arts can support performances, events or exhibitions, for example, that may laud an international canon (botanical art) while celebrating a distinctive, national and local identity, as happened with the Art Gallery of Ballarat Capturing Flora exhibition.

When large, generic, global art is used to subsidise small, specific, local art, everyone wins, with the global paying for the local. If there is too much concentration on global culture, it may be perceived by some locals as inauthentic and “selling out” the purpose of arts for the local community.

Dangers inherent in the pursuit of international competition include neglecting local resources and cultural needs of community members. In some instances, it may be perceived by some that senior arts leaders focus on money at the expense of strategies to facilitate community success.50

Within the context of festival culture, the pressure to compete internationally has focused attention on an external audience: elite or transitory social groups, such as tourists. An external focus has been criticised as neglecting local communities, their cultural needs and local resources.51

Building a Foundation for the Arts

“The development of regional arts and culture has been criticised for having audience development strategies in place, without first strengthening the foundation of the arts within regional areas.”53

A lack of knowledge and understanding of the arts is considered an obstacle to the development of arts and culture within regional areas. “There is an ambiguity surrounding the definition of what constitutes the arts, and that this may not only be a barrier to attendance or participation in the arts, but also to coordinating and hosting arts projects and events.”52
One way to overcome these limitations is for planners to be educated in the practice of artists and artists to be educated in the practice of planners to allow collaboration to occur between the two.\textsuperscript{54}

Without a solid system that builds a foundation for the arts by nurturing, attracting, and retaining artists, will see work exported from elsewhere rather than tailoring art to local needs.\textsuperscript{55}

**Technology is a Powerful Tool**

Web-accessible maps profiling cultural activity such as Culturemap developed by Audience London with support of Arts Council England, responds to the need both to map cultural provision and to link it to usage, population typologies and catchments.\textsuperscript{56}

It has proven to provide valuable evidence and information on the relationship between arts provision and attendance in a demographic and spatial context. This online tool can reveal gaps in provision and participation, drawing on secondary and primary surveys showing correlations between audiences, venue types and locations.\textsuperscript{57}
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