

# Artspeak

Newsletter for the Arts and Regional Cultural Network of the Central West

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## Cultural Planning Hot On The Agenda



*Is the pressure too much for volunteers? Ruth Fagan and Anne Henley, from Cowra Arts Council, at a planning meeting with Arts OutWest*

At 'Cultural Policy - State of the Art', an international conference held in Brisbane in June/July of this year, arts groups, community workers, cultural planners, councils, local government reps., consultants, academics and representatives from tourism and funding bodies, met to discuss the hot topic of cultural planning and cultural policy.

With the Federal Government's policy statement, 'Creative Nation', not even a year old, with Brisbane focusing on culture to promote itself as a 'livable city', and the Queensland Government's cultural statement giving priorities to strategies that will lead to success for cultural industries in cultural exports, cultural tourism and emerging technology, the emphasis is on 'building local to go global'. Strategies are being developed to strengthen cultural communities, respect indigenous cultures and support regional distinctiveness.

In Arts 21, the Victorian Government outlines 6 strategies for the Arts industry to move into the 21st century.

1. Positioning the arts industry as a creative force in media and communication.
2. Provide world class facilities in metropolitan and regional centres.
3. Strengthening the range and quality of the annual calendar of arts activities.
4. Promoting leadership in the arts industry.
5. Customer-focused marketing.
6. Delivering Australia to the world.

It is clear that even the 'bean-counters' can see that the Arts industry plays such a major role in the economy and the future of our communities, that it must be placed high on the agenda. In 1993/94, culturally derived goods and services contributed more than \$23 billion to the Australian economy.

Internationally, where cultural tourism has always been an acknowledged drawcard, even more important roles are being assigned to the Arts. For example,

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Welcome to the second edition of Arts OutWest's newsletter. This edition has a very strong emphasis on writing, which has been a major growth area in the Arts throughout the region. As a result, plans are underway to set up a Writer's Centre in the Central West. If this proposal succeeds, the facility will service the writers, writing groups and book clubs in the area and strengthen the strong tradition that exists between literature and the Central West.

The Arts OutWest Board, as usual, are busy in a myriad of ways. Our Board consists of:

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News Editor - Prime Television  
Ph: (063) 622211

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Regional Arts Consultant  
Dept. of School Education - Orange  
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Aboriginal Home Care  
Dubbo  
Ph: (068) 858317

**Sonia Muir**

Editor/PR/ Rural Women's Network  
Orange  
Ph: (063) 913616

All the best to Sonia, who is off to Beijing for the United Nations World Conference on Women, to Warren, who is standing for local government in Dubbo; and to Rob, who has produced a computerized visit of Miss Traill's House (historic home) in Bathurst.

## Cultural Planning (Cont'd)

the 'Make Belfast Work' campaign relies heavily on a community-focused arts policy which aims at social and urban regeneration through arts activity. Its long-term goal is to attract investment and create employment as the arts improve the quality of life of the community.

Australia's policy document, 'Creative Nation', focuses on:

1. audience development
2. sponsorship
3. marketing
4. international export
5. links with new media and broadcasting technology

There is a lot of work to be done in

developing our cultural industries in the Central West, both to enhance the quality of life of those who live here, to provide our youth with reasons to stay, and to attract individuals and other industries to the region - both to live and to visit.

People are attracted by active and creative communities, but volunteers alone cannot build these communities for us. As the demands on our volunteers grow, it is essential to value their work and support them with a professional infrastructure if we are to take the Central West into a lively 21st century.

Elisabeth Bastian

Regional Cultural Development Officer

## Arts Councils Keen to be Involved in Cultural Planning

### Cowra Arts Council

Cowra Shire has a long history of community-based cultural activities: art shows, festivals, dance, drama, music, Eisteddfods and rural shows have been part of every Cowra child's background.

This has meant a valuable and rich resource for the area and an enthusiastic and knowledgeable team of volunteers to support it.

Cowra Arts Council recognises the enormous value these things have been to our community and has stressed their importance to the Cowra Council.

As volunteer resources have become more stretched and new activities evolve each year, Cowra Arts Council recognises that these important social and community events are struggling to survive.

Cowra Council has invited the Cowra Arts Council to take part in an Economic Development Plan for the whole shire. As an Arts Council, we see this as a chance to demonstrate the worth of all these activities for the long-term future of the shire.

We plan to start a register of all artistic items and their worth, and a register of arts workers and the economic benefit they bring and the activities and events which also bring a boost to the economy of the shire.

By doing these things, we will demonstrate to the Council and members of the community the benefit of a strong cultural plan for the future.

In Council's Economic Development Plan we will be able to demonstrate the viability of the Arts and ask for future funding to be made available for an arts worker in the shire to assist volunteers already organising these many events.

Ruth Fagan  
Chairperson

### Dubbo Arts & Cultural Advisory Council

Following is the text of a letter sent to all Dubbo Councillors on 21 August:

"The Dubbo 21 Plan clearly identifies a need in the Dubbo community for better cultural facilities if Dubbo is going to properly take its place as the foremost regional centre in NSW.

The Dubbo Arts & Cultural Advisory Council (DACAC) would like all prospective councillors to publicly state their position on three key areas identified by us as essential to the cultural debate which is taking place and which will continue to dominate our agenda over the life of the new council.

They are:

\* A cultural centre which would include a performing arts space, enhanced facilities for the visual arts and a museum.

\* The addition of a Cultural Services Manager to the staff of Dubbo City Council.

\* The pursuit of the RAAF Base site as a venue for cultural activity.

We look forward to hearing your comments on these issues."

Jill McCann  
Chairperson

### LETTERS WELCOME

We'd like to see Artspeak become a forum for your views on a whole range of Arts or Cultural issues. Got something to say? Letters, photos or articles by the first week of November would be appreciated. Write Arts OutWest, CSU Mitchell Bathurst 2795 or Fax to (063) 384646.



# Arts Councils call for Full time Arts Workers

I'm delighted to hear that so many Arts Councils in the area are feeling the need for the employment of a full-time Arts worker. The need in the Central West is desperate. As each area defines itself culturally, and has come to support its artists instead of sending them packing to the city or overseas, so does the infrastructure essential to an artistic community need to be developed. This includes the development of:

- \* arts and community in the schools e.g. artists in residence, workshops, art prizes, liaising between exhibitions and performances and the school.
- \* arts on the street eg. Main Street Programs and Public Art Works.
- \* artistic spaces eg. galleries, performance spaces and public art.
- \* a network of happy, productive artists through communication, workshops and exhibitions.
- \* liaison between the artistic community and other public and private organisations in the town eg. Shire Council, Tourist Organisations, Business Organisations, Community Help Organisations ... the list goes on.
- \* promoting the Arts in the area through a few tourist-type displays each year, written publicity, radio etc. and networking with the media.

Why do all of this? As an area defines and celebrates itself culturally, so does it become a place of interest and a joy to

behold. This dovetails neatly with cultural tourism. It also helps inoculate in particular country areas against the capricious nature of life on the land such as drought and the commodity market.

At present, the voluntary organisations in each town are philanthropically busy doing the work. They are setting up the structures while holding their breath hoping that someone will come along behind

***"As an area defines and celebrates itself culturally, so does it become a place of interest and a joy to behold. This dovetails neatly with cultural tourism. It also helps inoculate in particular country areas against the capricious nature of life on the land such as drought and the commodity market."***

them and keep it all going.

Let me relate some recent events in our area.

In late March, who:

- \* organised the CASP grant.
  - \* organised the local artists
  - \* employed a selector and exhibition designer.
  - \* had the invitations and catalogues printed and collated.
  - \* had fifty plinths made and painted.
  - \* fed and wine the hundreds of people at the opening.
  - \* manned the exhibition for two weeks.
  - \* packed it all up and flaked until ...
- ClaySculpt Gulgong descended in April

and it happened all over again but this time with an international potting group involving 400 or so participants? Was it the little red hen? Let me give you a tip, it was the Committee of the Mudgee Arts Council.

They were also writing a gallery brochure for the area, liaising with local government and galleries, preparing speeches for the National Party Convention to launch the aforementioned Gallery Trail brochure ... getting artworks from 6 local galleries for a display. And this was all repeated at the Small Farm Field Days in August.

And this is only the visual arts front. They were also employing musicians, organising a literary evening, attending meetings with other organisations eg. Mardis Gras

and Main Street. There was the parent body in Sydney to liaise with as well as Arts On Tour, various freelance artists, newsletters to be written, AGM's to be had and we are now into July. The pace is expected to continue at this rate for the foreseeable future.

While we have the largest membership for an Arts Council in N.S.W., and a very supportive and talented artistic community, what we need is some sort of coordinator to oversee the projects, to liaise between the various artistic organisations and to lend some ongoing professional and accountable support.

We need an artswoker to liberate people like me to get on with other arts projects in the area with the knowledge that the work will go on as it will be in a paid capacity.

**Jennifer Bennett**  
Mudgee Arts Council



The Regional Volunteers Resource Program (Central West) NSW, Arts OutWest, and the Volunteer Centre of NSW present

**TRAINING WORKSHOPS**  
for  
Coordinators of volunteers

Parkes 8 September  
Dubbo 9 September

Details from Arts OutWest on  
(063) 384657

*Left ... undaunted by the rain, at the Henry Lawson Festival of the Arts in Grenfell*