



Authoring Contemporary Australia

A Regional Cultural Strategy for Greater Western Sydney

FULL REPORT

"Not only is Greater Western Sydney rich with history and living cultural practices, it is also authoring the future of Australia. In our dynamic region, global socio-cultural, economic and environmental complexities converge in everyday community life. This fertile mixture arouses debate that forges fresh new ways of thinking and adds to a bank of creative skills, knowledges and stories."

WSROC A Greater Western Sydney Initiative

...the windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, colour, music plays in homes, lambing out, windows and between your garden bushes, passers-by break into song, theatre spills into public places, celebrate on



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FOREWORD



Many studies of Greater Western Sydney have focused on the region's wide ranging socio-economic disadvantage in comparison to wealthier parts of Sydney. Undoubtedly, there is disadvantage, but what these statistical indexes have missed, is the fertile culture and innovation, the heritage and social history, the dynamism and diversity, the curiosity, resilience, compassion and openness that thrives in the region.

Our culture is not just about our most visible actions, or the biggest landmarks or the histories that are recorded in the weightiest tomes. Our culture is also comprised of the memories and experiences, the people and practices that may be hidden from view, but nonetheless shape our attitudes and sense of identity, and inspire us to reach our potential.

The Regional Cultural Strategy aims to bring forth these hidden stories, and in doing so, enrich our understanding of this dynamic region and its pivotal role in the evolving Australian identity. Greater Western Sydney is a national treasure, the history and culture of which has been key to achieving Sydney's global city status.

Greater Western Sydney has been Australia's dependable and plucky Auntie.... For 40,000 years, her grasslands and floodplains nourished the Indigenous inhabitants. Then in 1788, when the British arrived at Sydney Cove and found it impossible to settle, it was her fertile and stable lands that sustained the colonies. She witnessed the first conflicts between Darug warriors and the colonists, as well as the first attempts at reconciliation.

She is steadfast, reliable and reassuring... Greater Western Sydney founded the first viable towns and roads, agriculture and industries. Many Australian artists have been inspired by her wild and idyllic landscapes, and later, her burgeoning suburban developments. She supplied the ore and manufacturing industries to support Australia's war efforts. After the war, she welcomed European arrivals who sought new opportunities in helping to rebuild the nation. Today, she continues to open her arms to migrants and refugees from across the globe, and is home to almost 1.7 million people.

She provides nourishment and opportunity... Greater Western Sydney is expanding and changing at a frantic pace, being expected to house much of the population growth of the Sydney region. She continues to feed them too, growing 90% of Sydney's fresh vegetables. And by generating more than \$54 billion a year, she has the third largest economic output in Australia.

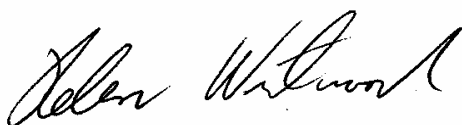
However, the benefits of her development are not evenly distributed. Alongside affluent new housing estates, she is witness to some of the gravest social disadvantage and poverty in the state, compounded by suburbs that are battling years of neglect, a backlog of basic infrastructure provision and decaying urban environments.

Through her openness, she offers a refreshed perspective... From within the adversity and urgent haste of suburban life, her unique strength is unearthed. It is here that the complex challenges facing Australia, suddenly converge. And without theoretical brooding or glossy fanfare, she works out these issues in the dynamics of everyday community life, offering new insights that surpass boundaries. Greater Western Sydney is indeed, the author of contemporary Australia.

She is often dismissed as simply the western suburbs, and labelled with fear, crime and inertia by the media. These images bear little resemblance to her real lives, although sometimes, she is constrained by the stereotype.

As Australia's Aunty, Greater Western Sydney has often provided a stable base, opportunities and ideas for the nation's growth, but she has been in the wings all this time. The culture of Greater Western Sydney has been shaped by these events and perceptions, by her people and their histories and relationships, her environmental character, economies and political decisions. Through the collaborative efforts of the region's art institutions, cultural organisations, local government, research centres and others, her stories will reach centre stage, and the spotlight will be on the robust, diverse and candid culture of Greater Western Sydney.

This Regional Cultural Strategy reinforces the well-earned reputation of Greater Western Sydney councils as leaders in innovative cultural development. We trust that the Strategy will inspire public discussion and debate, leading not only to positive change in the short term, but enduring partnerships and equitable, inclusive policy development and investments in the longer term.



Clr Helen Westwood
President, WSROC

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The fourteen local councils of Greater Western Sydney, along with cultural institutions and organisations, artists and cultural consultants, State agencies and peak bodies have contributed to the preparation of a strategic framework for regional cultural development. *Authoring Contemporary Australia - A Regional Cultural Strategy for Greater Western Sydney* aims to strengthen collaborations between these groups so that we can secure and make best use of our cultural resources to enhance cultural opportunities for all Greater Western Sydney people.

The Regional Cultural Strategy comprises:

1. Research into the cultures of Greater Western Sydney;
2. A Regional Cultural Vision (2030) that sets the guiding principles and six strategic directions for regional cultural planning;
3. A Regional Cultural Framework that outlines key regional cultural development issues and describes policies and actions to achieve the six strategic directions;
4. A Regional Management Framework as the basis for review and monitoring, evaluating and modifying the Strategy.

Our culture embodies the stories and creative spirit that gives us a sense of belonging to the community of Greater Western Sydney. Through heritage, arts and cultural activity, we are inspired to reflect, and exchange ideas, on 'who we are' and 'how we live', strengthening the social connections that contribute to a robust and vibrant community.

With effective cultural planning, councils gain a clearer sense of a community's aspirations and values. This in turn informs policy-making and planning decisions for the whole community. Cultural planning, when harnessed to local government's strategic objectives, can help to tackle social exclusion, contribute to urban regeneration and crime prevention and encourage healthier lifestyles.

Adopting a regional approach to cultural development is not a new idea. This Strategy drew upon the ideas, thoughts, questions and recommendations developed in numerous documents, discussion papers and forums by individuals and organisations in the cultural and academic fields.

As governments seek to build stronger communities and better places to live, articulating the cultural dimension of public policy has gained prominence. The *Local Government Amendment (Miscellaneous) Act 2002* for example, expands the scope of activities that councils should include in their management plans, to "social, community and cultural matters". In 2004, the NSW Government released *Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government* to assist councils integrate cultural plans with broader management plans. All fourteen Greater Western Sydney councils have adopted, or are in the process of preparing, local cultural plans.

Since 2002, several State Government (or funded) bodies with cultural agendas have focused their activities on Greater Western Sydney, including the Local Government &

Shires Association. In the same period, eight regional cultural institutions benefited from a NSW Government capital infrastructure package of \$19.4 million.

Most of these activities are not formally connected. The Regional Cultural Strategy is a timely initiative, which seeks to coordinate these opportunities to deliver maximum benefits to Greater Western Sydney communities. For this reason, it complements *FutureWest - Greater Western Sydney Regional Planning & Management Framework*, a strategy for improved forward planning and management of growth in the region. The Regional Cultural Strategy is also a call to collaborative action to the wider range of organisations and groups who contribute to the cultural development of Greater Western Sydney.

A Cultural Vision for Greater Western Sydney

By the year 2030, we see that:

Greater Western Sydney is the author of contemporary Australian life. Here, diverse socio-cultural, economic and environmental complexities converge and are worked out in the dynamics of everyday community life. This fertile mixture arouses debate that forges new ways of thinking and adds to a bank of creative skills and knowledges.

People in Greater Western Sydney lead fulfilling and creative lives. A myriad of cultural activities bring to life the customs of our diverse communities, inspiring creative participation that opens up new social exchanges and nourishes cultural respect.

Greater Western Sydney Councils lead the way in best-practice cultural planning and continue to play a key role in the region's cultural development. Public planning benefits from the strategic application of community cultural development (CCD) processes that exemplify inclusive, sustainable planning and policy development.

Increased civic participation strengthens people's sense of attachment to their communities. Here, in this multi-centred region of cities, each place resonates with its own distinctive rhythm. Familiar vistas and historic places are protected, significant collections documented and cared for, whilst public art proclaims the region's diverse cultures, achievements and aspirations.

State and Federal Government and private investment frame local government's role in the region's cultural development. Government support is in line with the region's rapidly growing population, providing ongoing funds for cultural infrastructure, staff and programs that are relevant to Greater Western Sydney communities.

An accessible network of complementary creative spaces across the region supports all forms of creative endeavour – spaces for people to enjoy, produce and debate, exhibit and perform, archive and research, art. The region's cultural organisations and artist co-ops are networked, and can effectively mobilise resources, professional expertise and training to develop creative skills and access communication technologies.

The importance of the region's diverse heritage, arts and culture in Australia's cultural development is well known, and the stories are interpreted in arts practice

and broadcast in the media. So too are the innovations of the region's artists and institutions in forging a distinctive and sophisticated arts culture.

The region retains it's skilled, creative graduates because our educational institutions work in concert with pivotal arts organisations to provide increasingly 'hands on' opportunities for students. This opens up new professional networks and graduates can secure guidance and seed grants to establish artist run initiatives and other projects.

Cultural and creative industries contribute to the regional economy. A myriad of businesses demand creative skills and culturally diverse knowledges, which translates into targeted training and employment opportunities for artists within the region. The business community invests in partnerships with cultural organisations and artists.

The people of Sydney's Greater West are proud of their culture. They cherish their diverse heritages and lifestyles, nourish each other and their environment, and confidently pass on these values to their children.

Guiding Principles

These principles will guide decision making at the regional level. They reflect the unique cultural dynamics of Greater Western Sydney:

1. Sustainability – to achieve cultural investments that nourish a vibrant culture and secure cultural facilities, resources and opportunities for the benefit of generations to come. Nurturing a creative Greater Western Sydney culture that abounds with diverse knowledges, fresh ideas and skills, will contribute to developing sophisticated new approaches to regional sustainability.

2. Dynamism and Diversity – because diverse social, cultural, economic and environmental conditions maximise stability, growth and responsiveness to change. It is through diverse social interactions and cultural exchanges that we negotiate and affirm our social bonds and express individual identities.

3. Inclusion and Community Relevance – in recognition that people's local knowledge and experience should be included in decision making that affects their lives, in order to build capacity and trust. Cultural events, facilities and organisations should be locally accessible and inspire people to share their stories and contribute to a rich cultural life.

4. Openness and Continuity – because in Greater Western Sydney, a sense of cultural continuity through practicing customs and passing down stories to new generations is vital to community and cultural identity.

5. Integration and Connectivity – in recognition that best-practice cultural planning integrates cultural matters into broader policies for public planning. It seeks coordination within local government departments, across State and Federal Government agencies, between regional arts organisations and other stakeholders to cooperate in achieving regional cultural outcomes.

6. Distinctiveness – in recognition that Greater Western Sydney is multi-centred region of cities, each with it's own distinct community culture and identity. These identities are

shaped by the unique combination of environment and historical developments, the diversity of people and their circumstances and the economic base of the place.

7. Creativity – because creative activities are a means of publicly recognising and celebrating the community's values, achievements and ambitions. Creativity is also the key to devising new ways of approaching complex contemporary urban challenges.

Strategic Directions

These six strategic directions provide the focus for the Regional Cultural Strategy, and a guide for future initiatives to respond to the cultural vision:

1. Achieve planning outcomes that originate from community values – and which encourage people's growth and potential. The wellbeing of Greater Western Sydney communities depends on the effective inclusion of their diverse views in public and urban planning processes. Over the next 15 years, our physical environment will change dramatically to accommodate 510,000 more people. Failure to account for the cultural trends that influence people's lives can result in urban development that diminishes social capital. Cultural planning offers insights and mechanisms for urban sustainability because at its core is the communication of people's values.

2. Arrive at distinctive and creative places – because a sense of place and the timely provision of physical 'hard' cultural infrastructure are vital ingredients in regional cultural development. Well-connected, appealing places, which proclaim the unique history and character of local areas, and cultural institutions that offer people a range of social and recreational opportunities, contribute to community wellbeing and our region's vitality.

3. Tell the region's diverse cultural stories – because the stories that people hear and tell, shape their expectations of a place. By engaging with art we can tell our own stories, portray our own sense of ourselves and directly communicate the region's diverse values, achievements and ambitions to the rest of the world.

4. Cultivate a creative regional spirit – because by nurturing the conditions that enable creativity to flourish, people have greater opportunities to participate in lively, self-renewing cultural life. This strategy focuses on 'soft' infrastructure - in particular, cross-disciplinary networks. It aims to promote cultural participation across a range of sectors such as education and health, and strengthen the creative regional community whilst building audiences for cultural activity.

5. Realise the region's creative potential – by supporting our creative hub, that is, the artists, entrepreneurs and arts workers for whom creative invention and interpretation is core business. Their skills and works are the 'soft' infrastructure necessary to sustain a vibrant and self-replenishing creative industry.

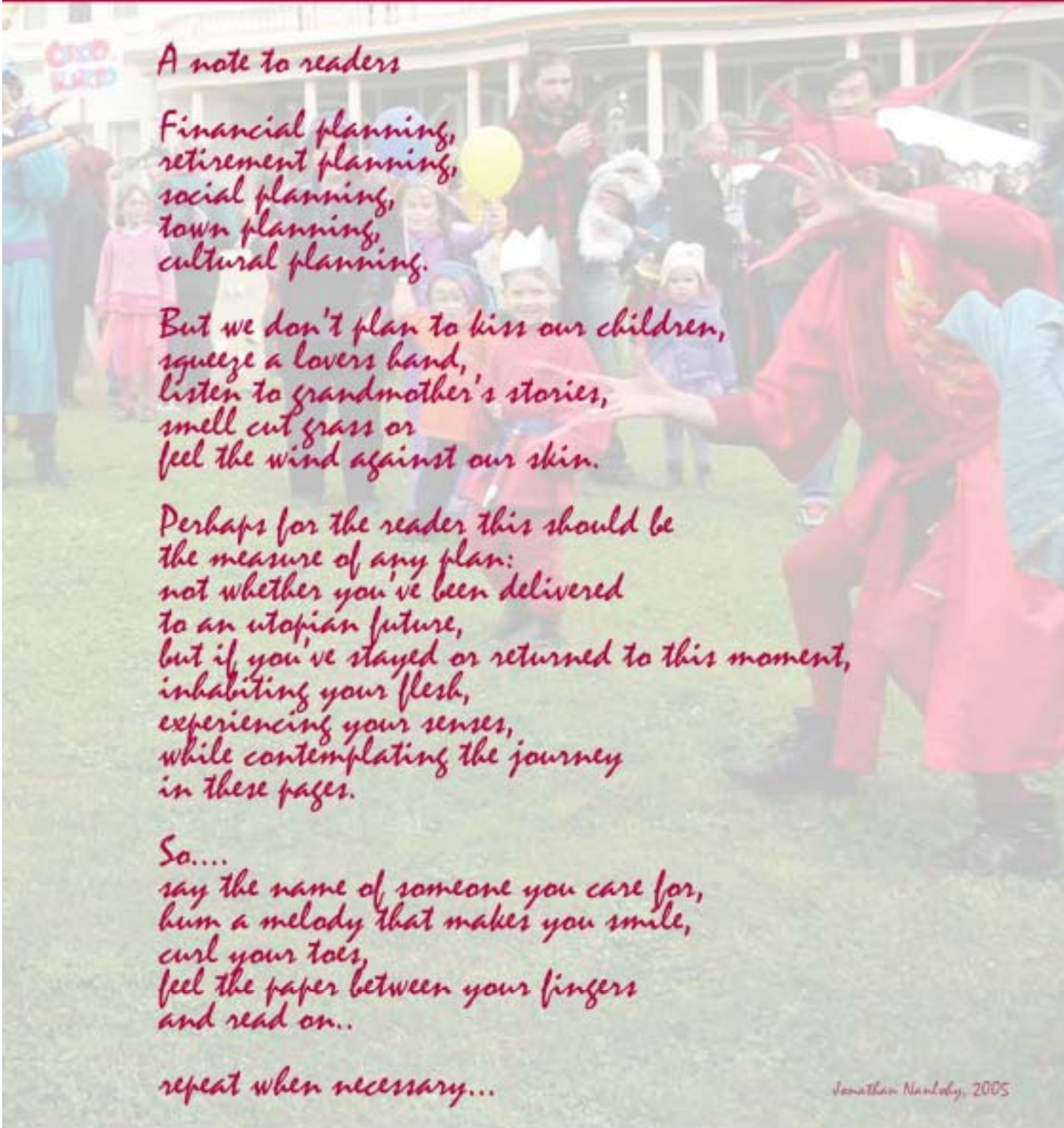
6. Secure equitable cultural investments in Greater Western Sydney – with commitments by State and Federal Governments to, firstly, address historical imbalances and backlogs in cultural infrastructure provision, and secondly, meet the new demands of growth and expansion of the metropolitan population. Policy responses must be appropriate to the cultures of Greater Western Sydney and should therefore be developed in partnership with local government, cultural organisations and communities.

Authoring Contemporary Australia



Photograph: John Skennar

...the neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, colour, music, plays, art, games, dancing, and between your garden bushes, passers-by break into song, theatre spills into public places, celebrate on



A note to readers

*Financial planning,
retirement planning,
social planning,
town planning,
cultural planning.*

*But we don't plan to kiss our children,
squeeze a lover's hand,
listen to grandmother's stories,
smell cut grass or
feel the wind against our skin.*

*Perhaps for the reader this should be
the measure of any plan:
not whether you've been delivered
to an utopian future,
but if you've stayed or returned to this moment,
inhabiting your flesh,
experiencing your senses,
while contemplating the journey
in these pages.*

*So....
say the name of someone you care for,
hum a melody that makes you smile,
curl your toes,
feel the paper between your fingers
and read on..*

repeat when necessary...

Jonathan Nandoly, 2005

1 Introduction

... windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, and between your garden bushes, passers-by break into song, theatre spills into public streets.

INTRODUCTION

Title

Authoring Contemporary Australia – A Regional Cultural Strategy for Greater Western Sydney

Purpose

The purpose of the Regional Cultural Strategy is to provide a forward looking, strategic framework for the cultural development of Greater Western Sydney. It articulates the region's cultural vision and objectives and brings together the different cultural activities of governments, cultural institutions and organisations, peak and regional bodies to a common cause. It aims to strengthen collaborative structures so that we can secure, and make best use of cultural resources in ways that enhance cultural opportunities for all Greater Western Sydney people.

The Regional Cultural Strategy also provides a coherent framework for regional advocacy and coordination. Furthermore, it is a call to collaborative action to the wider range of organisations and groups that contribute to the region's cultural development.

Greater Western Sydney councils have a reputation as leaders in innovative cultural development, being among the first in NSW to instigate cultural planning programs. They continue to play an important role in the region's cultural development and in partnership with Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) and Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC), are the primary focus of the Regional Cultural Strategy. The Strategy does not intend to replace local cultural plans, but rather, outlines processes to support the individual cultural planning policies of the fourteen Greater Western Sydney councils. It embraces culture in its widest sense, with a special emphasis on arts development as a channel to strengthening people's creative skills and literacy towards a rich cultural life.

WSROC's role is to coordinate and where appropriate, initiate key actions in the Regional Cultural Strategy. WSROC will bring together the various partners and convene network meetings to monitor and ensure the continuing relevance of the Strategy.

Rationale

“Cultural creativity is the source of human progress; and cultural diversity, being a treasure of humankind, is an essential factor of development.”¹

Our culture embodies the stories and creative spirit that gives us a sense of belonging to the community of Greater Western Sydney. Through heritage, arts and cultural activity, we are inspired to reflect, and exchange ideas, on 'who we are' and 'how we live', strengthening the social connections that contribute to a robust and vibrant community. Creative participation in cultural life is not only a fundamental right of individuals in all communities - it is conducive to personal fulfillment and progress².

¹ UNESCO, *The Power of Culture*, 1998.

² *ibid.*

As governments seek to build stronger, more engaged communities and better places to live, articulating the social and cultural dimension of public policy has gained prominence. The *Local Government (General) Regulation 1999* requires local government to prepare social and community plans to address the needs of residents, and ensure fair distribution of resources and opportunities. The Department of Local Government developed *Social and Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines* to assist councils to meet these requirements. More recently, the *Local Government Amendment (Miscellaneous) Act 2002* expanded the scope of activities that councils should include in their management plans, to “social, community and cultural matters”.

In 2004, the NSW Ministry for the Arts and the Department of Local Government released *Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government*. The Guidelines aim to raise the profile of cultural planning and assist councils to integrate cultural plans into broader management plans. Of the fourteen councils in Greater Western Sydney, three have recently adopted Cultural Plans, three are reviewing and rewriting their plans and eight are in the process of preparing cultural plans, developing a policy or appointing a dedicated cultural development officer.

Why is cultural planning important to local government?

Culture in its widest sense is about what matters to people and communities. It is about relationships, shared memories and experiences. It is about identity, history and a sense of place and belonging. It is about the different cultural and religious backgrounds found in most communities. It is about the things we consider valuable for passing on to future generations. It is our way of connecting the present with the past and the future³.

Culture has been described as having three interconnected dimensions⁴, as illustrated in Figure 1.

- i. A diversity of **cultural values** contributes to community sustainability and growth. Like biodiversity or economic diversity, cultural diversity involves complex and interdependent relationships;
- ii. Diverse interactions and **social exchanges** build cohesive communities by teaching mutual respect and consideration of different cultural conventions, experiences and cultural representations. The City is the physical setting for these exchanges. Through cultural activity, people make sense of the world, generate cultural meaning from their experiences and share ideas with others;
- iii. **Art making** is a vital cultural activity that empowers people with the skills, language and opportunity to participate in these cultural processes. The diversity of artforms across Greater Western Sydney reveal the many different ways that people communicate and interpret their experiences.

The essence of this broad definition of culture, is that culture resides in all human undertaking. It occurs through human interaction and the daily exchanges between people and places. It is made in ‘cultural houses’ including schools, galleries, libraries,

³ NSW Ministry for the Arts and Department of Local Government, *Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government*, 2004, p. 7.

⁴ Jon Hawkes, *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture’s Essential Role in Public Planning*, Melbourne: Victorian Cultural Development Network. 2001, p. 4.

museums and media, but also made in the streets, parks, shops, on public transport and in cafes, and appears in the cultural landscapes of where we live. It is our culture, this never-ending public process, which gives a city its identity that makes it distinct and special. It tells us ‘who we are’ and ‘where we came from’ and gives us our own place in history. Culture is not a pile of artefacts – it is us.

This broad definition appreciates that culture does indeed, just happen. However, since the duty of governance is enmeshed with the quality of people’s lives, all tiers of government – and councils in particular – play a role in providing opportunities and addressing barriers to participation so that a *healthy* culture can flourish⁵. Local cultural planning is a way of helping councils integrate and focus their efforts in all the areas that affect the quality of people’s lives. It is a way of linking those efforts with broader management plans and strategies.

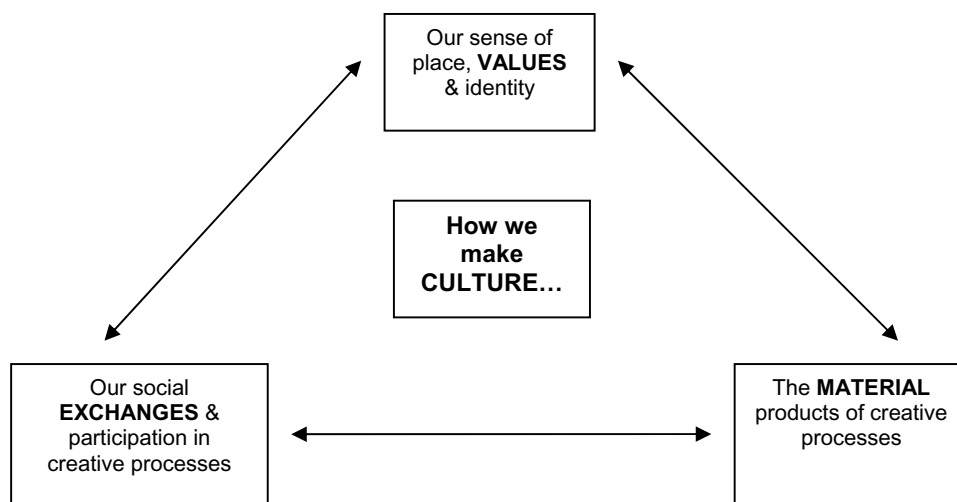


Figure 1- Interconnected dimensions of culture

Integration of cultural planning

With effective cultural planning, councils gain a clearer sense of a community’s aspirations and values. This in turn informs policy-making and planning decisions for the whole community. Cultural planning can provide ways of integrating and connecting the various strategic plans within council. When harnessed to local government’s strategic objectives, cultural planning can help councils tackle social exclusion, contribute to urban regeneration and crime prevention, create employment opportunities, build safer communities, improve community well being and encourage healthier lifestyles⁶.

The Cultural Planning Mandala (Figure 2) illustrates the relationship of culture to local strategic planning, by mapping the web of dynamic relationships and systems that shape a community. The Mandala is a flexible tool for inclusive public and urban planning and can be adapted to the management plans of any council or organisation. At the core of the Mandala – that is, central to the local government charter and management planning, and likewise, to the function of the city - is the cultural life of local communities.

⁵ Fairfield City Council, *Draft Cultural Plan Discussion Paper*, April 2004, p. 3-4.

⁶ NSW Ministry for the Arts and Department of Local Government, *Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government*, 2004.

Understanding culture – the habits and priorities of the people who create demand for services and resources - is fundamental to sustainable public planning. The Mandala demonstrates that an appreciation of how people live is central to a council achieving its strategic outcomes, whether they relate to environment (“health and livability”), infrastructure provision (“accessible and connected”) or good governance (“trust and confidence”).

The Mandala is a framework through which to consider how the community’s values are reflected in council decisions, and to imagine how a city’s cultural activities and facilities may contribute, via the six management plan themes, to meeting strategic outcomes that are empowering to the community.

For further discussion on the benefits of cultural planning, see *Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government*.

Why take a regional approach?

Adopting a regional approach to cultural development is not a new idea. This Regional Cultural Strategy drew upon the ideas, thoughts, questions and recommendations developed in numerous documents, discussion papers and forums over several years by individuals and organisations in the cultural and academic fields. The scope of this project spans the eleven WSROC councils, as well as the MACROC – Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils – areas of Camden, Campbelltown and Wollondilly.

During the 1990’s, pioneer cultural planners recognised a need for planning approaches that followed community patterns rather than local government boundaries. Later, the Creative Cultures program focused attention on Greater Western Sydney’s cultural needs through a broad agenda that included regional advocacy, brokering relationships and advising government on integrated cultural strategies. In 1999, the NSW Government introduced *A Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney*⁷ to achieve more equitable distribution of resources across the metropolitan region, at the same time giving expression to local differences. Artswest Foundation established a Regional Cultural Planning Coordinator to increase local government’s involvement in integrated cultural planning, a project now managed by WSROC.

Since 2002, several other State Government (or government funded) bodies with cultural agendas have focused their activities on Greater Western Sydney, including the Local Government and Shires Association, Community Cultural Development NSW, Museums and Galleries NSW and the NSW Heritage Office. In the same period, eight Greater Western Sydney cultural institutions benefited from a NSW Government capital infrastructure package of \$19.4 million.

Most of these activities are not formally connected. The Regional Cultural Strategy is a timely initiative, which seeks to coordinate these opportunities to deliver maximum benefits to Greater Western Sydney communities. For this reason, it has been produced in complement to local cultural plans and key regional strategies, including *FutureWest - Greater Western Sydney Regional Planning & Management Framework*.

⁷ NSW Ministry for the Arts and Office of Western Sydney, *A Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney*, 1999, p. 30.

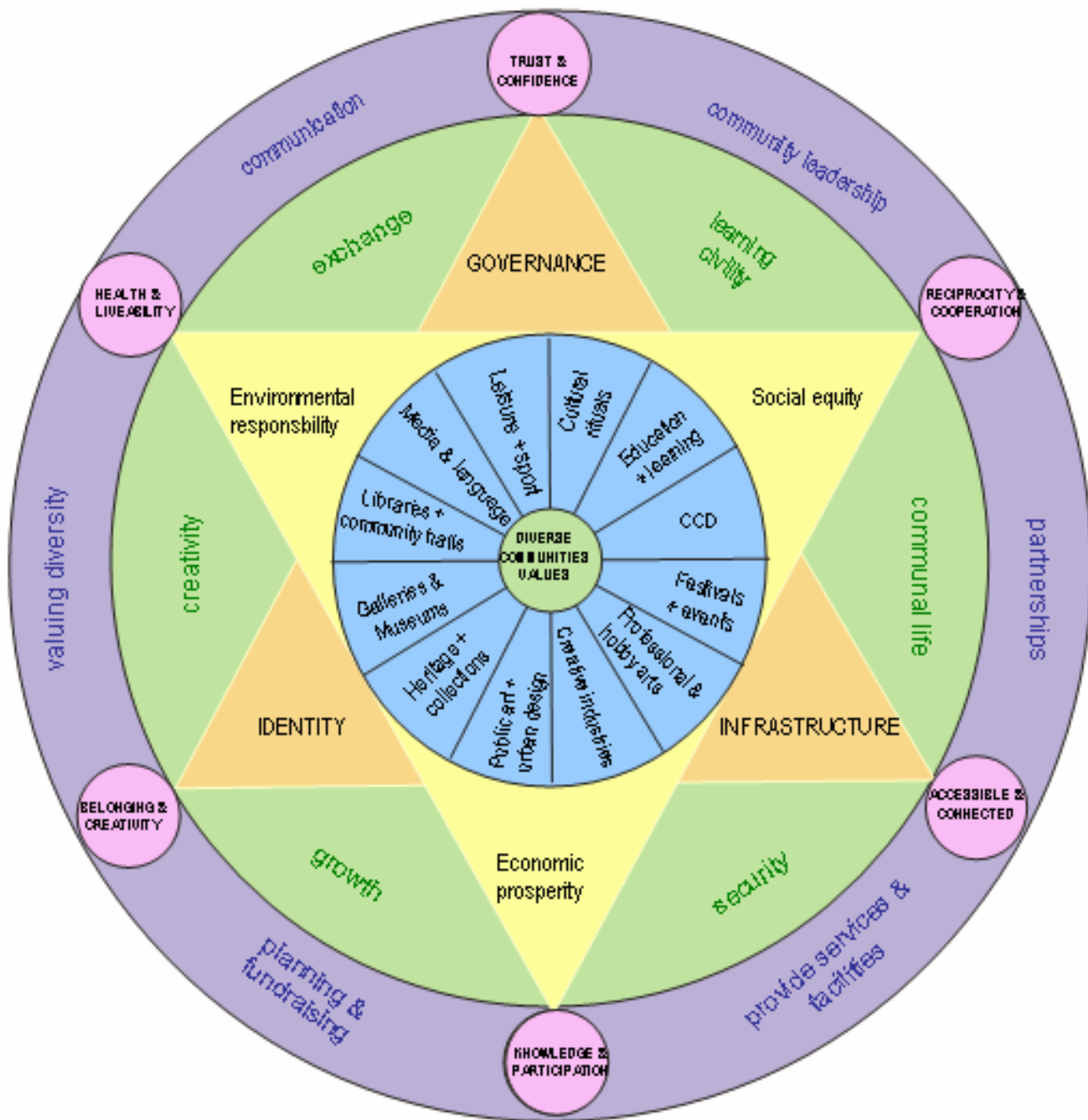


Figure 2 - Cultural Planning Mandala for a sustainable city - illustrating the web of interrelationships that shape the character of Greater Western Sydney.

The Mandala illustrates that an understanding of people's values plus effective policy responses is central to planning for a sustainable city that supports well-being. The triangle layers represent the components of a council's strategic plan, including triple bottom line considerations. The next (green) circular layer positions council's planning activities within the physical context of the city. The outer (purple) layer represents the policy context - the local government charter – while the small (pink) circles illustrate how desirable strategic outcomes can be achieved through an integrated cultural approach.

FutureWest is a framework driven by thirteen Greater Western Sydney councils in partnership with WSROC, to better manage growth and change in the region. It addresses issues such as the equitable provision and funding of infrastructure, support for diversity, protection of the environment and employment opportunities. *FutureWest* is founded on detailed studies of the social, economic and environmental dimensions of Greater Western Sydney⁸. These studies, and the development of *FutureWest* occurred concurrently with the research for the Regional Cultural Strategy. This Strategy has benefited greatly from the resulting cross-fertilisation of information, debate and ideas.

Process

Phase 1: Informing the process

(a) Convening professional networks

The basis of the regional cultural planning process was the cooperation of the fourteen local councils, cultural institutions and organisations, artists and cultural consultants, state agencies and peak bodies operating in Greater Western Sydney. WSROC established four structures (which meet quarterly) to facilitate information exchange, test ideas and ensure up-to-date clarity on key cultural issues:

- A **Reference Group** of local, regional and State cultural leaders to guide the project, chaired by WSROC's Cultural Development and Equity Spokesperson (an Executive Management Committee member from the WSROC Board);
- A **Cultural Planners Network** of cultural development professionals from each Greater Western Sydney council to provide technical input and advice on cultural matters;
- A **Heritage Planners Network** of strategic and heritage planners/ advisors from each Greater Western Sydney council to provide technical input and advice on heritage issues;
- An **Arts Managers Network** of directors, curators and managers from key arts venues across Greater Western Sydney to provide technical input and advice on arts development.

(b) Research and consultation

This involved researching strategic documents to understand existing approaches to cultural planning in Greater Western Sydney, and consultations with key stakeholders. Importantly, it also examined arts-based expressions of people's values and ambitions, such as local exhibitions, performances, film and community cultural development projects, because these intimate views are often missed by orthodox consultation methodologies. This involved:

- Analysis of cultural plans/ policies, social plans and community profiles and management plans from Greater Western Sydney councils;
- Analysis of strategic plans from peak cultural organisations operating in Greater Western Sydney;

⁸ Studies include: Urban Frontiers Program - UWS, *Western Sydney Social Profile*, 2002 and *Shifting Suburbs Population Structure and Change in Greater Western Sydney*, 2003; WSROC, *Regional Environmental Profile*, 2003; Department of Human Geography – Macquarie University, *Suburbs in the Global City: Employment Profile of Greater Western Sydney*, 2003; PPM and CSIRO, *Greater Western Sydney Regional Transportation Profile*, 2004; SGS Economics and Planning, *Infrastructure Financing Study*, 2004; *Greater Western Sydney Local Government Area Profiles*. These studies are available from the WSROC website www.wsroc.com.au/regional/futures

- Analysis of cross-disciplinary regional research (eg: economic and transport studies);
- Analysis of community consultations conducted in previous years by TeamWest Regional Priorities Group, Artswest Foundation and other regional projects;
- Interviews and consultation with cultural, social and heritage planners, arts managers, artist networks and groups, community-based cultural organisations and peak bodies.

Phase 2: Action learning

As a result of previous regional cultural projects and social planning requirements, a wealth of community data already existed. It was advised that communities may feel “over-consulted”. WSROC chose to produce a Discussion/ Consultation Paper to encourage focused feedback from councils and the community alike. It was vital that the Paper be informed by current experiential knowledge - not just desk research - so WSROC focused on being actively involved in a range of cultural projects.

The objective was to offer these projects a regional perspective, whilst participating in an ‘action learning’ environment that helped to deepen understanding of the complexities of Greater Western Sydney culture. Projects included:

- TeamWest Regional Priorities Group
- Artfiles Directory Advisory Committee
- Art-iculate Steering Committee
- Battle of Vinegar Hill Commemoration Committee
- Liverpool Living Streets Committee
- Liverpool “Arthouse” Artists Cooperative Advisory Committee
- UWS Arts Consultative Committee
- Penrith Cultural and Creative Industries Task Force
- Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government – Reference Committee
- Local Government & Shires Association - Western Sydney Cultural Steering Committee

Phase 3: Generating Strategic Options

The cultural priorities that emerged from phase 2 were collated into a Discussion/ Consultation Paper that was circulated in late 2003. The Discussion Paper sought to clarify key concepts, test provisional strategies, develop a shared vision and common agenda and identify limitations.

Phase 4: Developing Strategic Sub-projects

Responses to the Discussion Paper highlighted common issues including the need for practical tools for cultural planning. WSROC chose to address these common problems by initiating strategic sub-projects, to produce practical outcomes for councils that lasted beyond the life of the WSAAS project-funding for the Regional Cultural Planning Coordinator’s position. Sub-projects include: cultural planning workshops for local government and the Digital Cultural Atlas for GWS (both are partnerships with UWS Centre for Cultural Research).

Phase 5: Writing the Regional Cultural Strategy

The Regional Cultural Strategy has incorporated the range of stakeholder responses to the Discussion Paper.

Implementation

Phase 6: Implementation of the Regional Cultural Strategy

The effectiveness of the Regional Cultural Strategy requires stakeholder endorsement of the Strategy and partnerships to develop implementation plans:

1. Circulate the draft Strategy to the regional cultural planning Reference Group, Cultural Planners Network, Heritage Planners Network and Arts Managers Network, and proposed partners for comment (Oct - Nov 04);
2. Present the draft Strategy to the WSROC and MACROC (Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils) Boards for endorsement (Nov 04);
3. Disseminate the draft Strategy as widely as possible through Council and arts networks, inviting public comment, and encouraging other organisations to enlist as partners in the Strategy (Dec 04 - Feb 05);
4. Present the draft Strategy to Councils and other key stakeholders for endorsement, and to identify opportunities to integrate the Strategy into their plans (Feb – June 05);
5. Finalise and launch the Regional Cultural Strategy (Apr 05);
6. Bring together partners to agree upon and establish priorities and develop action plans;
7. Integrate the strategies and actions into the plans of councils, arts organisations and other partners;
8. Ensure the effective coordination and implementation of collaborative ventures.

Management

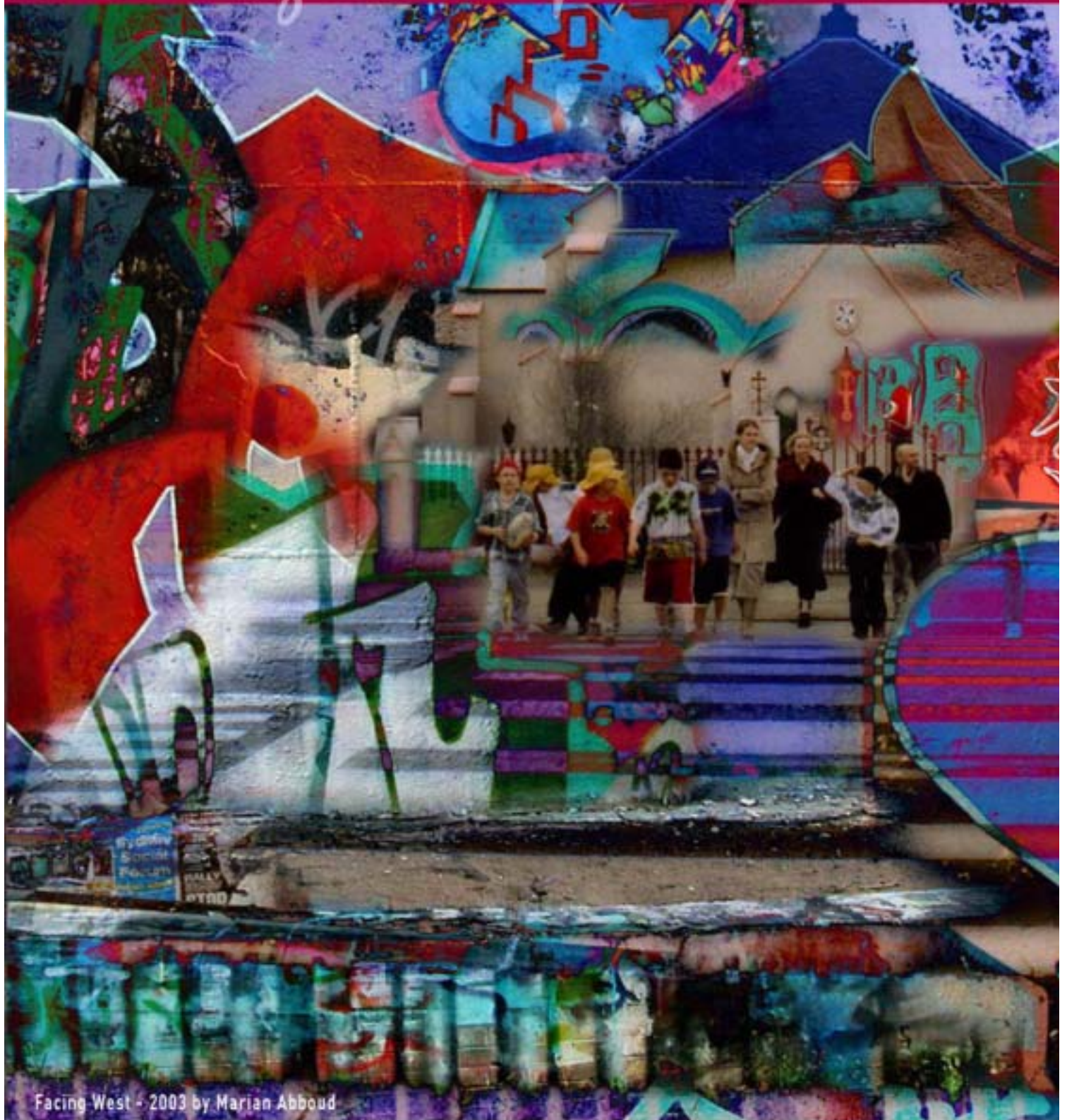
WSROC has secured 12 months funding from the NSW Ministry for the Arts to continue the Regional Cultural Planning Coordination (RCPC) project, with the core objective of coordinating the implementation and management of the Regional Cultural Strategy.

The following management framework provides the necessary basis for review and monitoring, evaluating and modifying the Regional Cultural Strategy over time. Effective management must consider:

- **Mechanisms for regional engagement** in the monitoring and review of cultural development in the region;
- **Coordination of partnerships and networks** to implement critical actions identified in the Strategy;
- **Performance indicators** at a regional scale to evaluate the progress and impact of the Regional Cultural Strategy. Regional measures of performance are being developed in line with *FutureWest - Greater Western Sydney Regional Planning & Management Framework*.

Refer to Section 5 - **Regional Cultural Management** for further discussion of the management approach.

Authoring Contemporary Australia



Facing West - 2003 by Marian Abboud

windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, and between your garden bushes, passers-by break into song, theatre spills into public places, celebrate a

THE CULTURES OF GREATER WESTERN SYDNEY

This section summarises the events, and educates the trends and endeavours that shape the cultures of Greater Western Sydney, as the basis for developing a Regional Cultural Strategy.

i. Cultural Continuity

Indigenous heritage and culture

Greater Western Sydney spans across the lands of the Darug, Tharawal and Gandangara peoples who have been living in the region for tens of thousands of years. The grasslands, woodlands and waterways and particularly the Hawkesbury-Nepean floodplain and wetlands were rich sources of food for Indigenous peoples.

Despite ethical and legal reasons for protecting Indigenous heritage, the Register of the National Estate lists some 23 Indigenous sites in the region, only five of which are protected or maintained. There are many more listings on the State Heritage Inventory, including very large areas of Holsworthy and parts of the Blue Mountains National Park. As more sites are identified by Indigenous peoples, they bring a community responsibility to protect the sites.

The ongoing practice of culture, passing on knowledges and the documentation of oral histories, invigorates the connection between Indigenous heritage and contemporary life. There is also a growing consciousness that Indigenous heritage and culture should be understood holistically in the landscape, rather than being managed as separate items, and this is reflected in the philosophy of **Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural Centre**⁹. Muru Mittigar is a tourism and local employment venture that honours the knowledge, culture and spirit of Darug country. A native garden nursery, bush tucker catering and artistic storytelling program through dance, music and painting, is the platform for both vocational training for Indigenous youth and community gatherings.

The Greater Western Sydney region sits within the boundaries of three local Aboriginal Land Councils – **Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council** at Mt Druitt, **Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council** in Liverpool and **Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council** in Wollondilly. These local Aboriginal Land Councils maintain cultural continuity and identity in Greater Western Sydney by working to return culturally significant and economically viable land to Aboriginal peoples as a fundamental ingredient to securing cultural, social and economic independence.

Greater Western Sydney (in particular Blacktown, Campbelltown and Penrith) continues to be home to the highest number of Indigenous people of any region in Australia, outside of the Northern Territory¹⁰. There exists in the region, because of its significant position within the Indigenous population of NSW, the opportunity to explore new ways of promoting Indigenous culture and heritage and increasing the opportunities of Indigenous people in partnership their local groups.

⁹ Muru Mittigar was established in 1998, and is located at the Penrith Lakes.

¹⁰ ABS 2001

Migration heritage

All people in Australia share the legacy of migration. Migration heritage is the legacy of people's experiences of leaving one country and culture, traveling, settling in and adapting to a new culture and place, and becoming familiar with it and its people, and continuing and adapting traditional culture¹¹.

Since 1788, we are all successive waves of migrants to Australia.

European settlement heritage

European settlement within the region began in 1788 - the same year that colonists arrived at Sydney Cove - when Governor Arthur Phillip establishing a viable site at Parramatta. Greater Western Sydney is the site of substantial contact - both resistance and reconciliation - between Indigenous groups and British colonists. As the colonists ventured ever westward from Port Jackson searching for fertile lands, they systematically blocked access to important indigenous food sources, and causing tensions with the Darug. Pemulwuy was a most prominent warrior who led Darug resistance against the colonists. Conflict continued on and off until 1805 when the first recorded act of reconciliation occurred between Indigenous peoples and the British settlers.

The **Parramatta Riverside Walk**¹² commemorates this significant occasion from the perspective of the Indigenous peoples. The public artwork is a visible landmark of the Aboriginal history of the area and stretches 800 metres from the River Cat terminal to Lennox Bridge.

As the site of Australia's earliest viable European colonies, Greater Western Sydney has retained nationally rare evidence of this history, from the expansion of settlements and agriculture, early roads and major engineering projects, through iconic artworks that contributed to national identity, to the expansion and urbanisation of the region. For example, **Elizabeth Farm**, the birthplace of the Australian wool industry, was commenced in 1793 and contains part of the oldest surviving European building in Australia.

Hawkesbury, Camden and Wollondilly contain rare evidence of early grant patterns and landscape character. The cadastral boundaries of **Pitt Town**, for example, one of the Macquarie Towns established in 1810, are still evident through ongoing rural land use.

Much of this heritage has elsewhere been lost to development on mainland Australia. There is concern that, due to rapid and extensive new housing development and general uncertainty about listing landscapes, many of Greater Western Sydney's culturally significant heritage landscapes will be lost.

Multicultural Heritage

Greater Western Sydney is the most multicultural region in Australia. It is characterised by abundant cultural, linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic diversity, with almost a third of the population having been born overseas and similarly, speaking a language other than English at home. The greatest arrival of migrants to the region occurred after WWII,

¹¹ John Petersen, Migration Heritage Centre, *pers.com*. 2004.

¹² Parramatta Riverside Walk, 1998, Artist - Jamie Eastwood. Parramatta is named for the local Barramattagul clan.

when Australia invited Europe to help to rebuild the nation following years of depression and war. More recently, the region has welcomed migrants and humanitarian entrants from Asian, Middle Eastern and African countries.

Migrant communities have invested generously in their new home, mobilising their specialist skills and limited resources to build communal places of worship and commemorative sites, social and sports clubs, childcare and aged facilities, and thus shaping the physical landscape. The social networks of culturally diverse communities are a vital ingredient in the cultural life of Greater Western Sydney. This important physical, social and cultural infrastructure continues to make Greater Western Sydney an attractive destination for new migrants to Australia.

Activist Heritage

Greater Western Sydney has a proud history of political activism. Since the 1930's, community action has often focused on securing basic public amenities and infrastructure to support a surging suburban population. Successful campaigns include *Beds for the West* to establish Westmead Hospital in 1980 (now one of the biggest health campuses in the nation) and achieving the University of Western Sydney in 1987. Other community action, such as opposition to the construction of the M2 Tollway in 1995, raised awareness of the ecological and Indigenous heritage significance of the northwestern suburbs, although protestors failed to modify the roads location or preserve heritage sites.

Arts practice has also been a domain of important community action and expression. In 1987, visual arts graduates from the University of Western Sydney mobilised to establish alternative spaces for contemporary art in the region. For eight years *Streetlevel* was a cooperative that showcased artists and performers from the region and, in doing so, it catalysed a new attitude and confidence in Western Sydney culture.

The Western Sydney Heritage Review¹³ identifies that the range of heritage in the region is not well understood. The primary focus of most heritage lists has been the architectural and historical value of built colonial heritage. Heritage listings do not reflect the diversity of cultural values, with particular gaps in Indigenous, migrant (esp, post WWII), 20th century industrial and moveable heritage, and in documenting the explosion of housing estates and subdivisions.

ii. Cultural Activities

The growth of Greater Western Sydney has occurred unevenly and, as is the case with other infrastructure and facilities, there is an historical backlog of cultural infrastructure provision. Alongside affluent neighbourhoods are some of the most neglected and disadvantaged areas in the State, inequities which are exacerbated by negative media representations of socially excluded groups.

Nonetheless, conditions of adversity have aroused ingenious and resourceful cultural practices in the region. Through creative means, communities articulate both their frustrations and their aspirations, in pursuit of a better quality of life. Artists maximise available materials and networks, and investigate their experiences through curious and gutsy amalgams of cultural traditions and contemporary techniques.

¹³ NSW Heritage Office, *Western Sydney Heritage Review*, 2004 (unpublished).

Much of Greater Western Sydney's arts and cultural activity springs from an exploration of three main themes: *place* – informed by artists' investigations of local history and their connectedness to the environment; *identity* – which sees artists negotiating a sense of belonging, continuing cultural customs, sharing personal and cultural experiences and fusing traditional and contemporary forms; as well as consciously tackling *social justice* and social change through art.

Community-based activities

Greater Western Sydney has a lively network of individuals and community organisations involved in local cultural activity. **Artfiles: The Arts Directory for Western Sydney 2004**¹⁴ lists approximately 500 community organisations, clubs and societies with an arts-activity focus. From hobby groups to professionally-facilitated programs, community-based arts activity provides a means of self-expression and transformation, skills development and socialising, connecting with cultural traditions and shaping new creative styles. Most councils support community-based cultural activity through project grants, local events and festivals and community cultural development (CCD) projects.

Cultural maintenance through ethnic organisations

When people migrate to a new country, they bring with them cultural customs such as cooking styles, celebrations, music, dance and art. Practicing these customs connects people to their cultural heritage and identity and imbues the unfamiliar environment with reminders of home. Cultural continuity makes it easier for people to settle in and adapt. Over time, their sense of belonging in a new environment strengthens, and they feel at home. Children may become the beneficiaries of cultural traditions, mediating between preserving the old and creating new practices that express their living heritage.

In Greater Western Sydney, clubs, religious organisations and migrant services are often the social hubs from which artistic groups emerge. The artists share a desire to maintain cultural traditions for their community, to express cultural identity and build community solidarity, as well as a personal interest to develop or pass on their creative skills.

Sometimes the cultural forms remain unchanged over many years.... St Raphael's German Dance Group was founded through the local church, almost 30 years ago. They are proud of their reputation for preserving traditional village dances, some of which are no longer practiced in Germany and Austria. These traditions are therefore kept alive almost solely in Greater Western Sydney. St Raphael's is committed to passing on traditional dance and music forms, through a youth group and performing at community festivals.

Sometimes the cultural forms evolve in the new environment... The founding dancers of Raices, a Latin American folkloric group, had performed with other clubs for many years before establishing the local network. After a year, they merged with a youth and children's dance group and developed a repertoire of folk dances from the Argentine region. Raices is a dynamic group; often adding new moves which they feel invigorate the essence of the original dances. For the members of Raices, their regular rehearsals

¹⁴ Information and Cultural Exchange, *Artfiles: The Arts Directory for Western Sydney 2004*, 2004.

and performances are fun social gatherings, a means of connecting with cultural traditions and fostering cultural knowledge and pride in their children.

The artistic traditions express cultural identity and nurture community connections.... The **Blacktown Migrant Resource Centre (BMRC)** works with emerging communities and supports them to direct their own cultural development programs. The BMRC recognises visual and performing arts as conduits to community development and cultural exchange. For example, during consultation with newly arrived Sierra Leone families for the **NESB Youth Exposed Project**¹⁵, the common need for a cultural performance group became known. As a result, the **Sierra Leone United Cultural Group for Peace** was formed. This cross-generational performance group sees elders teach younger members about their cultural traditions, and in doing so, they nourish community pride, knowledge and confidence. The Group also harnesses the energy of their traditional dance, song and performance as a vehicle to combat racist stereotypes and educate audiences about refugee issues. They have performed at community events and festivals in Blacktown and across Sydney including the New Years Eve Concert at Hyde Park 2002.

The BMRC provides a point of connection for many artist groups. It assists to develop the infrastructure necessary for self-sufficiency, such as regular rehearsal space and securing gigs. The BMRC assisted Southern Sudanese dance troupe, **Gugu**, to build up their experience and exposure in this manner, and they are now regulars on the Sydney metropolitan performance circuit.

Indigenous artists currently have limited formal opportunities to network in the region. The Indigenous Program Manager from **Community Cultural Development NSW (CCD NSW)** is organising a conference for 2005-06, aiming to identify the range of artistic skills, training, mentoring and networking opportunities for Indigenous artists. She is also researching the viability of a Greater Western Sydney Indigenous Artist Co-op and studio. **Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-op** represents numerous artists from Greater Western Sydney and is keen to establish a satellite venue in the region.

These cultural groups are an important ingredient in the cultural life and identity of Greater Western Sydney. They assist in the settlement process for emerging communities and build cross-cultural understanding. Together, they are the living heritage of the region, preserving cultural traditions whilst inventing new artforms through which to express contemporary identities and interpret their experiences. In many cases, their effect is quite localised, but large-scale festivals offer important opportunities for exchange and cross-fertilization.

Individual Artists

The **Artfiles Directory** lists around 1300 individual artists in the region, spanning digital art, environmental arts, Indigenous arts, literature and writing, performance, screen and broadcasting and visual arts craft and design. The **Blue Mountains Online Artist Register** features 344 artists, including urban designers, public artists and artist planners.

¹⁵ Blacktown Migrant Resource Centre, *Welcome to My World Youth Resource Kit*, 2003, funded by Western Sydney Area Assistance Scheme. CD available from Blacktown Migrant Resource Centre.

Greater Western Sydney is home to renowned Australian artists such as visual artists, Suzanne Archer and David Fairbairn who are represented in major public collections; Aboriginal author and recipient of the 1998 Human Rights Award Ruby Langford Ginibi; and actors Doris Younane and Khoa Do who have appeared in feature films and Australian television series'.

The region's artist landscape is also rich with emerging artists, including students at the University of Western Sydney and TAFE colleges, young hip-hop performers and aerosol artists, and newly-arrived artists who are seeking to reestablish their practice in Australia following overseas success, as well as amateur and hobby artists. Most artists in the region support their artistic practice with other employment, often in a non-arts related field.

Artist Groups

In addition to the ethno-specific cultural groups, Greater Western Sydney is home to a myriad of artist organisations, from community theatre companies and radio clubs, through visual arts and craft groups, writing societies and music clubs, to heritage and historical societies and multi-artform membership collectives. Regardless of their differing scale of activities or length of establishment, all these groups have two key objectives in common – to support the artistic development of their members and to encourage broader community involvement in arts and culture.

For example, the **Macquarie Towns Art Society** keeps its members in touch through monthly newsletters and offers regular workshops, demonstrations and field excursions. The Art Society runs the **Lennox Gallery** that features changing exhibitions of member's work and sells art, pottery and craft. Community involvement is encouraged through regular art classes for adults and children.

The **Penrith Symphony Orchestra** is a semi-professional organisation with a core of talented musicians who play the whole orchestral repertoire including symphonies and concertos. Professionals appointed to leading positions, such as the principal conductor, guide a consistently high standard of performance. The Orchestra aims to be accessible to the community. It offers affordable tickets and diverse programming, whilst the volunteer Board members actively break down barriers between the players and audience.

A number of local councils actively support newly-formed local artist networks, namely **Parramatta-Holroyd** and **Liverpool-Fairfield**. These councils facilitate regular meetings, mailouts, art market days and workshops to assist the professional development and networking between artists. Blue Mountains and Penrith councils provide funding and some administrative support to artist associations which are run by volunteer management committees.

The **Platypus Collective** is a membership group of young artists who span performance, literature and visual arts. It organises regular meetings and workshops and is currently establishing an arts space for its members. One of its ongoing initiatives is brokering the work of local artists for exhibition in the busy cafes and restaurants around Parramatta, and in corporate buildings.

Artist networks tend to be locally focused, so forging bridges between networks as well as individual artists is important to regional cultural development. The Artfiles Directory and website create a sense of a regional community of artists, connecting artists, arts organisations and community organisations with projects beyond their own geographical locations, and facilitating the exchange of information and sharing of resources. It also increases the community's knowledge and valuing of art and culture in Greater Western Sydney¹⁶.

Community Cultural Development (CCD)

A keystone practice in Greater Western Sydney, community cultural development (CCD) is a strategic and proven process for building confident, expressive communities. Exemplary CCD projects are undertaken by organisations such as **Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE)**, **CCD NSW** and **Penrith Regional Gallery & Lewers Bequest**, as well as a range of community services agencies, in partnership with local communities and groups. Through creative and social activity, CCD fosters a safe forum for people to share experiences, negotiate ideas and appreciate different frames of reference and knowledges.

CCD can interrogate cultural assumptions and transmit important social messages... *Happy Laps Habibs* is a short film made by 14 Arabic-speaking young people through a partnership with the **Motor Accidents Authority**, **Silent Cells** and **ICE**. Video editing and digital music workshops provided the artistic means through which young people explored the realities of road rage and mobile phone-induced accidents, speeding and peer pressure. They scripted, produced and acted in the film to bring home a serious message using humour and creativity.

CCD can unleash people's stories.... A series of textiles workshops with migrant women from Bangladesh, Egypt, China, India, Fiji, Pakistan and Lebanon, culminated in the exhibition *Silken Threads* at the **Parramatta Heritage Centre**. The women shared their migration memories and worked with an oral historian and artist to transform their stories into textile artworks. Traditional symbols merged with personal icons in screen-printed fabric drops and embroidered cushions. The project was a partnership with **CCD NSW** and **Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre**.

CCD can transform the ordinary... *Mechanix* captured the imagination of local residents and **Bankstown City Council**. **Urban Theatre Projects** created the performance, exploring life in a mechanised world. Community members brought skills in set design, metal fabrication, music, costume design, dance and acting, and it was their ideas that sparked the production's creative vision. The familiar City Plaza was transformed into a new world of wonder and possibility. The project was held up by the Mayor as a perfect example of "people in this community working together to create something wonderful for their fellow residents".

In Greater Western Sydney, CCD and contemporary art merge... When the **Penrith Regional Gallery & Lewers Bequest** came under new directorship, it was determined to reconnect with the local community. A key strategy was to apply CCD principles and mentor community curatoriums to generate exhibitions. In the development of *Time and Love: The Handcrafted Bedroom*, the curatorium conducted research and community outreach, met artists and selected the works, in a process mediated but not controlled by

¹⁶ Information and Cultural Exchange, *Artfiles 2003: A Comprehensive Evaluation*, 2003.

the Gallery. The exhibition design was an exhilarating display of the everyday and the extraordinary, with beds elevated off the floor and drawers of delicate embroideries suspended in space. It attracted 4,500 visitors, resulting in close associations with guilds and other membership groups, who now meet regularly at the Gallery.

CCD can build a better neighbourhood... Speed Street in Liverpool was identified as a problem area, with high crime, social isolation and a deteriorating environment. It became the focus of the **Living Streets** program that used CCD to bring residents out of their homes to reconnect with each other and their street. The unused “heart” of the neighbourhood, Dunbier Park, was revitalised by a community garden and public art, and now features mosaiced seating and barbeque produced in community art workshops. In just two years crime had halved and Speed Street became an active and cherished neighbourhood. The program is now in its seventh year, and provides a model for a new Living Streets project at Warick Farm.

Recent research undertaken by the Australia Council commends CCD as a valuable process for public planning. CCD exemplifies an inclusive sustainable public planning process, because at its core, is the communication of the values, experiences and habits of the very people who structure demand for urban services and resources. CCD can therefore join up community perceptions with government decision-making processes.

Greater Western Sydney is well placed to implement an inclusive regional planning approach that sees planners and policy-makers draw on the CCD expertise of our cultural organisations, artworkers and council staff.

Festivals and Events

Most councils host local celebrations recognising national events, such as Australia Day, NAIDOC Week, Children’s Week, Local Government Week, Seniors Week, Youth Week, Heritage Week and Christmas, as well as an annual local festival. Councils often also support community-initiated festivals and neighbourhood events that celebrate local culture and involve community partners, for example, the **Back to Guilford Festival**, one of the region’s oldest community festivals that attracts 15-20,000 people each year.

Some community celebrations have evolved into large-scale festivals, such as the **Cabramatta Moon Festival** that transforms Freedom Plaza, Cooks Square and John Street into an open-air pavilion of performances, parades, stalls and activities. Other areas host festivals and events that target their unique environmental, economic or cultural characteristics. The **Fruits of the Hawkesbury Festival** and the **Hawkesbury National Fiddle Festival** capitalise on the areas colonial heritage, agricultural activity and local crafts and interests. **Hawkesbury City Council** has developed an online guide for planning a safe and successful event, and offer small grants for local events. The Blue Mountains **Songlines Festival** combines the areas twin identities as the state’s first City of the Arts and a City within a World Heritage Park.

The inaugural 2003 Western Sydney Writers Festival, **Homeword**, was organised by the **New Writers Group** based in Guilford. It aimed to provide local writers – song writers, poets, rappers, performing artists, scriptwriters, fiction and non fiction writers – of all ages and backgrounds to showcase and share their work. Homeword offered a forum for writers to explore new ideas and stories, opportunities to collaborate with other artists,

and professional development workshops to hone their skills. It aims to become an annual event for the region.

In 2004, **Blacktown Arts Centre** initiated ***Western Front – Contemporary Art from Western Sydney***, a collaborative visual arts program that spans multiple venues across the Sydney, to interrogate global challenges and contradictions. It aims to be a biannual event that brings together a range of partners to showcase contemporary artists from the region.

Greater Western Sydney also participates in Sydney metropolitan events and festivals. Parramatta Riverside Theatres regularly hosts events for the ***Sydney Festival*** and (former) ***Carnivale***. Since 1999, Parramatta has presented the ***Sydney Indigenous Film Festival*** showcasing the talents of Australia's emerging and celebrated Indigenous filmmakers during NAIDOC Week. In 2004, the event expanded to an Indigenous Arts Festival that combined film with music, visual arts, dance, storytelling, performance and spoken word, offering more opportunities for creative collaborations between Indigenous artists and groups, to explore personal, political and community cultural issues.

The ***Sydney Writers Festival*** has a strong presence in the region. It regularly programs major events in Greater Western Sydney, in partnership with regional arts organisations such as **ICE**, **Blacktown Arts Centre** and **Parramatta Riverside Theatres**, and supports local satellite events such as the ***Fairfield Writers Festival***. The ***Sydney Biennale*** is currently negotiating to hold exhibitions and artist residencies in the region.

Greater Western Sydney is home to the ***Auburn International Film and Video Festival for Children and Young Adults***. The festival was a CCD initiative of the **Auburn Community Development Network** in 1998. The festival program combines multimedia workshops for young people with curated film programs and international artist exchanges. Award winners in each category are showcased at film festivals around the world.

Food

Agriculture is an important activity in Greater Western Sydney, with the region growing 90% of Sydney's fresh produce. Maintaining a wide choice of healthy food at a reasonable cost is vital to ensuring the continued good health of the community. Major agricultural products include perishable vegetables, poultry, flowers and cultivated turf. Monthly farmers markets and the **Hawkesbury Harvest Farmgate Trail**, promote the region's agricultural resources and celebrate rural lifestyle.

Waves of migration have brought a myriad of new farming techniques and crops, as well as cooking styles, eating patterns and foods to Greater Western Sydney. Specialist grocery stores stocking familiar ingredients, along with cafes and restaurants, form cultural clusters in the region and have become spontaneous meeting places.

In Cabramatta, tourists can book on guided Food Trails and discover the secrets of Vietnamese and Laotian cooking – where to find the freshest ingredients, who specialises in pho and where to indulge in Vietnamese banquets. Parramatta is well known for its restaurant strip along Church Street, where diners can choose from Korean, Japanese and Malaysian food, through to Indian, Italian, Turkish, Greek, Lebanese and modern Australian style cooking. The restaurants offer al fresco dining so

Church Street comes alive with shoppers mingling with diners, and people meandering down after a show at the Riverside Theatres, whilst car loads of Parramatta Eels supporters cruise by cheering. The atmosphere is lively with a sense of occasion and people are open and friendly.

Place Making and Public Art

Greater Western Sydney is emerging as a multi-centred region of cities. Each city will serve local needs and likewise provide a network of specialised leisure, sporting, cultural, economic and education opportunities to the whole regional community. Each place – each village, neighbourhood, locality, centre - has its own unique community culture and identity. These identities are shaped by the environment, historical developments, the diversity of people and their circumstances and the economic base.

For the communities of Hawkesbury and Blue Mountains (described as ‘the City within a World Heritage Park’) local identity is characterised by an ethos of environmental protection. They also identify with the colonial heritage of their areas. Blue Mountains residents, for example, are driven to preserve the unique identities of their 26 towns and villages through which the story of early European exploration and settlement unfolds. Likewise, Camden and Wollondilly residents are proud of their agricultural heritage and nominate the rural lifestyle and picturesque landscapes as defining characteristics of their place.

Other local government areas are defined primarily by their community relationships and make up. Fairfield and Auburn, two of the most ethnically diverse areas in the world, nominate people and culture as local assets, ‘celebrating diversity’ and promote ‘many cultures, one community’.

Bankstown as ‘a City of Progress’ and Blacktown ‘Growing with Pride’, embrace the developing built form and urban character for the opportunities they bring to local communities. Holroyd promotes its identity as a city ‘Built around People’. Baulkham Hills is characterised as ‘the Garden Shire’. Liverpool is the ‘City of Choice to Live, Learn, Work and Play’. Positioned at ‘at the heart of Sydney’ and ‘Sydney’s second CBD’, Parramatta emphasises that it was Australia’s first viable European settlement and continues to be an economic powerhouse and global city.

Through these local statements of identity, which are shaped by residents’ relationships to their natural and built environments, recognition of diverse cultural communities and pride in local heritage, the everyday picture of Greater Western Sydney as a multi-dimensional region of cities becomes clear.

People will identify with many diverse communities at the same time, linked through common characteristics such as Indigenous kinship, ethnicity, age, class, religion and occupation. In a local government context, the communities share the common physical geography of the local area, but are made up of a diversity of interests and cultures.

In Greater Western Sydney, there is a growing acceptance that our places are imbued with social and symbolic meaning. Several Councils, including Parramatta, Holroyd, Fairfield and Campbelltown, have strategically included artists on urban design teams to define the cultural landscape through public art and design, making visible the stories and culture of their localities.

The ***People Places in Western Sydney – Urban Improvement Project*** (2002-03) saw WSROC working with local government in the development of public space in four town centres – Auburn, Cabramatta, Blacktown and Carrington Place in Katoomba. The project emphasised the value of working closely with local people, and demonstrated how to engage a multidisciplinary team that includes public artists, cultural and design professionals, engineers and social planners, to get high quality results on the ground. It showed that public space is about people and their needs, their local character and identity – not just the physical form.

iii. Major Cultural Facilities

Neighbourhood Centres

Each local government area has neighbourhood centres and community halls available for hire. They can be used for meetings, workshops, launches, performances, and range in capacity from a meeting hall for 20 people to 1500-seat auditoriums and function centres.

Historically, these centres have been underutilised by the community, because the hire fee and poor public transport options have made them inaccessible, particularly for arts-based activities. However, new multi-purpose-built community hubs, such as the **Castle Hill Library, Information and Community Centre** are offering accessible and inclusive cultural opportunities for the whole community.

This new Centre provides a wide range of library services, including local studies and a virtual Reference Library. The building also provides services to support home businesses, students and people engaged in life-long learning, as well as remote services to facilitate access to information and communication in the community. There is a joint foyer and community information area, a range of meeting rooms, a self-serve refreshment area, casual reading areas, a dedicated and individual group study areas, a dedicated youth space and children's space and storytelling area.

Libraries

Libraries are moving towards a more formal 'learning centre' role, providing entry points to cultural participation, information and technology and social exchange. Libraries have developed innovative programs to build collections and host events that capture the interest of diverse communities. Information and communication technology training and access, including classes for seniors, are provided by most libraries. Libraries offer meeting spaces for arts groups, and **Liverpool City Library** also features an exhibition space offering professional opportunities for emerging local artists.

In 2001, the **Whitlam Library** (Fairfield City Council) initiated the ***Living Library Program*** to strengthen its relationship with Cabramatta's diverse communities through a series of performances and discussions. In 2003, the Library was energised by dancers from the South American community, Khmer musicians, photographers, historical film and picture lovers, and participants in oral history projects. By forging these community relationships, the Library is able to source relevant new material for the local studies collection and stimulate further community collaborations.

Museums, Historical Societies and Historic Collections

Museums, heritage places and collections provide people with a meaningful connection to their past and lived experiences, and assist with maintaining traditions and cultural practices. They anchor peoples understanding of how places and communities came to be and are tangible expressions of our identity. They enable stories to be preserved, shared and (re)interpreted by others, providing a deepened sense of belonging and attachment to the community.

Greater Western Sydney is home to a diverse range of museums, galleries and collecting institutions, including regional museums (**Liverpool Regional Museum**), social history museums (**Fairfield City Museum**), house museums (**Rouse Hill House**), heritage centres (in Wollondilly and Parramatta), a science museum (**Sydney Children's Museum**), theme-museums (**Museum of Fire** in Penrith, **Belgenny Farm** in Camden) and historical societies. **Museums and Galleries NSW** has identified at least 60 across the region, not including those in private ownership¹⁷. These places and their collections are integral to the identity of Greater Western Sydney, and in turn, intensify our understanding of the historical development of NSW and Australia.

Camden Museum was developed by the local Historical Society and continues to be run by its well-organised membership of volunteers. They care for a collection of over 3,000 objects, photographs and maps, which tell the story of the town of Camden and the surrounding district. Museum exhibitions explore Indigenous heritage, early land grants and the establishment of Camden town, social history and the economic development of the area through agriculture and industry. Researchers have access to the collection and extensive reference library. Camden Museum is recognised by Museums and Galleries NSW as a best practice model for volunteer-run museums, with a committed and active membership and a well-assessed and significant collection.

Fairfield City Museum features a permanent local history exhibition and a historical village. The village brings to life Greater Western Sydney from 1900 to the 1930s through soundscapes and reconstructed and heritage buildings, including a schoolhouse, a slab hut, weatherboard cottage, blacksmith's shop and local store. The collection of around 2,500 objects relate to Fairfield's history from early to mid twentieth century, reflecting themes such as agriculture, government, domestic life and migration. The Museum's Curator of Social History is also interested in documenting moveable heritage items of significance to ethnic community groups, to better understand Fairfield's recent migration history. In keeping with best practice, maintaining these items within the places of greatest meaning is of utmost importance in this process.

The role of Greater Western Sydney museums in reflecting back and celebrating with the community, it's founding stories, has gained prominence in recent years. **Museums and Galleries NSW** (MGNSW) undertook a sector-wide needs assessment for Greater Western Sydney, and prepared a three-year strategy that prioritises best practice, community relevance and advocacy¹⁸. As part of this strategy, a Museums Advisor will be working with **Blacktown Bicentennial Museum** at Riverstone, and nine museums will take part in the MGNSW's Museums Standards Scheme that focuses on collection management and sustainability.

¹⁷ Museums and Galleries Foundation, *Needs Assessment*, 2002.

¹⁸ Museums and Galleries Foundation, *Western Sydney Strategy 2003-05*.

In addition to those in museums and heritage places, culturally significant collections are held by individuals, families and communities who are important custodians of moveable heritage.

The need to preserve and better document moveable heritage in Greater Western Sydney has been identified by both the Western Sydney Heritage Review and the Migration Heritage Centre.

Art Galleries and Arts Centres

The three regional public art galleries – **Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Penrith Regional Gallery & the Lewers Bequest** and **Campbelltown Arts Centre** - are pivotal institutions, icons of Greater Western Sydney creative energy where people incubate ideas, connect with new networks and exchange artistic skills. Their programs are multi-disciplinary and consciously connect with regional communities by unpacking the important social issues affecting them, and celebrating personal and regional achievements. Recent state government capital infrastructure funding to each of these arts centres will enable them to respond effectively to the changing cultural needs of the region's population.

Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre has a dynamic exhibition program that positions issues of local interest in a contemporary regional, national, even international context. The Centre operates in an increasingly multi-disciplinary space, offering art and health courses, a nursery where native plants are seeded and grown, and interpretation of local heritage through contemporary art. It has also received funding for a children's playground designed by prominent Australian contemporary artist Mikala Dwyer.

Since 2002, **Penrith Regional Gallery & the Lewers Bequest** has concentrated on developing exhibitions and public programs with a distinctly regional and local attitude. By honing in on the people, place and histories of Penrith and Western Sydney, and by highlighting the significance of the Gallery's collections and unique site, it has re-established vital community links and interest. A strategic shift to generating 'in-house' exhibitions (rather than importing touring shows), as well as offering education outreach and workshop programs has increased the Gallery's visitation, promotions and income generation. The Gallery is highly regarded for producing programs that bring together contemporary practice, community cultural development and art history and scholarship, as demonstrated in the exhibition *Anita and Beyond*¹⁹.

Anita and Beyond was a mix of social history, personal memories and contemporary art, remembering the life of Anita Cobby. Seventeen years after her rape and murder in Blacktown, the community is still deeply affected by her story. The exhibition was developed by a community curatorium that included Anita's parents and aimed to 'tell personal stories that examine the realities of life after violence, in an attempt to heal'. Over the period of the exhibition, there were 17,450 visitors to the Gallery, representing a 400% increase in attendance figures.

From 1988 to 2003, **Campbelltown Arts Centre** operated as a regional art gallery that served well the cultural needs of the residents of Campbelltown. However, rapid population growth and diversification has driven a philosophical shift in the meaning of

¹⁹ "Anita & Beyond" was a partnership project between Penrith Regional Gallery & the Lewers Bequest, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre and a community curatorium.

cultural products are how they are made in the region. This shift has unleashed a spectrum of possibilities and creative initiatives that redefine the place and practice of contemporary arts in South-West Sydney.

The Arts Centre focuses on engaging local and regional communities with multidisciplinary contemporary arts practice that integrates visual arts, performance and community cultural development practice to develop programs that respond to ideas and issues that emerge from the community. The Arts Centre will also commission national and international artists to produce new works in Campbelltown and provide opportunities for emerging artists within the region to develop new skills and networks.

Fairfield City Gallery and **Blacktown Arts Centre** support predominantly local arts activity. They specialise in textiles art and digital art/ multimedia respectively, and both galleries are building dedicated community access spaces to address an urgent shortage of exhibition spaces across the region.

In addition to these public galleries, Greater Western Sydney has a number of community exhibition spaces, local galleries run by art societies (which primarily show members' work), and private galleries clustered in the Blue Mountains area.

Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural Centre exhibits and sells work by Aboriginal artists from around Australia. The Centre is visited by inbound tourists, and aims to expand its exhibition space and performance program to offer more employment to local Aboriginal artists.

Art Collections

The regional galleries in Greater Western Sydney hold permanent collections of contemporary and historical art. Collections tend to be themed according to specific periods of Australian art history, and often include works of national significance that depict the local area, notable local artists and donations.

Penrith Regional Gallery & the Lewers Bequest boasts an outstanding collection of Australian art from the 1930's to 1980's that covers the development of Modernism in Sydney and New South Wales. Critical components of the Gallery's collection are its splendid heritage gardens and historic buildings.

Campbelltown Arts Centre's permanent collection features more than 700 works of art. The Centre collects contemporary Australian art of national significance, and includes work by Rosalie Gascoigne, John Coburn and Marion Borgelt. The Centre also has a substantial collection of Indigenous art that is representative of much of Australia. Artists include Yvonne Koolmatrie, Emily Kngwarreye, Gloria Petyarre, Gordon Bennett, the late Maxi Tjampitjinpa and the late Robert Ambrose Cole.

South Western Sydney played a major role in the historical development of the nation and continues to contribute to Australia's artistic identity. The story of the region's exploration and colonisation unfolds through a collection of colonial prints and paintings, including Joseph Backler. Another unique strength of the collection is work by artists from the Campbelltown and Macarthur area, including Elisabeth Cummings, John Peart, Roy Jackson and Savandhary Vongpoothorn.

A number of Councils also have collections featuring work by local artists. **Blacktown City Council** has acquired many artworks, primarily through the Annual Blacktown City Art Exhibition, and this permanent collection is displayed throughout Council's Civic Centre. The **University of Western Sydney Art Collection** focuses on work by renowned Australian artists. The UWS Acquisitive Sculpture Award and Exhibition supports the creation of large-scale site specific outdoor sculpture which enhances the campus environment. The award aims to establish closer links between the University, artists and industry, and encourages local businesses to invest in public art.

Theatres and Performing Arts Centres

Parramatta Riverside Theatre, the **Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre** and the **Hills Centre** are the major performance venues in Greater Western Sydney. These venues showcase national and international performing art companies alongside a suite of local community productions, functions and workshops.

Parramatta Riverside Theatres offers a full theatre season along with comedy, orchestral music, jazz, cabaret and contemporary dance. Riverside is a major venue of the **Sydney Festival**, in 2004 hosting the world premiere of *Stone Sleeper*, a moving performance that merged music, poetry and Bosnian dance in a story of cultural resilience and archaeological mystery. It also catered for family audiences with the Flying Fruit Fly Circus' *Skipping on Stars* and presented five other Sydney Festival events.

Riverside Theatres hosts **Western Sydney Dance Action** (WSDA) the only contemporary dance organisation in the region. In addition to presenting a season of dance works by independent artists at the Theatre, WSDA conducts CCD programs and masterclasses for emerging dance artists from Greater Western Sydney. WSDA recently became incorporated and is focused on developing a sustainable business structure, strategies for audience development and a strong local program.

Like the visual arts venues, Riverside's program features contemporary art-CCD projects that connect strongly with local communities. As part of **Carnivale, Urban Theatre Projects** presented *india@oz.sangham*, which explored what it means to be Indian in Sydney. The ideas and experiences recounted by members of Sydney's Indian communities were brought together through a CCD process. They defined the content and feel of the work with professional artists, and performed in the final event that permeated the different spaces of Riverside Theatres.

Writing for theatre is also supported by Riverside Theatres. In partnership with **Information and Cultural Exchange** it presented *Elastic*, a program of ten-minute dramas by six new writers who delve into the complex realities of suburban life. *Elastic* was the fifth 10x6 initiative, a project which sees emerging writers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds developing their scripts with experienced dramaturgs, directors and actors, and then delivers a season of powerful contemporary theatre.

The **Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre** showcases a range of national theatre and musical groups. The Centre has a specialty teaching focus and its studios are used to capacity by the **Penrith Conservatorium of Music**. It offers classes in Music Therapy, Speech and Drama, Early Childhood Music and Youth Choir. It is currently the

venue manager for **Q Theatre**, whose resident professional company, **Railway Street Theatre**, has been included in the extensions for the Centre.

New performance spaces have also been included in the extensions to **Campbelltown Arts Centre**, **Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre** and **Blacktown Arts Centre**.

The region's major cultural institutions do more than present art; they have evolved to perform multiple roles in community development, mentoring and networking. However, this handful of pivotal organisations must meet the needs of almost half of Sydney's population. Despite their exemplary work, the community's demand for creative working spaces, professional guidance, peer support and audience development, exceeds the capacities of our institutions. Recognition and long term commitment to our pivotal cultural organisations must be secured for the cultural life of the region, and the social and economic development outcomes that flow from it, to flourish.

Entertainment Venues

Major club venues such as the **Rooty Hill RSL Club** and **Penrith Panthers** offer a range of international acts, well-known Australian celebrities and cabaret shows. The potential for these clubs to collaborate with arts institutions and organisations is being explored.

iv. Education

The Department of Education and Training's (DET) **Arts Unit** is based in Westmead, with two Regional Arts Coordinators covering the Western Sydney and South West Sydney regions. They coordinate dance, drama and music festivals, public speaking competitions and visiting artist programs, organise arts camps and intensive workshops for talented students, and run an arts grant program.

Innovative programs and partnerships have been established between schools, and with external organisations. For example, **Weaving Words** sees Year 10 and 11 students mentoring Year 6 students to create drama and poetry pieces culminating in performances for local schools. Another drama program works with **Railway Street Theatre Company** and links preliminary course drama teachers and students with student mentors from the **University of Western Sydney**. The program is funded by **Wentworth Area Health Service**, so the drama workshops result in a series of vignettes addressing health issues. These are performed at the Youth Festival at **Q Theatre**.

In 2003, **Museums and Galleries NSW** researched and piloted a Schools Access Strategy in Greater Western Sydney. This study involved DET, local high schools, museums and galleries, and demonstrated how creative art practice, and galleries as learning environments, could achieve specific learning outcomes across the whole curriculum. This project strengthened the relationships between individual schools and galleries and produced a series of useful resource material.

The **University of Western Sydney** offers a range of arts courses through the **School of Contemporary Arts** and **School of Communication and Design**. The Werrington campus has excellent facilities including studios and a theatre. The **Centre for Cultural Research** focuses on the relationships between social and cultural change, local cultures, and the transformation of communities, places and localities. It specialises in

developing innovative, wide-ranging, creative and reflexive research relevant to local communities, in collaboration with government departments, cultural institutions and community organisations.

UWS is committed to regional community engagement and this unique principle informs its teaching, research and development programs. Through the newly formed **Arts Consultative Panel**, which comprises the relevant heads of school, directors from regional arts venues, local and NSW Government representatives, the University seeks to open up practical pathways for students to apply their creative skills in industry projects, and collaborate with professional artists and organisations.

A wealth of research conducted in recent decades demonstrate that an arts-rich education for children and young people develops the skills and capacities – such as communication, self awareness, social skills, planning and design skills - needed to build a viable Australian society. Furthermore, high quality arts experiences as a student can spark lifelong appreciation and involvement in arts.

v. Creative Enterprise

Cultural Tourism

Enterprising groups have harnessed the cultural strengths of their local community and environment through cultural tourism. **Cabramatta Food Tours** and **Hawkesbury Harvest** are two long-established initiatives that attract local, metropolitan and statewide visitors who seek a unique and memorable experience. The colonial and rural heritage of Wollondilly and Hawkesbury are tourist magnets, and the Blue Mountains promotes its world heritage park status and sustainable tourism activities. **Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural Centre** in Penrith attracts inbound domestic and international tourists.

The **Parramatta Heritage Centre** offers an excellent model for tourist information centres. It is located within museum/ gallery complex, in the busy Parramatta CBD. Paid and volunteer staff assist visitors to develop a full program cultural activities that reveal the history and culture of Parramatta.

Arts-business partnerships

Corporate support for the arts has been slow to take off in Greater Western Sydney, although the **Western Sydney Business Awards** include an arts-business partnership category. The new strategic direction of **Artswest Foundation** driven by the business community, is a channel to increasing private sector involvement in the creative and cultural life of the region. Innovative research is also occurring in the region, which seeks to broker projects between community service organisations, businesses and cultural institutions.

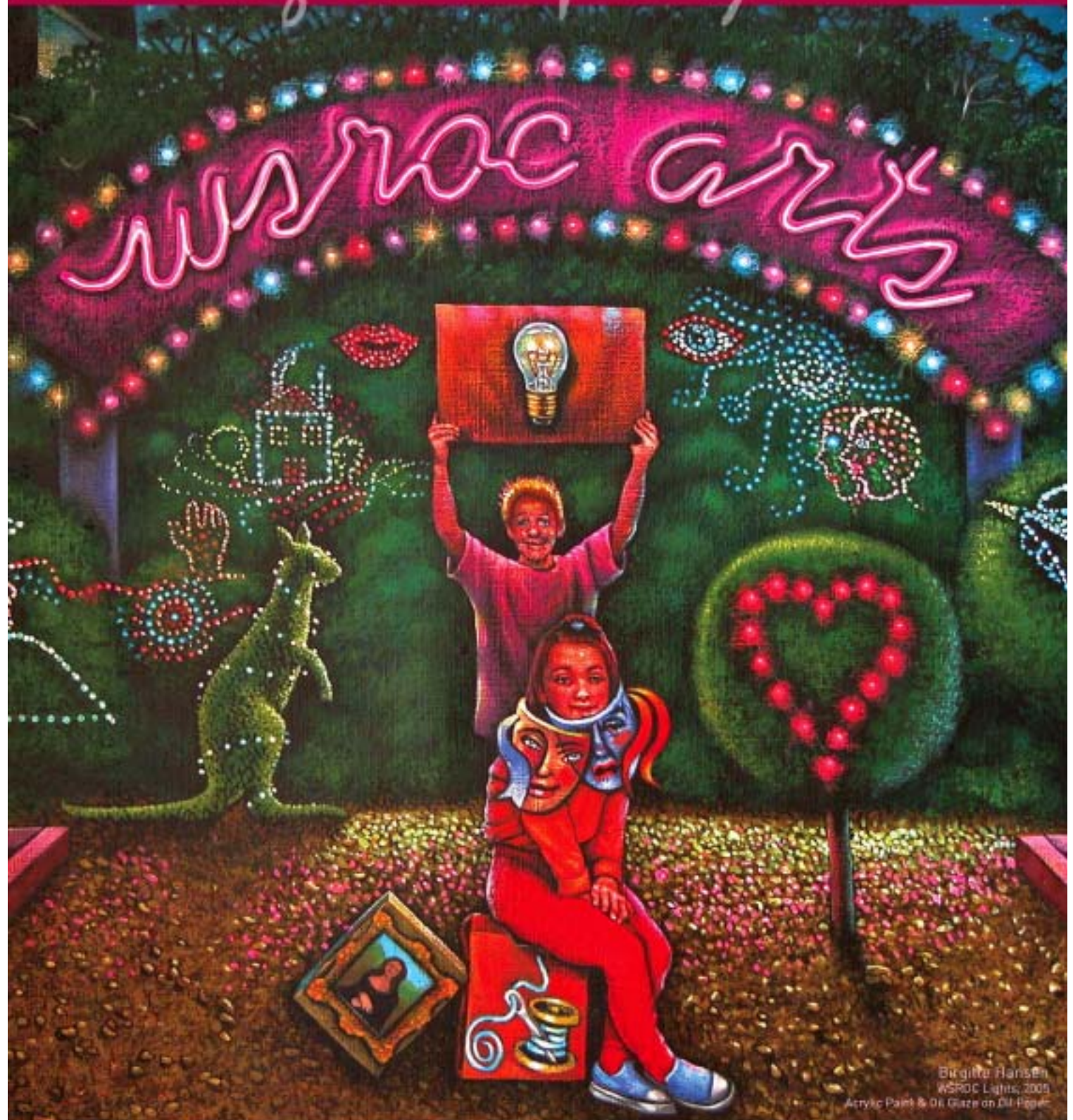
vi. State Cultural Institutions

The *Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney* requires all state cultural institutions, festivals and major organisations to put in place marketing strategies for Greater Western Sydney. While some have implemented excellent projects and partnerships with Greater Western Sydney organisations, such as the **Sydney Writers Festival**,

Sydney Opera House Studio and **Sydney Festival**, most have not considered the region seriously.

The **Powerhouse Museum's** regional museums program is well respected in Greater Western Sydney, assisting volunteer-based museums such as the **Wollondilly Heritage Centre** to build their research and curating skills. The development of **Bella Vista** also benefited from the Powerhouse Museum's expertise. A partnership between the **Museum of Contemporary Art, Casula Powerhouse** and **Penrith Regional Gallery** aims to facilitate arts/ business/ community partnerships in Greater Western Sydney.

Authoring Contemporary Australia



Birgitta Hansen
WSRAC Arts, 2009
Acrylic Paint & Oil Glaze on Oil Paper

windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, colour plays in fountains, and between your fingers, passes by break into song, theatre spills into public spaces, celebrate a



Visions in Culture

Flickering against closed eyelids,
conscious and unconscious,
our cultural vision is
sharing our dreams.

Can you feel it?
The pulse in your temple,
life's blood journey revealed
momentarily,
from heart to mind
then to hands
we make this thing,
this vision.

Forming it,
it forms us.
Breathing it,
it breathes us.
Listen to its breath
we seek its reassurance
like watching your child sleep,
the future known and unknown.
Promise and uncertainty
flickering against closed eyelids,
sharing dreams.

All is well.

Jonathan Nandley, 2005

3 Regional Cultural Vision

Windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, colour, music, plays, art, films, community, and between your garden bushes, artists by break into shop, theatre spills into public spaces, celebrate a

REGIONAL CULTURAL VISION

A Cultural Vision for Greater Western Sydney

By the year 2030, we see that:

Greater Western Sydney is the author of contemporary Australian life. Here, diverse socio-cultural, economic and environmental complexities converge and are worked out in the dynamics of everyday community life. This fertile mixture arouses debate that forges new ways of thinking and adds to a bank of creative skills and knowledges.

People in Greater Western Sydney lead fulfilling, healthy and creative lives. A myriad of cultural activities bring to life the experiences and customs of the region's diverse communities, inspiring creative participation that opens up new social exchanges and nourishes cultural understanding and respect.

Greater Western Sydney Councils lead the way in best-practice cultural planning and continue to play a key role in the region's cultural development. Public planning benefits from the strategic application of community cultural development (CCD) processes that exemplify inclusive, sustainable planning and policy development.

Increased civic participation strengthens people's sense of attachment to their communities and neighbourhoods. Here, in this multi-centred region of cities, each place resonates with its own distinctive rhythm. Familiar vistas and historic places are protected, significant collections documented and cared for, whilst public art proclaims the region's diverse heritage and contemporary cultures, achievements and aspirations.

State and federal government and private investment frame local government's role in the cultural development of Greater Western Sydney. Government support is in line with the region's rapidly growing population, providing ongoing funds for cultural infrastructure, staff and programs that are relevant to the needs and interests of Greater Western Sydney communities.

An accessible network of complementary creative spaces across the region supports all forms of creative endeavour – spaces for people to enjoy, produce and debate, exhibit and perform, archive and research, art. The region's cultural organisations and artist co-ops are networked, and can effectively mobilise resources, professional expertise and training to develop creative skills and access communication technologies.

The importance of the region's diverse heritage, arts and culture in Australia's cultural development is well known, and the stories are interpreted in arts practice and broadcast the media. So too are the innovations of the region's artists and institutions in forging a distinctive and sophisticated arts culture.

The region retains its skilled, creative graduates because our education institutions work in concert with pivotal arts organisations to provide increasingly 'hands on' opportunities for students. This opens up new professional networks and graduates can secure guidance and seed grants to establish artist run initiatives and other projects.

Cultural and creative industries contribute to the regional economy. A myriad of businesses demand creative skills and culturally diverse knowledges, which translates into targeted training and employment opportunities for artists within the region. The business community invests in sponsorships and partnerships with cultural organisations and artists.

The people of Sydney's Greater West are proud of their culture. They cherish their diverse heritages and lifestyles, nourish each other and their environment, and confidently pass on these values to their children.

Guiding Principles

These principles will guide decision making at the regional level. They reflect the unique cultural dynamics of Greater Western Sydney:

1. Sustainability - Urban sustainability requires that public and urban planning entails a rigorous understanding of the culture – the values, experiences and habits - of the very people who structure demand for services and resources, and likewise, and appreciation of arts and ethnic diversity.

Cultural investment should nourish a vibrant and creative culture and secure opportunities for the benefit of generations to come. Nurturing a creative Greater Western Sydney culture that abounds with diverse knowledges, fresh ideas and skills, will contribute to developing sophisticated new approaches to regional sustainability.

2. Dynamism and Diversity - in recognition that diverse systems involve complex and interdependent relationships, which maximise stability, growth and responsiveness to change.

It is through diverse social interactions and cultural exchanges that we negotiate and affirm our social bonds and express individual identities. We grow mutual respect between communities by learning to appreciate different cultural conventions and understanding how historical representations have shaped present-day relationships.

3. Inclusion and Community Relevance - in recognition that people's local knowledge and experience should be included in decision-making that affects their lives, to build capacity and trust in the community.

Cultural events, activities, facilities and organisations should be locally meaningful and accessible and inspire people to share their stories and contribute to a rich cultural life. A keystone practice in Greater Western Sydney, community cultural development (CCD) is an inclusive process for building confident, expressive communities.

4. Openness and Continuity - in recognition that openness and continuity are key to building robust communities who enjoy the benefits of a fertile cultural life.

In Greater Western Sydney, a sense of cultural continuity through practicing customs and passing down stories to new generations is vital to maintain community and cultural identity.

5. Integration and Connectivity - in recognition that best-practice cultural planning integrates cultural matters into broader policies for public and urban planning. It seeks coordination within local government departments, across State and Federal Government agencies, between regional arts organisations and other stakeholders to cooperate in achieving regional cultural outcomes.

Cultural planning aims to enhance people's sense of connection to each other, to their neighbourhoods and region. Connectivity also refers to people's access to communication technologies, their social relationships and ability to 'get about' at a local level. Furthermore, it refers to the fluid creative approaches of the region's cultural institutions, which dissolve disciplinary hierarchies and merge contemporary arts practice with sociology and CCD.

6. Distinctiveness - in recognition that Greater Western Sydney is multi-centred region of cities, each with its own distinct community culture and identity. These identities are shaped by the unique combination of environment and historical developments, the diversity of people and their circumstances and the economic base of the place.

Distinctiveness is an outcome of working with communities and responding to their specialised local knowledge to inform urban design, facilities planning and tourism development, rather than just reproducing generic or all-purpose plans. Studies of cities worldwide demonstrate that residents, visitors and skilled workers are attracted to places with a distinctive character and lively, engaged community.

7. Creativity - in recognition that creativity is not just the motivation for producing art, it is the key to devising new approaches to complex contemporary urban challenges.

Creativity is a quality that must be must be valued and nurtured. Access to the necessary resources to *be* creative, supported by a culture that fosters curiosity, collaboration and connectedness, are essential to building social capital and meaning. In Greater Western Sydney, creative activities are a means of publicly recognising and celebrating the community's values, achievements and ambitions.

Strategic Directions

These six strategic directions provide the focus for the Regional Cultural Strategy, and a guide for future initiatives to respond to the cultural vision:

1. Achieve planning outcomes that originate from community values – and which encourage people's growth and potential. The wellbeing of Greater Western Sydney communities depends on the effective inclusion of their diverse views in public and urban planning processes. Over the next 15 years, another 258,000 homes, new roads and other physical infrastructure will be built in Greater Western Sydney to accommodate 510,000 more people. Failure to account for the cultural trends that influence people's lives can result in urban development that diminishes

social capital. Cultural planning offers insights and mechanisms for urban sustainability because at its core is the communication of peoples values. It offers the tools of community cultural development (CCD), cultural impact assessments and cultural indicators to transform orthodox systems.

2. Arrive at distinctive and creative places – because a sense of place and the timely provision of ‘hard’ physical cultural infrastructure are vital ingredients in regional cultural development. Well-connected, appealing places, which proclaim the unique history and character of the local area and offer people a range of social and recreational opportunities contribute to our wellbeing. Key to this strategy is establishing a network of cultural facilities that support people to produce, contemplate and be delighted by arts and culture. Furthermore, public art can enhance the enjoyment and meaning of the built environment. These facilities should be included in the masterplans for both new and established areas.

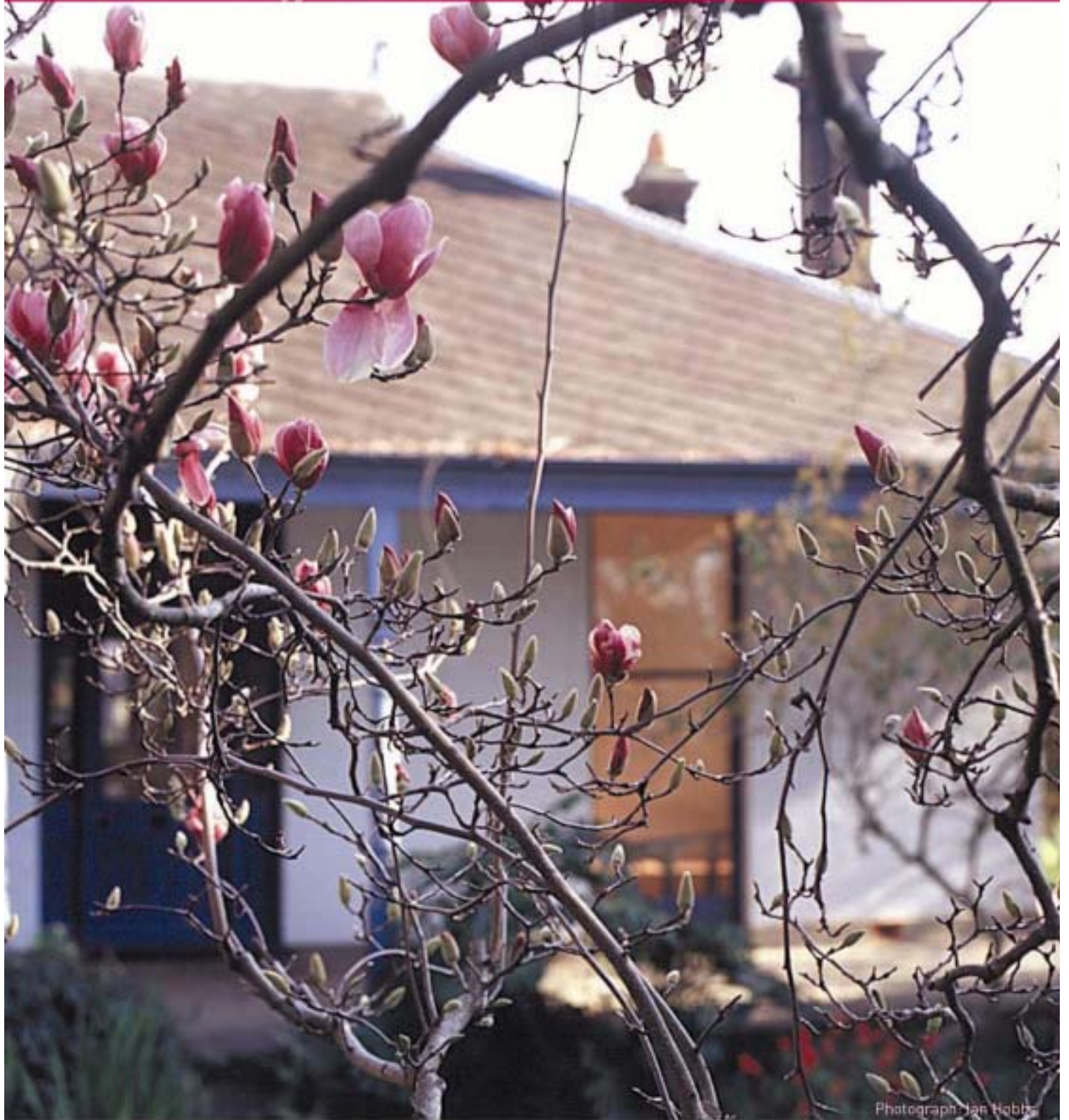
3. Tell the region’s diverse cultural stories – because the stories that people hear and tell, shape their expectations of a place. This strategy aims to bring forth the diverse stories, heritage and practices that shape our regional identities to promote a deeper understanding of Greater Western Sydney people and places. By engaging with art we can tell our own stories, portray our own sense of ourselves and directly communicate the region’s diverse values, achievements and ambitions to the rest of the world.

4. Cultivate a creative regional spirit – because by nurturing the conditions that enable creativity to flourish, people have greater opportunities to participate in lively, self-renewing cultural life. This strategy focuses on the ‘soft’ infrastructure - in particular, cross-disciplinary networks - necessary to the region’s cultural development. It aims to promote cultural participation across a range of sectors such as education and health, and strengthen the sense of a creative regional community whilst building audiences for cultural activity.

5. Realise the region’s creative potential – by supporting our creative hub, that is, the artists, entrepreneurs and arts workers for whom creative invention and interpretation is core business. This strategy focuses the ‘soft’ infrastructure necessary to sustain a vibrant and self-replenishing creative industry. It includes assisting our artists to fulfill their creative potential and pursue opportunities in viable sectors; encouraging cultural entrepreneurs to start up businesses; strengthening regional marketing networks and resources; and harnessing unique cultural tourism opportunities.

6. Secure equitable cultural investments in Greater Western Sydney – with commitments by State and Federal Governments to, firstly, address historical imbalances and backlogs in cultural infrastructure provision, and secondly, meet the new demands of growth and expansion of the metropolitan population. Policy responses must be appropriate to the cultures of Greater Western Sydney and should therefore be developed in partnership with local government, cultural organisations and communities. Priorities include addressing the social and cultural impacts of urban development, consolidation of the region’s flagship cultural institutions and planning for their expansion and emergence of new organisations, as well as touring the stories of the region.

Authoring Contemporary Australia



Photograph: Jan Hobbs

windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, colour, music, plays, dancing, out, windows, and between your garden bushes, piazzas, by breath into shops, theatre spills into public places, celebrate a

A cultural framework has been prepared as the basis for ongoing implementation of the cultural vision for the region over the next 25 years. It brings together the work of local government, regional cultural institutions and organisations, state and federal government departments and peak arts bodies, and sets them in the context of the cultural vision.

This framework outlines key regional cultural development issues and describes policies to achieve the six strategic directions discussed in the previous section, namely:

1. Achieve planning outcomes that originate from community values
2. Arrive at distinctive and creative places
3. Tell the region's diverse cultural stories
4. Cultivate a creative regional spirit
5. Realise the region's creative potential
6. Secure equitable cultural investments in Greater Western Sydney

Each strategy is discussed in turn and is supported by Action Plans in the form of tables that consolidate the proposed details for achievement. The tables state long term goals, short term outcomes, critical actions and propose partners as the basis for implementing the Regional Cultural Strategy. Critical actions aim to build on regional strengths, increase cultural involvement and secure effective regional cultural investment. The tables demonstrate a clear link between the regional issues identified through consultations and research, and the strategic responses.

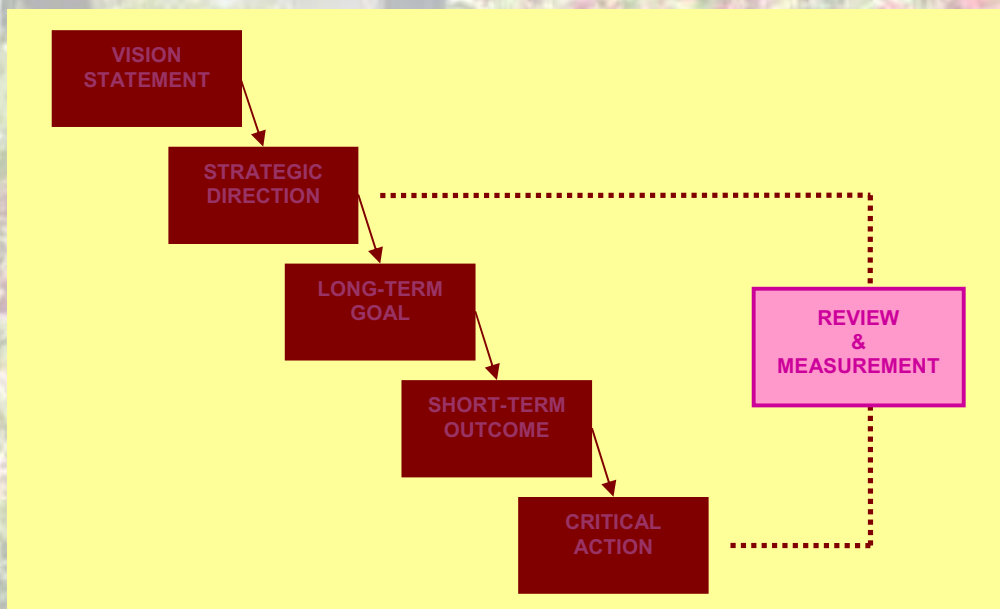
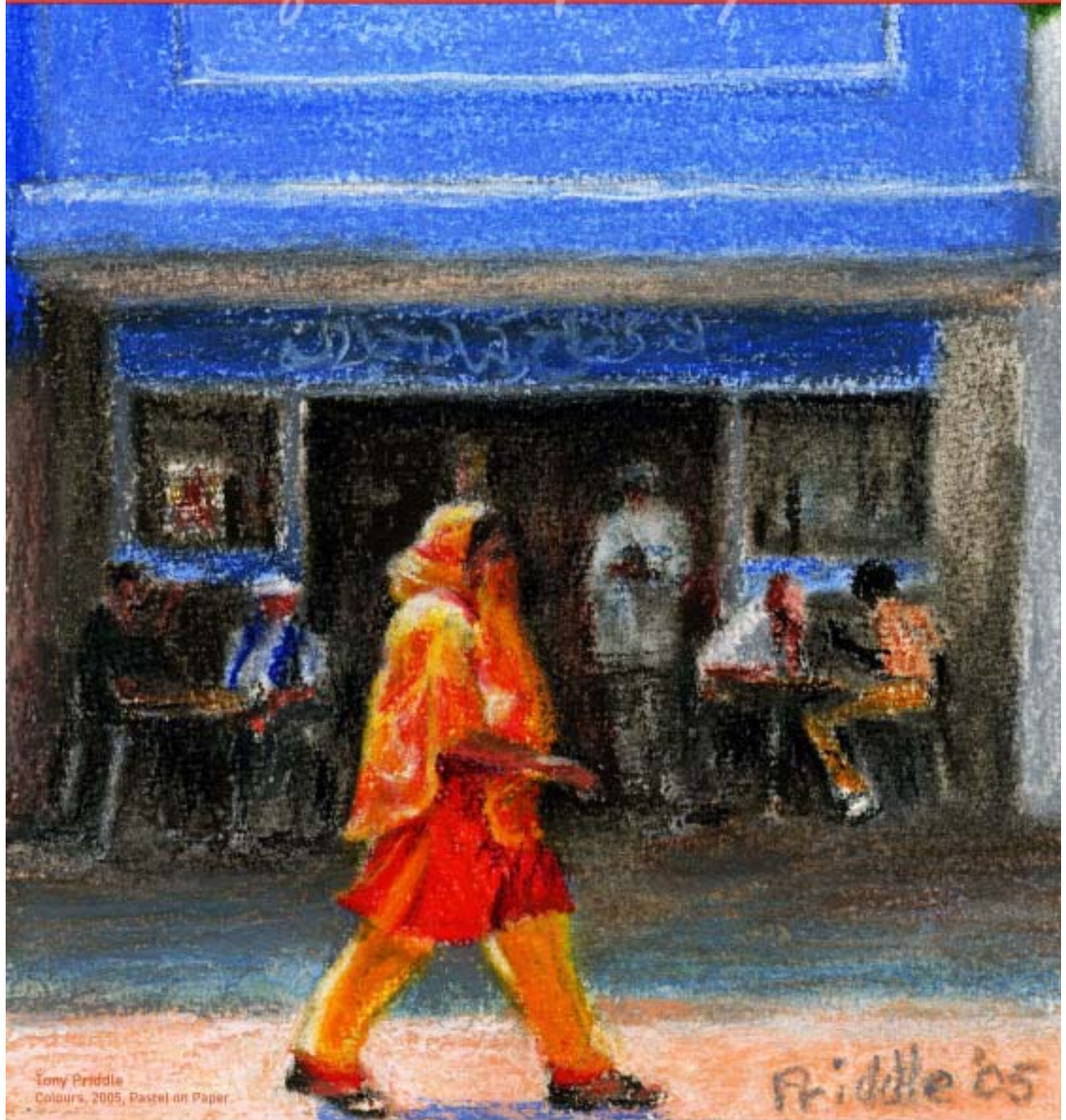


Figure 3 - The Regional Cultural Planning Framework

4 Regional Cultural Planning Framework

Windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, colour, music, plays, art, games, dancing, art, windows and bridges over artful waters, artists by street into shops, people spill into public places, celebrate a

Authoring Contemporary Australia



Tony Priddle
Colours, 2005, Pastel on Paper

windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, colour, music, plays, dancing, and, between your arched fingers, dancers fly through into public places, celebrate a

In ten years time
Bindis have disappeared from lawns
Bare feet are fashionable
toes stretch and curl
exploring the grass

Jonathan Nantahy, 2005

I Achieve planning outcomes that originate from community values

arduous, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptors sleep in park
and between your garden bushes, dancers by street car song, theatre rolls into public places,

Achieve planning outcomes that originate from community values

Aim

This strategy focuses on the importance of forward-thinking, inclusive public policies as an ingredient in regional cultural development. It aims to forge institutions that restore social capital by exemplifying a generosity for community in their public and urban planning and organisational management policies. This includes orienting council activities to encourage people's growth and potential, to build capacity and trust in the community and empowering people to participate in decisions affecting their lives.

Most planners acknowledge that sustainable, effective public and urban planning necessarily includes local people in the planning process. Cultural planning and community cultural development practices offer planners and decision-makers an effective means of synthesising (often intangible and diverse) community values into broader planning processes.

Background Issues & Opportunities

This strategy arises from the need to consider the following issues:

- Greater Western Sydney is an increasingly complex arena, demanding a sophisticated and creative, forward thinking approach to urban planning and public policy development. Urban sustainability and planning is not only a matter of economy, ecology and demography. Rather, issues of housing, transport, work, education, recreation, health and water usage are a product of, and respond to, broad cultural trends and consumption practices.
- It follows that in Greater Western Sydney, urban planning and public policy development should entail a rigorous understanding of the values, experiences and habits of the very people who structure demand for services and resources, and likewise, an appreciation of arts and ethnic diversity. However, orthodox tools for gathering this information – social impact assessments and community consultations – often report the most obvious views and fail to capture the depth of community perspectives. Furthermore, even if values-rich social and cultural information is received, the mechanisms to integrate it into urban plans and public policy are poor.
- Over the next 15 years another 258,000 homes, new roads and other physical infrastructure will be built in Greater Western Sydney, to accommodate 510,000 more people. These dramatic projections underline the need for planners to understand the community's values, effectively assess how the changes will affect their lives, and ensure responsive policy directions and design outcomes, in a genuine attempt to evenly distribute the benefits of urban development. Failure to account for how people live can result in development that is disabling to communities, accentuating social polarisation, isolation and loss of identity thereby diminishing social capital. We need refreshed planning and policy approaches that improve understanding of, and respond to, the ways local communities function and thrive.

A society's values are the basis upon which all else is built. These values and the way they are expressed are a society's culture. The way a society governs itself

cannot be fully democratic without there being clear avenues for the expression of community values, and unless these expressions directly effect the directions society takes. These processes are culture at work²⁰.

- Orthodox institutional systems and structures tend to privilege technical knowledge over community experiences; economic gain over environmental responsibility and economic measures over social indicators. Achieving the balanced integration of cultural, economic, environmental and social dimensions will require profound and fundamental shifts in the way our institutions think and act – enabling the culture of our institutions to respond to the culture of our communities.

Strategy

Cultural planning offers insights and three important mechanisms for sustainable Greater Western Sydney growth. Cultural planning exemplifies an inclusive public and urban planning process because at its core, is the communication of the values, experiences and aspirations of local people. Best practice cultural planning seeks coordination within local government departments, across State and Federal government agencies, between regional arts organisations and other stakeholders to cooperate in achieving regional cultural outcomes. It aligns cultural investment with broader planning strategies to meet the diverse challenges of the region.

- The first mechanism is **community cultural development (CCD)**, a process that invites people to investigate social issues and forge a collective creative response. There is international evidence of CCD's effectiveness in building confident, expressive communities.

CCD fosters a safe forum for people to explore and creatively workshop ideas and test their assumptions, allowing the emergence of new knowledges and consensus on core issues. It synthesises a tangible creative outcome (such as public art, a theatre performance or collection of stories) – essentially the community's platform – that enables their opinions to be transported into government decision-making processes, pointing to ways of improving urban planning and public policy outcomes. For these reasons, the Australia Council commends CCD as a valuable process for government agencies whose decisions affect communities²¹.

Greater Western Sydney is rich with CCD expertise. Councils and cultural organisations, arts institutions, research centres and community services agencies alike undertake exemplary CCD projects. As such, the region is ideal for implementing an inclusive public and urban planning approach that sees planners and policy-makers draw on the CCD expertise of our cultural organisations and council staff.

- The second mechanism to ensure development leads to positive urban design and social outcomes is **cultural impact assessment**. These studies would assess the effect of a proposed development on the community's quality of life and identity, the aesthetics, histories and associations of a place, and people's ability to act and interact with each other. These studies would be conducted for significant developments and lodged as part of the development application process,

²⁰ Hawkes, *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability*, op.cit., p. vii.

²¹ Deborah Mills and Paul Brown, *Art and Wellbeing*, Australia Council, 2004, p. 9.

embedded into planning instruments such as Development Control Plans. CCD projects could form part of the cultural impact study process.

- The third mechanism, is a suite of **cultural indicators** to monitor local and regional cultural vitality.

Councils collect diverse information about their communities, including consultations for specific projects, annual surveys and analysing demographics for social plans. A centralised information management system would enable councils to better monitor their decisions and the community's response over time. Cultural planning processes can help councils make best use of existing information and point to untapped sources to build a detailed picture of local communities.

This strategy will progress the detailed investigation of opportunities for including local communities in public and urban planning processes within the following areas:

- **Achieve best practice cultural planning** – The innovative practices of Greater Western Sydney councils will be collated into an Advocacy Kit and training program. Case studies and presentations that span a range of cultural planning projects, from public art to environmental education, will illustrate the relationship of culture to urban planning and public policy. Councils will also be encouraged to include a cultural planner in teams for major projects.
- **Develop mechanisms to embed cultural development into formal planning and management instruments** – This will involve research partnerships and developing new planning tools to assist leaders make decisions that are well-informed by a range of community perspectives. It will include: developing a range of cultural indicators to measure local and regional cultural vitality; researching and establishing a suite of CCD, arts-based consultation and participation processes as part of local and sub-regional projects; and researching best-practice models for undertaking cultural impact assessments.
- **Manage cultural information for urban planning** – The development of a powerful new information management portal, the Digital Cultural Atlas for GWS, aims to manage cultural information for the region and integrate it with other planning data. It will connect a range of cultural information sources, such as online community directories and heritage lists, and could additionally manage information from cultural impact studies and CCD projects. Based on a GIS system with a sophisticated indexing capacity and image collection, the Atlas maps cultural assets and enables the user to search for information, projects and photos/ videos on specific themes or locations. The Atlas will be a resource to develop cultural indicators.

Other Resources & Opportunities

- NSW Ministry for the Arts & Department of Local Government, *Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government*, 2004.
- Local Government and Shires Association, *Local Government Cultural Awards* (annual).
- WSROC, *Life of the Place* (People Places Urban Improvement Project), 2003.
- Parramatta City Council, *Artsplan Strategy, Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plans*, 2003.

- WSROC, *FutureWest - Greater Western Sydney Regional Planning and Management Framework*, 2005.
- Western Sydney Information and Research (WESTIR), *Diversity Sydney Project*, 2004.
- WSROC, *Research and Policy Website*, 2004.
- Deborah Mills and Paul Brown, *Art and Wellbeing*, Australia Council, 2004.
- CCD NSW, *Respect, Acknowledge, Listen: Practical Protocols for working with the Indigenous Community in Western Sydney*, 2003.
- Department of Planning, *Community Engagement in the NSW Planning System*, 2003. www.iplan.nsw.gov.au/engagement/
- Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources, *Sydney Metropolitan Strategy*

Key Performance Indicators

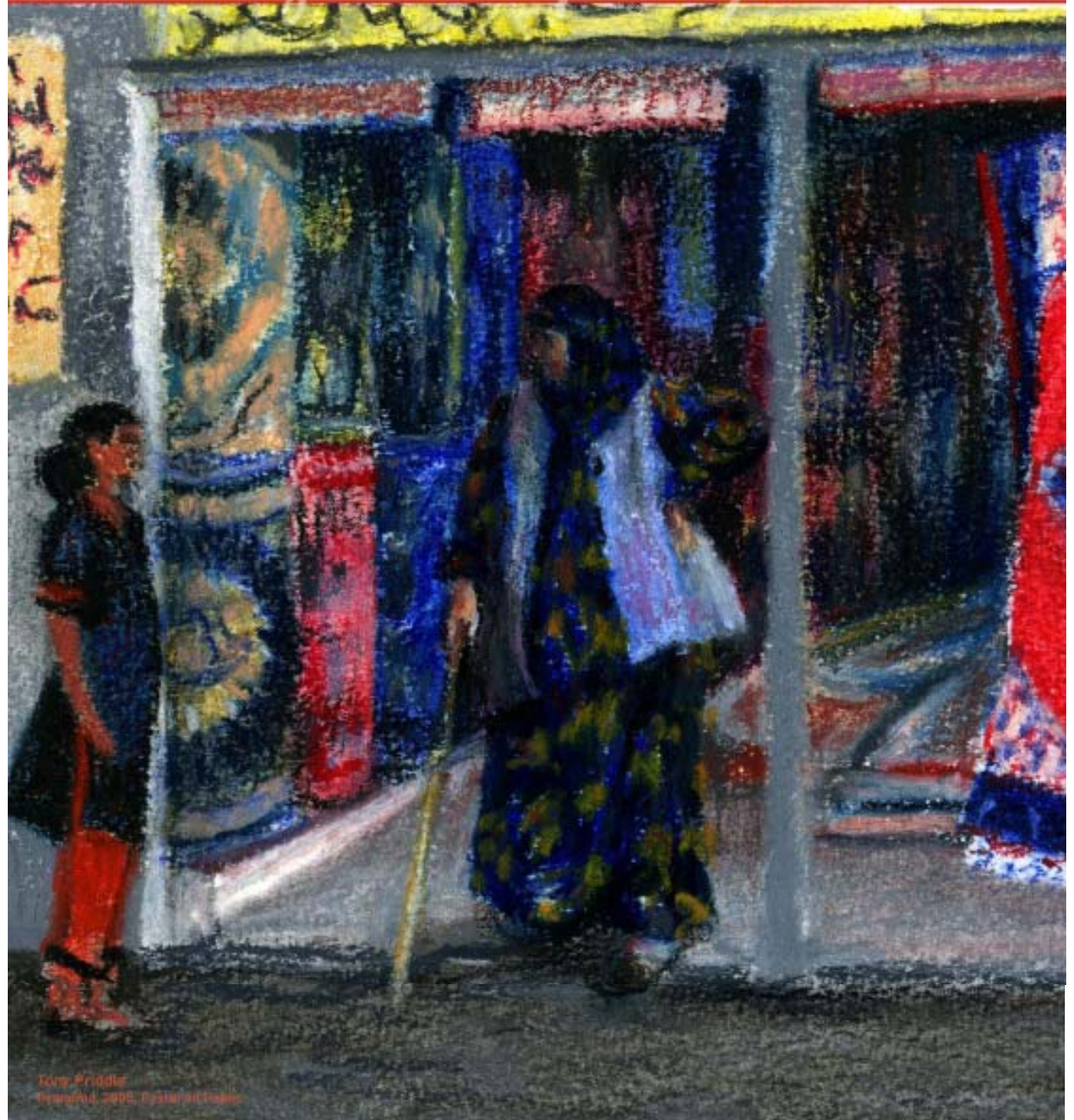
Key performance indicators for monitoring the achievement of this strategic aim and long-term goals are being developed.

Achieve planning outcomes that originate from community values

Issue	Goal	Critical Actions	Potential Partners
Best practice cultural planning	<p>Long term goal Councils know the benefits of cultural planning and have embedded cultural development processes into their formal planning instruments.</p> <p>Increasing numbers of council staff and elected representatives can apply cultural planning knowledge.</p> <p>Short term outcome Councils are aware of the range of cultural planning skills in their organisations.</p> <p>Cultural planners are included in multidisciplinary teams for major projects.</p> <p>There is growing evidence of the benefits of cultural approaches and councils are inspired to build on their own planning successes and share expertise.</p>	<p>Tailor introductory cultural planning training for Greater Western Sydney.</p> <p>Develop local resources for the effective implementation of the Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging information sharing; • Working with each council to record successful cultural planning projects, especially cross-departmental projects. Topics could include: cultural industries, public art, events; • Collating these case studies into an Advocacy Kit for use by council staff. <p>Encourage councils to include cultural planners in multidisciplinary teams for major projects.</p> <p>Encourage councils to adopt CCD NSW's Protocols for working with Indigenous communities in Western Sydney.</p>	<p>Cultural Planners Network/ WSROC/ MACROC/ Councils/ NSW Ministry for the Arts (MFA)/ Local Government & Shires Association (LGSA)/ University of Western Sydney – Centre for Cultural Research (UWS-CCR)/ Community Cultural Development NSW (CCDNSW)/ Museums and Galleries NSW (MGNSW)/ Regional Arts NSW (RANSW)</p>
Develop cultural indicators	<p>Long term goal Councils and WSROC use a range of indicators to assess the impact of activities on local and regional cultural vitality.</p> <p>Short term outcome Indicators to measure cultural vitality of the region are included in <i>FutureWest</i> - GWS Regional Planning & Management Framework.</p> <p>Indicators are developed to measure the impact of cultural development strategies.</p>	<p>Collate international research on cultural indicators.</p> <p>Develop a set of cultural indicators that are rich, yet simple enough to be monitored and communicated.</p> <p>Develop key performance indicators to measure the progress of the Regional Cultural Strategy.</p>	<p>WSROC/ MACROC/ Cultural Planners Network/ Councils/ UWS-CCR/ MFA</p>
Cultural Impact Assessment	<p>Long term goal Hardwired into LEP's and DCP's, councils require specific types of developments to undertake Cultural Impact Assessments.</p> <p>Short term outcome Cultural Impact Assessment guidelines have been developed from best-practice models.</p>	<p>Collate data on how councils currently assess and manage the cultural impacts of developments; and research how developers currently undertake these assessments.</p> <p>Use best-practice models to develop Cultural Impact Assessment guidelines.</p>	<p>Cultural Planners Network/ WSROC/ MACROC/ Parramatta City Council/ Dept of Infrastructure, Planning & Natural Resources (DIPNR)/ Delfin Lend Lease/ MFA</p>
Understanding community through CCD	<p>Long term goal Local government demonstrates leadership in making urban planning decisions that increase social capital.</p> <p>CCD is an essential community engagement and consultation</p>	<p>Establish strategic research partnerships to analyse the application of CCD in Greater Western Sydney urban planning and public policy development.</p> <p>From this research, develop a suite of</p>	<p>Cultural Planners Network/ WSROC/ Councils/ CCDNSW/ Australia Council (OZCO)/ MFA/ UWS-CCR/ University of Technology (UTS)/ Delfin Lend Lease/</p>

Issue	Goal	Critical Actions	Potential Partners
	<p>technique for urban planning and public policy development.</p> <p>A suite of tools for engaging communities through CCD is developed for urban planning and public policy development.</p> <p>Short term outcome CCD practitioners are engaged by planners to facilitate community input into developments and public policy.</p> <p>Regional and local skills for facilitating CCD and arts-based consultation have been identified.</p>	<p>community consultation/ participation processes as part of local and sub-regional projects.</p> <p>Maintain a database of CCD practitioners to facilitate community consultations.</p>	Artfiles
Digital Cultural Atlas for GWS	<p>Long term goal Councils access and maintain an integrated spatial and community cultural information management system for planning.</p> <p>Diverse information sources contribute to better understanding of communities.</p> <p>Short term outcome An alive regional database of cultural research and community information is developed.</p> <p>Diverse information about communities is easily retrievable for cultural planning.</p>	<p>Conduct an extensive cultural audit of the region, including cultural facilities and objects, as well as cultural groups, artists, collections, skills, events, significant landscapes etc.</p> <p>Collate existing localities data and community profiles, into a regional database that highlights the values, unique character, strengths and potential of each locality, as a basis for determining the location of regional cultural facilities.</p> <p>Continue developing the GWS Digital Cultural Atlas, a system that combines GIS mapping, database, indexing and image technologies for integrated planning.</p> <p>Engage a council to pilot the GWS Digital Cultural Atlas.</p>	UWS-CCR/ WSROC/ Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE)/ Western Sydney Information and Research (WESTIR)/ University of Sydney/ Cultural Planners Network
<p>Proposed Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia Council (OZCO) • Community Cultural Development NSW (CCDNSW) • Councils – refers to the local government authorities of Greater Western Sydney – Auburn, Bankstown, Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Holroyd, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith, Wollondilly • Cultural Planners Network • Delfin Lend Lease • Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) • Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE) • Local Government and Shires Association (LGSA) • Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC) • Museums and Galleries NSW (MGNSW) • NSW Ministry for the Arts (MFA) • Regional Arts NSW (RANSW) • Parramatta City Council • University of Sydney • UWS Centre for Cultural Research (UWS-CCR) • Western Sydney Information and Research (WESTIR) • Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) 			

Authoring Contemporary Australia



Tony Priddle
Franklin, 2005, Pastel on paper

windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, colour music plays in homes, tambling old, young and between your arched bushes, passers-by break into song, theatre spills into public spaces, celebrate a

Western Sydney Regional Park

*A green wooded crescent scythes across
the regional landscape
and town houses, flats and busy roads
part to expose a green pulsating corridor
breathing oxygen back into the atmosphere,
etched by cycle and walkways,
dotted with recreation areas.*

*Wallabies and wildlife re-emerge
blinking into the light of this 21st century.
Trees and plants squeeze their way
into the sunlight between houses,
flats, shops, paths and cycle ways.*

*Flying foxes swarm at night,
seeking out the grooves of fruit trees
separated by backyard fences,
stretching for as far as can be seen.
Share cars sit by the curbsides
and the night air is alive with the sounds
of voices from many lands.*

*Families, couples and individuals stroll,
sharing in the summer's night air
while the pavement is punctuated by
the footsteps of joggers passing by.
The whir of cyclists wheels
and the sucking sounds of rubber on bitumen
wash away the brief exchanges between overtaking cyclists.
The sweet and acrid smoke from barbeques
cooking steak, shish kebab and taro,
swirls and rises into the clear night sky
merging into the Milky Way,
above the laughing
above people sharing life.*

Jonathan Nardaly, 2005

II Arrive at distinctive and creative places

*... windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks
colour, music, plays, art, games, dancing, and...
and between your garden bushes, patios - by breath into shops, theatre spills into public places, celebrate a*

Arrive at distinctive and creative places

Aim

This strategy focuses on the importance of a sense of place and belonging and the timely provision of 'hard' physical cultural infrastructure as vital ingredients in regional cultural development.

The aim is to achieve well-connected, appealing places, which proclaim the unique history and character of the local area and offer people a range of social and recreational opportunities. Key to this strategy is establishing a network of facilities that support people to produce, contemplate and be delighted by arts and culture. Each facility will be suited to the specific cultural needs and talents of its local community, whilst contributing to the growth and sustainability of a complementary network of quality flagship, specialised and local cultural facilities.

Background Issues & Opportunities

This strategy arises from the need to consider the following issues:

- **Greater Western Sydney is evolving as a 'multi-centred region of cities', with each city playing a distinct economic and socio-cultural role in the viability of the region.** In collaboration with Greater Western Sydney councils, WSROC has prepared *FutureWest – Greater Western Sydney Regional Planning & Management Framework*²² as the basis for forward urban planning. *FutureWest* proposes the establishment of a "city-region spatial structure" as the basis for future regional planning. This structure recognises that regional self-containment is occurring across the greater Sydney metropolitan area. This brings a need to decentralise economic, social and cultural opportunities to match population growth and create opportunities in line with those provided in the Sydney CBD. Within the region, growth would be concentrated within key strategic locations which promotes the efficient use of regional infrastructure by supporting major facilities and institutions, linked by key transit routes.
- It is anticipated that *FutureWest* will be a major contribution to the *Sydney Metropolitan Strategy* initiated by the Premier and the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources in 2004, to guide the growth of Sydney. The *Sydney Metropolitan Strategy* aims to provide a long term targeted and staged approach to growth in order to maintain our quality of life, the character of the city and our natural and built environments. The *Sydney Metropolitan Strategy* proposes a range of different "centre types" as a way of describing a city or town and its relationship to neighbouring places, so as to better understand the different capacities for growth and the future service needs across the region. These centre types are not prescriptive, but rather are broadly determined by the amount of employment and the amount and types of retail and services provided in a centre.
- The different centre types being proposed by the *Sydney Metropolitan Strategy*, range from Regional Cities and Major Centres, through to Town Centres, Villages and Neighbourhood Centres and other specialised centre types.

²² WSROC, *FutureWest - Greater Western Sydney Regional Planning & Management Framework*, 2005.

- **Within the city-region spatial structure of different centre types, the location of cultural institutions will contribute to the vibrancy of the city and region.** Flagship regional cultural institutions are already established Parramatta (Sydney's second CBD), Liverpool, Campbelltown, Penrith and Blacktown and are planned for Bankstown. In 2002, these institutions received major capital development funding from the NSW Ministry for the Arts, and need time to consolidate their growth as well as resources to program and promote their activities and plan for the future.
- However, by 2019, it is projected that Greater Western Sydney will be home to 44% of the metropolitan population, growing in real terms by another 510,000 people. Over this time, an **expanded network of quality cultural institutions** will be necessary, firstly to address historical imbalances and backlogs in cultural infrastructure and secondly to meet the new demands of growth and expansion of the metropolitan population.
- The Greater Western Sydney Regional Transportation Profile²³ shows that **social/recreation and shopping purposes** account for almost **70% of weekend trips** and 35% of weekday trips in the region. Most of these trips are within the same LGA or to another Greater Western Sydney district, with only 10% of trips to other metropolitan destinations. This suggests that Greater Western Sydney people prefer local, as well as regional, opportunities to socialise and recreate. To meet these lifestyle needs a **range of social, cultural, leisure and entertainment facilities, offering diverse activities and opportunities**, will need to be provided at the regional, sub-regional and local geographies.
- A high quality, well-connected built environment, which offers diverse recreation and social opportunities with a distinctive local flair, is important to building social capital. Desirable places do not happen by accident, but rather through appreciation of the interdependency of physical, social and cultural environments. That is, when local people participate in place-development, then they help create places where they want to be – these places reflect community identities and bring people together – resulting in distinctive places with a lively civic culture. Studies of cities worldwide demonstrate that these places are a magnet to **skilled workers** and attract knowledge-intensive business investment.
- Consultations with local artists and groups reveal that **all-purpose community centres are generally unsuitable for artistic activity** (for example, the acoustics are too harsh for successful music recitals, and concrete floors can be damaging to dancers). In an attempt to accommodate *all* activities, the very ingredients for creativity – purpose and inspiration, social interaction and access to specialised resources – are left out of the mix. What remains is an empty shell with an undefined purpose. And creativity cannot happen in a vacuum. Additionally, these spaces are often inaccessible by public transport and many artists struggle to afford the hire fees.
- **Hard infrastructure, no matter how well-designed, is just an empty shell without people and programs of activity.** Accompanying the capital development of arts facilities, commitments to funding soft infrastructure (projects, networks,

²³ PPM and CSIRO, *Greater Western Sydney Regional Transportation Profile*, 2004.

people) are vital to ensuring self-replenishing activity.

- Future community cultural facilities must have a clearly defined purpose and focus, so that they can contribute to cultural development. More than just venues, these should be **active incubators for cultural production and interaction**. For example, many successful arts spaces provide accommodation to local cultural organisations as a key strategy for generating ongoing creative activity. Their projects draw in participants for rehearsals or meetings and this purposeful interaction sparks new creative collaborations. As a result, a distinctive rhythm of activity builds up and attracts more participants. The artform specialty of these spaces must emerge from the interests and skills of local artists and groups. Specialised spaces may include music studios and rehearsal space, photography darkrooms, printing workshops or performance studios with a sprung floor suitable for dance and physical theatre. The facilities ideally accommodate local groups and provide for the whole creation-production cycle of the artform. For example, there is little value in offering a studio with pottery wheels, if artists have to drive elsewhere to access a kiln to fire and finish their creations.
- National research into cultural-creative industries also emphasises the importance of locally relevant cultural enterprise. The ‘winners circle’ of creative industries, that is, those with a high growth rate leading to increased employment and income generation, often begin as small businesses that focus on local markets, which then ‘seed’ the development of **specialised creative clusters**. They are also highly specialised and based on local creative talents and cultural competencies.
- For a place to be creative, it needs creative people. Making sure that there are enough affordable places to live and work will enable **emerging creative talent to stay in the local area**.
- **The extensive urban development across the region brings opportunities for built-in public art**. Art that resonates with local culture and is an integral part of the urban design lifts a place to another dimension of delight and meaning. Public art can be about achieving a beautiful pattern to the paving or making a special seating arrangement or lighting scheme. It can be about the things that people bring to particular places that make them unique, expressions of people through stories, narrative, history, secrets, poems. Public art can mark and contribute to the identity of a place²⁴. Public art may take the form of gateway markers, unique signage or even temporary installations.
- Western Australia has had a Percent for Art scheme since 1989. The scheme is implemented through a partnership between the Department of Culture and Arts and the Department of Housing and Works. One percent of the estimated cost of public building projects over \$2 million commissions public artworks from Western Australian artists. A review of the scheme in 2002 confirmed that **public art improved the ambience and accessibility of facilities**, humanised otherwise utilitarian environments such as police stations, prisons and hospitals, highlighted the potential of creativity for educators and students and has generally improved public

²⁴ WSROC, *The Life of the Place*, 2003, p. 11.

awareness of what artists offer society²⁵. Queensland has a similar scheme which sees a two percent contribution.

- The **natural and rural environments of Greater Western Sydney are distinctive cultural assets** contributing to the livability, sustainability and character of the region. Not only is green open space vital to improve environmental quality and protect remnant vegetation and biodiversity, it also provides a social, recreational and tourism asset for the region and contributes to a sense of place.

Strategy

This strategy will include the detailed investigation of opportunities within the following key strategic areas:

- **Establish a complementary network of cultural institutions and facilities** suitable to the city-region spatial structure proposed in *FutureWest* and consistent with the range of centre types being considered for the *Sydney Metropolitan Strategy*. The cultural network will be consistent with these proposed structures in order to promote the efficient use of regional infrastructure and provide a robust approach to accommodating diverse cultural activities across the region. The network will offer accessible creative spaces throughout the region, which support people to enjoy, produce and debate, exhibit and perform, archive and research art. It will include:
 - **Flagship cultural institutions within Regional and Major Centres:** The priority is to enable Parramatta, Penrith, Liverpool, Blacktown and Campbelltown to consolidate and enhance their pivotal regional cultural roles. The next stage is to plan for suitable major facilities in Bankstown. As flagship regional cultural institutions within Sydney's second CBD and major centres, they will provide leadership in the cultural development of Greater Western Sydney, and maintain strong communications and coordination of their activities. These flagship institutions should be recognised as quality, world-class facilities, drawing people from across the region, as well as nationally and internationally. Blue Mountains Cultural Centre is a unique case - whilst geographically located in a sub-regional centre (Katoomba), it will be considered a Flagship cultural institution. This is because Katoomba consistently attracts particularly high numbers of cultural tourists²⁶ from both domestic and international markets, is the State's inaugural City of the Arts and is located within a World Heritage National Park.
 - **Specialised cultural facilities within sub-regional centres:** Places like Fairfield, Cabramatta, St Mary's, Windsor, Auburn, Rouse Hill, Camden, Castle Hill, Olympic Park and Mt Druitt could be considered in these centre types. The cultural facilities that currently exist in these centres, such as the Camden Museum and Fairfield Gallery & Museum, present local and district stories, however spaces for specialised cultural production are scarce. The role of Olympic Park (including their facilities and programs) within this network needs to be worked out with Sydney Olympic Park Authority and included in their Arts Strategy. The role of new multipurpose libraries as entry points to increased cultural participation should also be considered.

²⁵ Andrea Kins, Keynote presentation, *WSROC People Places seminar*, 6 November 2003.

²⁶ *Tourism New South Wales Regional Statistics*

- The role of the cultural facilities in sub-regional centres will complement the flagship cultural institutions, by **supporting specialised arts production and presentation with a predominantly local and sub-regional geographic focus**. Their activities should strongly contribute to the critical development and promotion of particular artforms or themes (for example, textile arts). These specialised cultural facilities could include accommodation for local cultural organisations whose practices bring diverse groups together to work on common projects. Over time, a network of specialised cultural facilities, each known for nurturing particular artforms and providing specialised advice, can evolve. Investment in specialised facilities that emphasise local skills, rather than one-size-fits-all spaces, will more effectively meet local needs, and establishes the foci for **creative industry** development.
- The development Flagship and Specialised cultural facilities, should not prevent councils from pursuing local projects, but rather offer a steady resource to enhance local and neighbourhood creativity. Local cultural facilities and activities may include artist studios and workshops, artist kiosks, creative business incubators, rehearsal space, outdoor amphitheatres, artist markets and local museums.
- Location of these cultural facilities – from affordable artists studios, to major infrastructure such as galleries, museums, theatres and libraries - should be included in the **masterplanning** of new areas and established areas.
- **Adopt cultural facilities planning guidelines** - to ensure that new cultural facilities meet the interests of local and regional communities, and that the ongoing management, programming and staffing needs of these facilities are given strategic consideration by local and state governments.
- **Integrate public art into capital works programs**, such as the re/development of buildings, sites, roads, transit routes and housing estates, to enhance the enjoyment and meaning of built environments. Tackling this strategy will require working with private developers and peak industry bodies; and with the NSW Ministry for the Arts to lobby relevant State Government departments to allocate a percentage of their capital works budgets to public art (for example, Roads and Traffic Authority, Department of Housing), as well as local councils. Investigate the applicability of the Artsplan process created by Parramatta City Council, to other Greater Western Sydney councils, and research the work of developers such as Delfin Lend Lease.
- **Investigate the cultural role of regional nature reserves and green open space in recreation and leisure** – As a means of increasing public awareness and cultural meaning of these ecosystems, consider a range of sustainable, care-taking passive and active recreation opportunities. For example, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) have conducted several studies into the ways diverse communities understand, value and recreate in National Parks.

Other Resources and Opportunities

- WSROC, *FutureWest - Greater Western Sydney Regional Planning and Management Framework*, 2005.

- WSROC, *Life of the Place* (People Places Urban Improvement Project), 2003.
- Information and Cultural Exchange, *Artfiles Directory*, 2005.
- Sydney Olympic Park Authority, *Arts Strategy*, 2004.
- Local Government and Shires Association, *Public Art Resource Kit*, 2003.
- National Parks and Wildlife Service, *Cultural Studies series*.
- Sydney Metropolitan and Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Authorities, *Catchment Action Plans for the Hawkesbury-Nepean, Sydney Harbour and Southern Sydney*, 2003.
- *Regional Environment Plan (REP) 31 – Regional Parklands* (gazetted 8.6.01)
- Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources, *Sydney Metropolitan Strategy*

Key Performance Indicators

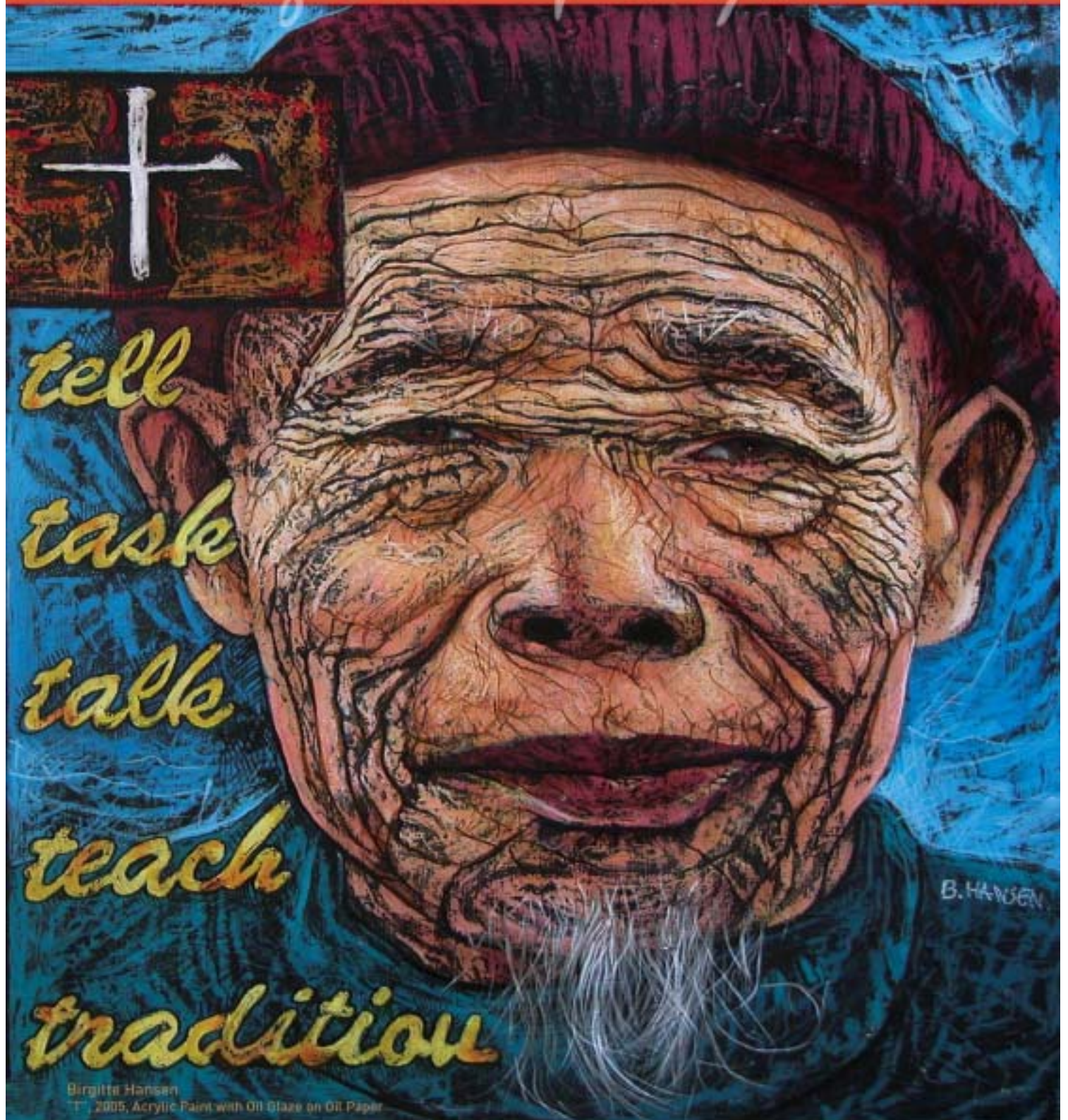
Key performance indicators for monitoring the achievement of this strategic aim and long-term goals are being developed.

Arrive at distinctive and creative places

Issue	Goal	Critical Actions	Potential Partners
Establish a complementary network of cultural facilities	<p>Long term goal A legible network of cultural institutions provides a range of creative opportunities and services to people across the region and contributes to a sense of place and identity.</p> <p>Short term outcome A cultural facilities spatial plan highlights the cultural strengths of each locality, and ranges from regional institutions to specialised facilities to neighbourhood studios.</p> <p>Existing flagship regional cultural institutions provide leadership in the cultural development of Greater Western Sydney.</p> <p>Artists can access suitable local spaces for arts production and presentation.</p>	<p>Recognise and promote existing regional cultural institutions and secure resources to consolidate their growth and plan for the future.</p> <p>Commence a survey of existing key cultural infrastructure, it's current and future capacity and future community needs.</p> <p>Inventory existing buildings and possible new locations that are suitable arts spaces.</p> <p>Develop a cultural facilities regional spatial plan that is linked to an overarching regional infrastructure plan and included in local area masterplanning (such as <i>FutureWest</i> and the <i>Sydney Metropolitan Strategy</i>).</p> <p>Research models for establishing and managing a network of diverse artist spaces.</p> <p>Investigate ways of providing affordable spaces for artists to live and work in the local area in order to retain emerging creative talent.</p> <p>Seek long term State Government and local government support for financing infrastructure for regional and sub-regional facilities</p>	<p>WSROC/ Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC)/ Cultural planners network/ Councils/ Arts Managers Network/ Artfiles/ UWS-Centre for Cultural Research (UWS-CCR)/ NSW Ministry for the Arts (MFA)/ Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR)/ Museums and Galleries NSW (MGNSW)/ Regional Arts NSW (RANSW)</p>
Adopt cultural facilities planning guidelines	<p>Long term goal Future cultural facilities meet the needs and interests of Greater Western Sydney people and are well managed and sustainable over the long term.</p> <p>Short term outcome Sound community cultural research underpins the planning for cultural facilities in both new and established locations.</p>	<p>Examine and develop case studies of successful cultural facilities, using NSW, national and international examples.</p> <p>Develop guidelines/ process for cultural facilities planning.</p>	<p>WSROC/ MACROC/ Local Government & Shires Association (LGSA)/ Councils/ MGNSW/ MFA</p>
Integrate public art into capital works programs	<p>Long term goal Public art enhances the enjoyment of the built environment and improves accessibility of facilities.</p> <p>State Government planning instruments reinforce local government public art policies.</p> <p>Developers integrate locally meaningful public art into housing estates and other capital works programs.</p>	<p>Investigate the applicability of the Artsplan process created by Parramatta City Council to other Greater Western Sydney councils.</p> <p>Work with MFA to develop strategies to promote state government leadership in public art, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> investigate a State Government Public Art Scheme that allocates a percentage of capital works budgets to public art; 	<p>MFA/ WSROC/ MACROC/ Parramatta City Council/ LGSA/ Cultural Planners Network/ Councils/ Delfin Lend Lease</p>

Issue	Goal	Critical Actions	Potential Partners
	Short term outcome Councils, especially those immediately affected by structure development, have public art policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> review State Environment Planning Policies (SEPP) to support local government cultural development initiatives (including public art and community engagement). <p>Investigate current practices and opportunities for including public art in new release areas.</p> <p>Investigate erecting 'art kiosks' to display temporary 2D artworks in public spaces throughout the region.</p>	
"Green space" cultural opportunities	Long term goal Cultural activities in regional nature reserves and open space, maintain and protect these environments and contribute to a sense of place.	Bring together the Catchment Management Authorities, National Parks & Wildlife Service and councils (cultural & environmental planners) to explore opportunities for working together. Activities may include:	Catchment Management Authorities (CMA)/ Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC)/ Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR)/ WSROC/ MACROC/ National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)/ Councils
	Short term outcome Strong partnerships between cultural and environmental groups lead to increased environmental interest, community interaction and a range of healthy activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the NPWS cultural studies; Develop cultural strategies that inspire public care of nature reserves and open space, including a range of sustainable, care-taking passive and active recreation and volunteering opportunities, and promotion of open space as community meeting places. <p>(see also strategic direction 4)</p>	
Proposed partners			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artfiles Directory Arts Managers Network Catchment Management Authorities - Hawkesbury-Nepean, Sydney Metropolitan (CMA) Councils – refers to the local government authorities of Greater Western Sydney – Auburn, Bankstown, Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Holroyd, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith, Wollondilly Cultural Planners network Delfin Lend Lease Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) Local Government and Shires Association (LGSA) Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC) Museums and Galleries NSW (MGNSW) National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) NSW Ministry for the Arts (MFA) Parramatta City Council Regional Arts NSW (RANSW) UWS Centre for Cultural Research (UWS-CCR) Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) 	

Authoring Contemporary Australia



Birgitte Hansen

"T", 2005, Acrylic Paint with Oil Glaze on Oil Paper

windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in park
colours, music plays on, dancing, old windows
and between your arched bushes, dancers by torch into deep theatre spills into public places, celebrate a

Out West

*There is an energy,
there is a drum
that beats for 2 million people
as it beats for one.*

*There is a place between imagining
and the continents spiny range
where the kaleidoscope of dreams
refract an ancient plain.*

*Where Australia's first peoples
and the last ones to arrive,
live shoulder to shoulder
in the shade of the Great Divide.*

*Where the stories that are told
will be told again
so that we can live new stories
our lives enriched by them.*

Jonathan Nandy, 2005

III Tell the region's diverse cultural stories

*Our city's past, dreams grow with everyone's melody, we
windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in par
colour, muse, plays in, games, tumbling out, windows
and between your arched bushes, passers-by breath into song, theatre spills into public places, celebrate a*

Tell the region's diverse cultural stories

Aim

This strategy focuses on the cultural stories of Greater Western Sydney and how they influence and project our regional identity. The aim of this strategy is to deepen understanding of Greater Western Sydney people and places, by unearthing and promoting the diverse range of stories, heritage and practices that shape who we are.

Background Issues & Opportunities

The stories that people hear and tell, shape their expectations of a place. Greater Western Sydney is dogged by an image of disadvantage, crime and inertia. Every time this story is repeated, whether through the media or urban chatter, it reinforces stereotypes of the region and traps communities in a social stigma. Although powerful, this image bears little resemblance to the everyday experiences of most Greater Western Sydney residents, and barely scratches the surface of life in the region.

The media is only one, though influential, storyteller. There are many stories of Greater Western Sydney people and places that go largely untold. How widely reported are the rich heritage and cultures of the region's diverse Indigenous and migrant communities? Or how, when propelled into uncertain physical, economic and political arenas, the region always rises to the challenge?

We may find these stories in historical documents and collections, passed-on through oral histories and cultural practices, or celebrated in public art, exhibitions and festivals. Art making is a potent means of developing the creative skills and language for people's self-expression and self-representation. By engaging with art, culture and heritage we can tell our own stories, portray our own sense of ourselves and directly communicate the diverse Greater Western Sydney values, achievements and ambitions to the rest of the world.

This strategy considers the following channels through which diverse Greater Western Sydney stories can be told:

Records and documentation - Recent studies reveal that Greater Western Sydney's built colonial heritage is well documented, but our records fail to reflect the full range of the region's cultural heritage. There are notable gaps in our understanding of Indigenous heritage, migrant (especially post WWII), industrial and moveable heritage and the importance of cultural landscapes²⁷.

Poorly planned urban development is a primary threat to Greater Western Sydney's cultural heritage because it is occurring faster than items can be identified and protected. The spotlight is currently on the urban fringe (especially in Camden, Hawkesbury and Penrith) where the heritage value and scenic quality of rural landscapes are essential to local identity. Regional efforts are underway to protect these lands, with developers encouraged to work with communities to masterplan housing estates, in ways which respect cultural heritage and local values.

²⁷ NSW Heritage Office, *op. cit.*

Heritage places are protected to varying degrees through local listings (in Local Environment Plans), the State Heritage Register and categorised national registers and lists, including the Register of the National Estate. The lack of heritage diversity on these lists can be attributed firstly, to the domination of architectural heritage values and secondly, to public misconceptions about heritage. Most Greater Western Sydney councils developed local heritage lists a decade ago when the historical and architectural values of buildings were of primary interest. In recent years, the heritage sector has moved to identify items with cultural and social heritage value, and so new methods of engaging local communities have emerged. One approach is **Community Based Heritage Studies** where heritage advisors work closely with local groups to understand the social and cultural meanings of objects and places. These studies expand the diversity of heritage listings and secure community support for protecting those items and places.

Collections provide another view on how people live. Greater Western Sydney stories and how they intersect, are recorded in historic collections of archaeological artefacts, items, documents, books and photographs; contemporary art collections; and library acquisitions of books, journals, music and screen culture. Moveable heritage collections and items are often maintained and cared for by individuals, families, communities and volunteer-run museums.

Oral histories reveal the stories beneath the surface, and deepen our appreciation of heritage places and items. They are a means of exploring the flip side of written history, and recording memories when material culture is not available. Oral history projects with Indigenous and migrant groups, as well as rural communities affected by urban development, ensure that memories are passed on and continue to enhance the region's understanding of the past.

Cultural maintenance - Understanding the past helps people make sense of the present and positively shape their future. But *documenting* the past is not enough. In culturally diverse Greater Western Sydney, reinforcing a sense of cultural continuity through customs and passing down stories to new generations is vital to cultural identity and maintaining community.

Greater Western Sydney (in particular Blacktown, Campbelltown and Penrith) continues to be home to the highest number of Indigenous people of any region in Australia, outside of the Northern Territory. Creation stories which describe the resonant relationship of Indigenous peoples to the land are not only a form of cultural maintenance, but an indication of how all Australians could nurture a more harmonious environment.

Greater Western Sydney is also the most multicultural region in Australia. In some areas in the south west, half the population was born overseas, mostly in a non English speaking country and up to two thirds of the population speak a language other than English at home. Liverpool's people for example, come from 143 countries and speak 111 languages. Migrant communities have invested generously in Greater Western Sydney, mobilising their limited resources to build communal places of worship, social and sports clubs, childcare and aged facilities, and thus shaping the physical and social landscape.

These cultural groups are an important ingredient in the cultural life and identity of Greater Western Sydney. Not only do they maintain cultural identity, they also build social bridges and space for cross-cultural understanding. Together, they are the **living heritage of the region**, preserving cultural traditions whilst forging new ways to express contemporary identities and interpret their experiences.

Keeping our stories alive - Not only is Greater Western Sydney rich with history and living cultural practices, it is also authoring the *future* of Australia. In this dynamic region, global socio-cultural, environmental and economic issues converge in everyday community life. Contemporary arts practice brings together diverse streams of thought and is therefore the ideal space for investigating these complex issues. Tourist trails and cultural signage are also a way of connecting and promoting the stories of the region.

Broadcasting our own stories – the mainstream media is often slow to respond to positive, self-directed images of Western Sydney, but concerted efforts by councils and art institutions has seen a small increase in media coverage of cultural events in the region. At the same time, a number of cultural organisations are working with community groups to harness information and communications technologies to disseminate their own stories, information and opinion.

Strategy

A multilayered approach is required to record, interpret and promulgate the diverse histories and practices that shape Greater Western Sydney. This strategy will include the detailed investigation of opportunities within the following key strategic areas:

- **Increase public recognition of the diversity of Greater Western Sydney's heritage and culture** through community based projects that draw on the CCD skills of council staff and cultural organisations. Among these projects will be oral histories and community based heritage studies to highlight the importance of social and cultural heritage values, and which aim to diversify heritage lists (including the State Heritage Register) and identify important cultural landscapes.
- **Broadcast our culture** – Greater Western Sydney people need increased opportunities to share their stories and express their own sense of themselves. But recording the stories is only the first step - it is equally important to publicly recognise, celebrate and disseminate them to deepen representations of Greater Western Sydney. Broadcasting initiatives could include the media and tourism trails, as well as providing incentives for artists to communicate these stories through content development for public art, galleries, museums, theatres, festivals and television.
- **Encourage cultural maintenance activities** for their role in maintaining community and cultural identity, and in fostering cultural understanding. There exists in the region, because of its significant position within the Indigenous population of NSW, the opportunity to explore new ways of promoting Indigenous culture and heritage and increasing the opportunities of Indigenous people in partnership their local groups. Providing access to the spaces and resources necessary to continue Indigenous and ethnic cultural practices as well as to forge cross-cultural bridges between groups contributes positively to regional identity.

- **Undertake research into local cultural networks** - to identify the range of activities that encourage diverse social interaction (that is, activities which forge social bonds between groups as well as within them), and thus contribute to cross-cultural understanding.

Other Resources & Opportunities

- NSW Heritage Office, *Greater Western Sydney Thematic History*, 2004.
- NSW Heritage Office, *Western Sydney Heritage Review* (unpublished), 2004.
- NSW Heritage Office, *Heritage Information Series: Community-based Heritage Studies: A Guide*, 1999.
- Meredith Walker *Protecting the Social Value of Public Places: An Illustrated Guide*, Australian Council of National Trusts, Canberra
- Australian Heritage Commission, *Protecting Local Heritage Places: A Guide For Communities*, 1998.
- Migration Heritage Centre, *Migration Heritage Toolkit*, 2002.
- Australian Heritage Commission, *Migrant Heritage Places in Australia: How to Find Your Heritage Places – A Guide*, 2000.
- Australian Heritage Commission, *Migrant Heritage Places in Australia: A Handbook for Group Co-ordinators*, 2000.
- NSW Heritage Office, *Objects in Their Place: An introduction to moveable heritage*, 1999.
- NSW Heritage Office, *Heritage Information Series: Movable Heritage Principles*, 2000.
- Roslyn Russell and Kylie Winkworth, *Significance: A Guide to Assessing the Significance of Cultural Heritage Objects and Collections*, Heritage Collections Council, 2001.
- Catchment Management Authorities (Sydney Metropolitan and Hawkesbury-Nepean), *Catchment Action Plans for the Hawkesbury-Nepean, Sydney Harbour and Southern Sydney*, 2003.
- Museums and Galleries NSW, *Understanding Significance learning circles program*, 2004.
- The Powerhouse Museum's Regional Services program.
- Australian Museums Online (AMOL) collections database (soon to become Collections Australia Network (CAN): <http://amol.org.au/>

Key Performance Indicators

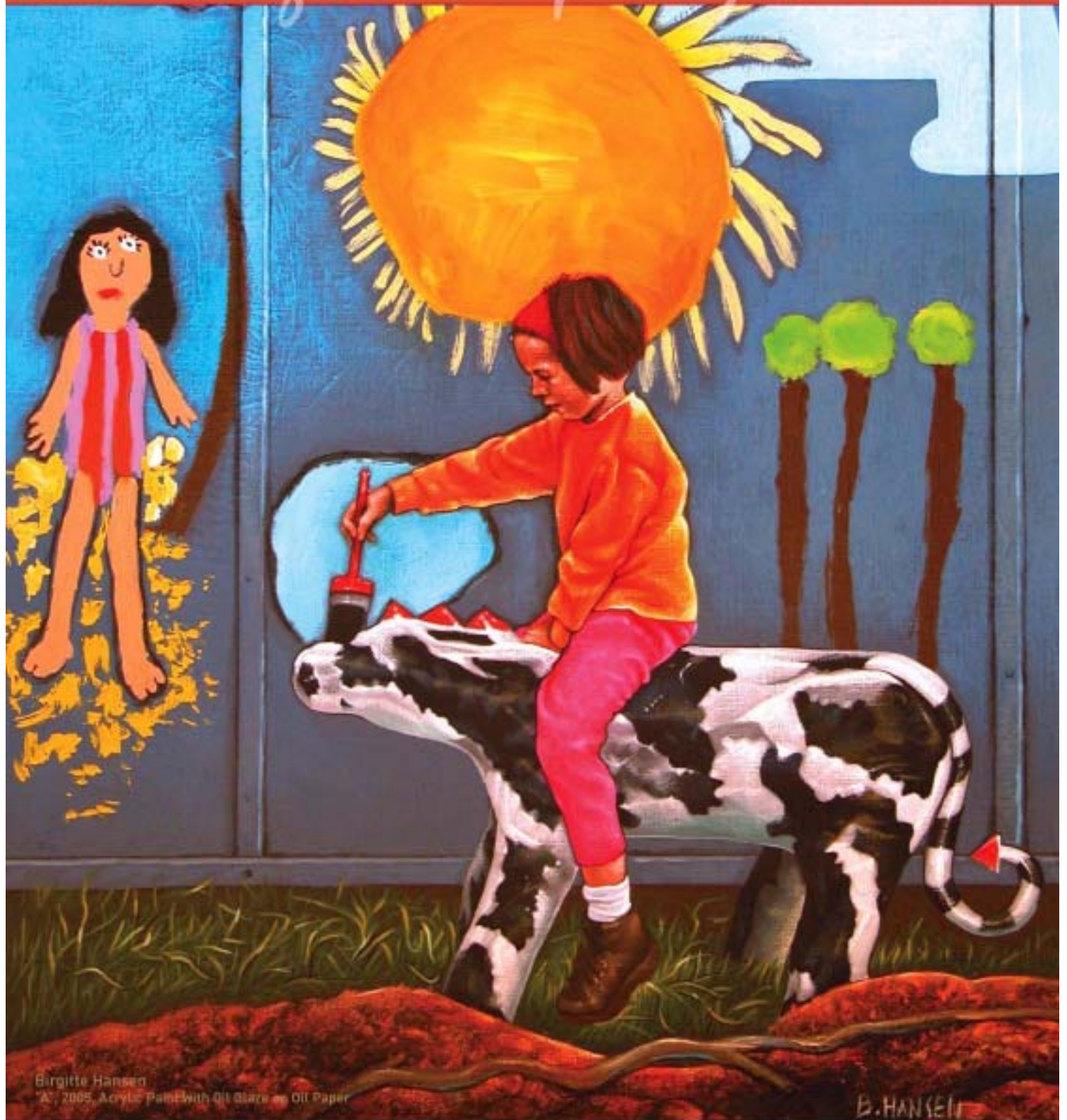
Key performance indicators for monitoring the achievement of this strategic aim and long-term goals are being developed.

Tell the region's diverse cultural stories

Issue	Goal	Critical Actions	Potential Partners
Recognise diverse Greater Western Sydney heritage and culture	<p>Long term goal</p> <p>Local, state and national lists reflect the diversity of Greater Western Sydney heritage.</p> <p>Historical and contemporary collections reflect the diverse cultures of Greater Western Sydney.</p> <p>Historical societies have sound significance-assessment skills and there is a strong, complementary network of collecting institutions across the region.</p>	<p>Monitor the development of the Agricultural Heritage Projects, as models for documenting community memories, moveable heritage and cultural landscapes.</p> <p>Develop a program to promote the value of heritage to local councils and communities, and which connects the local histories, including heritage places and collections.</p> <p>Continue to build on the Western Sydney Thematic History – build relationships with community cultural groups to contribute to the history.</p> <p>Encourage councils to undertake Local Heritage Reviews, including Community-based Heritage Studies.</p> <p>Develop a program to engage migrant communities to record oral histories and document migration heritage places and collections.</p> <p>Identify galleries, museums and libraries that actively collect items demonstrating culturally diverse perspectives, and encourage other organisations to similarly represent their communities, as appropriate.</p> <p>Promote the Museums and Galleries NSW's "Understanding Significance" learning circles program; and the Powerhouse Museum's regional service program in Greater Western Sydney.</p> <p>Encourage cultural institutions to update their collection details on the AMOL (Australian Museums online) database.</p> <p>Investigate the establishment of an Indigenous Cultural Centre and Keeping Place.</p>	<p>WSROC/ MACROC/ Heritage Planners Network/ NSW Heritage Office/ Councils/ NSW Ministry for the Arts (MFA)/ Migration Heritage Centre (MHC)/ Museums and Galleries NSW (MGNSW)/ Australia Council (OZCO)/ Australian Museums Online (AMOL)/ Powerhouse Museum/ Catchment Management Authorities (CMA)/ Murrumbidgee/ National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)/ Network of Indigenous Australian GWS cultural organisations/ Koori Interagency network/ Regional Arts NSW (RANSW)</p>
	<p>Short term outcome</p> <p>Local communities and cultural groups contribute to the ongoing development of the Western Sydney Thematic History.</p> <p>Communities are engaged in the review of Local Heritage Studies and nominate additional items of social and cultural significance.</p>		
Broadcast our culture	<p>Long term goal</p> <p>Residents and visitors have a deeper understanding of the heritage and culture of Greater Western Sydney.</p> <p>Visitors and 'knowledge workers' are attracted to the unique and vibrant culture of the region.</p>	<p>Develop a marketing strategy to promote cultural assets and lifestyle attractions, including a regional database of cultural images for tourism and promotion.</p> <p>Promote diverse Greater Western Sydney stories in public art, cultural signage and tourism trails.</p> <p>Develop media partners (local and metropolitan) to promote diverse Greater Western Sydney stories.</p>	<p>Arts Managers Network/ Cultural Planners Network/ WSROC/ MACROC/ MFA/ OZCO/ Sydney West Marketing/ Powerhouse Museum/ TV Sydney</p>
	<p>Short term outcome</p> <p>Artists interpret and promote Greater Western Sydney stories through cultural institutions and the media.</p>		

Issue	Goal	Critical Actions	Potential Partners
		<p>Implement programs for artists to develop content for galleries, museums, theatres, festivals and television that draws on diverse Greater Western Sydney stories.</p> <p>Increase the number of Greater Western Sydney exhibitions and performances that are developed for statewide and national touring.</p>	
Cultural maintenance activities	<p>Long term goal There are plentiful fora (eg: city events) for cultural groups to showcase their artistic practices. Within these fora, interchanges of skills and ideas amongst cultural groups create new contemporary artforms and social networks.</p> <p>Short term outcome Cultural groups can confidently access the spaces, resources and information needed to continue their traditional cultural and artistic practices.</p>	<p>Assist the Catchment Management Authorities to progress strategies pertaining to Indigenous heritage and cultural values and natural resources management.</p> <p>Support CCD NSW's research to establish an Indigenous artist Co-op and Studio.</p> <p>Promote opportunities that bring cultural groups together, such as access to rehearsal facilities, costume making workshops, performances and exhibitions.</p>	<p>CMA/ Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council (DLALC)/ Gandangara Land Council (GLC)/ Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council (TLALC)/ Traditional owners/ NPWS/ Councils/ Cultural Planners network/ Community Cultural Development NSW (CCDNSW)/ WSROC/ Network of Indigenous Australian GWS cultural organisations/ Koori Interagency Network</p>
Analysis of local cultural networks	<p>Long term goal Community harmony policies are underpinned by in-depth knowledge of the social practices that are effective in bringing diverse groups together.</p> <p>Short term outcome Enhanced understanding of diverse communities and their networks/ relationships.</p>	<p>Secure funding for the research project (which harnesses information gathered for the Digital Cultural Atlas for GWS) to further identify common cultural interests which bring diverse people together.</p> <p>Develop practical cultural harmony strategies and policy responses based on this research.</p>	<p>WSROC/ UWS–Centre for Cultural Research (UWS-CCR)/ Cultural Planners Network</p>
<p>Proposed partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts Managers Network Australia Council (OZCO) Australian Museums On-Line (AMOL) Catchment Management Authorities - Hawkesbury-Nepean, Sydney Metropolitan (CMA) Community Cultural Development NSW (CCDNSW) Councils – refers to the local government authorities of Greater Western Sydney – Auburn, Bankstown, Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Holroyd, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith, Wollondilly Cultural Planners Network Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council (DLALC) Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) Gandangara Land Council (GLC) Greater Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) Heritage Planners Network Koori Interagency Network Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC) Migration Heritage Centre (MHC) Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural Centre Museums and Galleries NSW (MGNSW) National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) Network of Indigenous Australian GWS cultural organisations (includes: Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture & Resource Centre, Cubbitch Barta Native Title Claimants Aboriginal Corporation, Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation, Darug Tribal Aboriginal Corporation, Gundungurra Tribal Council, Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and Koori Interagency Network) NSW Heritage Office NSW Ministry for the Arts (MFA) Powerhouse Museum Regional Arts NSW (RANSW) Sydney West Marketing (SWM) Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council (TLALC) TV Sydney UWS Centre for Cultural Research (UWS-CCR) 			

Authoring Contemporary Australia



Birgitte Hansen
'A', 2005, Acrylic Paint with Oil Glaze on Oil Paper

B. HANSEN

windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, colour, music, plays, games, dancing, and between your garden bushes, passers-by break into song, theatre spills into public places, celebrate on

Saying "Hello"

Sitting in a café, main street Western Sydney,
change is in motion, all around
it has a look, it has a feel,
it has a voice,
many voices.

Hear the accents and languages,
the strange has become familiar.

Words unknown before
have crossed oceans.

They settle all around,
walking the streets and catching trains,
window shopping in malls.

While drinking morning coffee,
words old and new
settle in their chairs.

Buying, thanking, greeting friends and strangers alike -
a phrase,
a word,

"namaste"

"hola"

"bula"

"morgen"

"g'day"

"arru"

"zdorovo"

"nasilsin"

"ci yi bak"

"mala"

"kóyo"

"no ngoola daa".

"Bongu"

"ni hao"

"rozhbarkh"

"modofa"

"salem"

"tadiyaas"

"ada bai"

.... having coffee in Western Sydney
starting the day with friends.

"merhaba"

Jonathan Nanledy, 2005

IV Cultivate a creative regional spirit

On the streets, in the neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, colour music plays in homes, dancing out windows and between your window panes, posters fly back into song, theatre spills into public places, celebrate a

Cultivate a creative regional spirit

Aim

This strategy respects the fundamental right of each individual in a community to enjoy a rich cultural life. It acknowledges that creativity is the source of human progress and is essential to addressing the complex urban challenges facing the region. The aim of this strategy is to nurture the conditions for the flourishing of creative capacities and likewise, to open up opportunities for all Greater Western Sydney people to be participants in lively, self-renewing cultural life.

Key to this strategy is uncovering the creative and cultural potential within education, environment, health and business sectors. By forging strategic partnerships across these disciplines, the region will benefit from strong multidisciplinary networks that support creative resource sharing and increased audiences for arts activities. This strategy also focuses on improving people's access to a range of different cultural experiences.

Background Issues & Opportunities

A creative culture enables people to contribute their local experience and knowledge, share their stories and participate in a rich cultural life as both creators and consumers of cultural products. For creativity to flourish, people must be able to secure resources and belong to an environment conducive to creative exploration – that is, a culture that supports curiosity and taking risks, working with others and learning from diverse fields of knowledge.

Our region's major cultural institutions are exemplars of best practice in cultivating community creativity. They do more than present art; they have evolved to perform multiple roles in community development, artistic development, mentoring and networking. Partly a response to financial need, but more from a democratic desire for relevant art, these institutions are expert in maximising limited resources and dissolving disciplinary hierarchies to **expand community involvement in cultural life**. They forge cross-disciplinary partnerships that combine contemporary art and community cultural development with fields such as sociology to engage communities in the examination of their own stories. These institutions build social capital because their creative processes educate and transfer creative skills, stimulate community (inter)action and celebrate diversity whilst helping to identify shared community values.

People **access cultural activities from different pathways** with varying levels of participation – as audience, school students, amateur artists, professional artists, via CCD initiatives, heritage and history projects etc. By applying the creative principles of our arts institutions to different industry sectors, we can increase community participation in cultural life.

This strategy draws on the democratic creativity principles that are embodied by our major cultural institutions to consider the following issues:

- *A Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney* reports that the fundamental problem in Greater Western Sydney is a **lack of critical mass**. That is, the region lacks the

levels of infrastructure and activity, including artist and audience numbers, needed to make the cultural life of the region self-sustaining and self-renewing.

- *A Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney* requires all state cultural institutions, festivals and major organisations to put in place **marketing strategies for Greater Western Sydney**. While some have implemented excellent projects, such as the Sydney Writers Festival, Sydney Opera House Studio and Sydney Festival, most have not considered the region seriously.
- In 1999, the ABS conducted a household survey on attendance at selected cultural venues and activities²⁸. It showed that **attendance rates in Greater Western Sydney were lower than for the rest of Sydney** for *all* cultural venues and activities surveyed, and that for art galleries, classical music performances and theatre performances, the attendance rates were about *half* that of the rest of Sydney. Even for the most popular venues and activities, attendance rates were significantly lower (for cinema, 63% compared with 74%, and for libraries, 33% compared with 39%).
- The surveys did not consider attendance at festivals but these events offer **accessible opportunities for people to participate in local cultural life**. The Blacktown City Festival, for example, draws up to 150,000 people during its week of activities across multiple locations that culminates in a main street parade. The Cabramatta Moon Festival attracts 50,000 people to its September food and cultural celebrations. However, festival organisers (especially for those events that are community run) are finding it increasingly difficult to secure public liability insurance for their events. The **Back to Guilford Festival**, which attracts 15-20,000 people, has been running for 20 years with a community steering committee, and was almost cancelled in 2004 for insurance reasons.
- While Greater Western Sydney artists, organisations and groups generate a wealth of cultural activity, the effects of this activity are quite localised. There are few opportunities for creative collaborations between artist groups. Many major venues and groups have established audiences that regularly attend their events, however, there is a **lack of coordinated communications** to reach broader audiences and develop a strong regional identity.
- A wealth of research conducted in recent decades demonstrate that an arts-rich education for children and young people develops the skills and capacities – such as communication, self awareness, social skills, planning and design skills - needed to build a viable Australian society²⁹. Furthermore, high quality **arts experiences as a student can spark lifelong appreciation and involvement in arts**.
- Within Greater Western Sydney at the 2001 Census there were 392,562 (23.3%) people under the age of 15 years. This represents nearly 10% of all young people in Australia and almost 30% of all young people in NSW in that age group. **There are more young people living in Greater Western Sydney than in South Australia and Tasmania combined.**

²⁸ NSW Ministry for the Arts, *Cultural Participation in Greater Western Sydney*, 1999, download from www.arts.nsw.gov.au

²⁹ Australia Council, *National Arts and Education Strategy Consultation Draft*, March 2004.

- While Greater Western Sydney has a youthful population profile in comparison to the rest of Sydney, it is now **ageing more rapidly than Sydney as a whole**.
- Greater Western Sydney has recognised the **relationship between health, culture and creativity** for many years. This knowledge has informed the development of culturally appropriate health care, as well as creative therapy that uses arts to treat patients and assist the healing process. CCD processes are proven effective in devising culturally appropriate and locally inspired health promotion strategies. Recent initiatives by the Western Sydney Area Health Service are investigating the relationship between the built environment, culture and well-being.
- Environmental groups seeking to increase **public awareness of environmental issues**, such as stormwater management and bushcare, frequently use arts projects, CCD and cultural strategies. There are opportunities in the current Catchment Action Plans to include cultural initiatives in the community education strategies.
- Corporate support for the arts has been slow to take off in Greater Western Sydney. The new strategic direction of Artswest driven by the business community, is a channel to **increasing private sector involvement in the creative and cultural life** of the region. A project undertaken by Penrith Regional Gallery, Casula Powerhouse and Museum of Contemporary Art is applying a model that seeks to broker creative partnerships between community service organisations, businesses and cultural institutions/ artists.
- **Creativity is the new raw material of the knowledge economy**³⁰. Creativity is not just the motivation for producing art; it is the key to entrepreneurialism and devising new approaches to complex contemporary urban challenges.

Strategy

This strategy will include the detailed investigation of opportunities within the following key strategic areas:

- **Promote cultural participation across a range of sectors** – Four key sectors will be the focus of this strategy – education, environment, health and business - selected for their importance in the well-being and viability of the region, and for their readiness to engage with culture and arts practice. By applying the community engagement models promulgated by our arts institutions to these sectors we can open up diverse access points for the whole Greater Western Sydney community to participate in a range of creative and cultural activities.
- **Develop a regional communications strategy** – to broadcast the range of cultural activities happening throughout the region and to reinforce a sense of a regional arts community. This strategy is also about sharing ideas to keep our culture vibrant, and so it encourages forums to debate and evaluate our cultural activities.
- **Encourage creative collaborations that lead to public celebrations** – to expand the audience base and maximise opportunities for artists to present their art and increase their networks. The intent is for more Greater Western Sydney people to

³⁰ Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, North Melbourne, Pluto Press, 2003.

experience the positive effect of local cultural pursuits. This includes coordinating joint “gigs” which present a number of cultural projects from different organisations and communities; providing incentives for artists and groups to collaborate on content development for festivals across the region and ensuring that artists can secure public liability insurance at a reasonable cost.

- **Access diverse and outstanding arts experiences** – opportunities for Greater Western Sydney people to engage with regional, national and international works of artistic excellence can inspire lifelong involvement in the arts. Whilst our own cultural institutions are drawing increasingly larger audiences for their programs, the marketing strategies of many state cultural institutions and state-funded institutions are having little impact in the region. It is vital that the audience development strategies of these Sydney-based institutions evolve in partnership with Greater Western Sydney councils and cultural organisations, and include more than just marketing activities.

Other Resources & Opportunities

- NSW Ministry for the Arts, *Evaluation of A Strategy for the Arts In Western Sydney*.
- Museums and Galleries NSW (MGNSW), *Schools Access Strategy* and resource material, 2002.
- Australia Council, *National Education and the Arts Strategy* (draft), 2004.
- Catchment Management Authorities (Sydney Metropolitan and Hawkesbury-Nepean), *Catchment Action Plans for the Hawkesbury-Nepean, Sydney Harbour and Southern Sydney*, 2003.
- Blacktown Arts Centre and partners, *Western Front Arts program*, 2004-05.
- Australia Business Arts Foundation, *Councils, Arts and Business (CAB) program*.

Key Performance Indicators

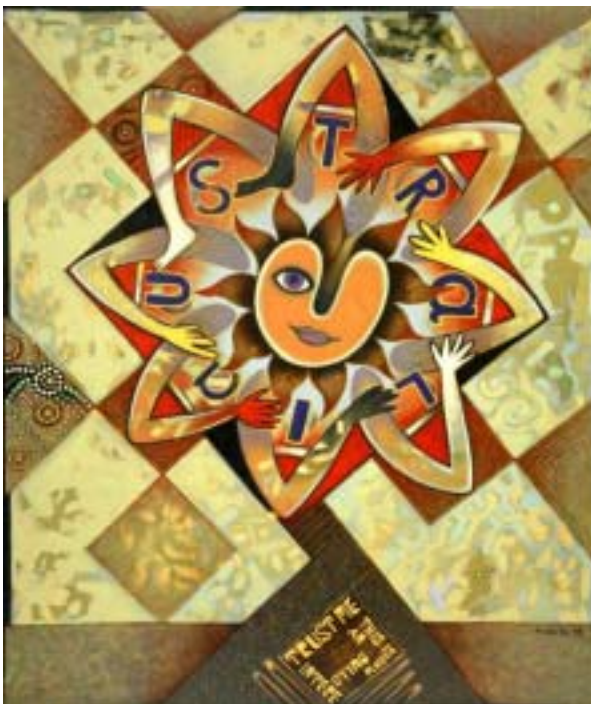
Key performance indicators for monitoring the achievement of this strategic aim and long-term goals are being developed.

Cultivate a creative regional spirit

Issue	Goal	Critical Actions	Potential Partners
Promote cultural participation across a range of sectors – education, environment, health, business	Long term goal Greater Western Sydney people have opportunities across a range of disciplines to participate in creative and cultural life.	Establish the Arts Managers Network as a TeamWest Priorities group.	TeamWest/ Arts Managers Network/ WSROC/ MACROC/ Museums and Galleries NSW (MGNSW)/ Dept of Education and Training (DET) Arts Unit/ Cultural Planners Network/ Councils/ Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE) – SWITCH/ Australia Council (OZCO)
	Short term outcome Greater Western Sydney students enjoy an arts-rich education, and develop strong communication, social and planning and design skills. Forward-looking partnerships and resource sharing is established between arts institutions and education, environmental, health and business sectors. Cultural strategies for community engagement have been developed with education, environmental, health and business sectors. Cultural research partnerships have been established to evaluate these cross-disciplinary projects.	Education Promote MGNSW's Schools Access Strategy and resources. In partnership with DET Arts Unit, develop strategies to increase students' experience of Greater Western Sydney arts, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • broaden the authorised artists database, • encourage family arts events, • investigate residency programs, art camps/ masterclasses with local artists, and • coordinate joint school arts events with councils and cultural organisations. Promote equity of education opportunities, including lifetime learning and improving access to information technology and communications by older people and marginalised groups.	
		Environment Bring together the Catchment Management Authorities, National Parks & Wildlife Service and councils (cultural & environmental planners) to explore opportunities for working together. Activities may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the NPWS cultural studies; • Promote the CMA's community liaison strategies; • Develop cultural strategies that inspire public care of regional nature reserves, including a range of sustainable, care-taking passive and active recreation and volunteering opportunities. • Develop cultural strategies that increase community interest in environmental management and heritage – including peer educators program for culturally diverse communities, CCD programs to promote bushcare, water conservation and Indigenous cultural and heritage approaches to natural resources management. 	Cultural Planners Network/ Councils/ WSROC/ MACROC/ Catchment Management Authorities (CMA)/ National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)/ Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC)

Issue	Goal	Critical Actions	Potential Partners
Regional communications strategy	<p>Long term goal Greater Western Sydney's creative community is well-networked and enjoys a rigorous culture of communication, exchange and debate.</p> <p>Short term outcome A regional magazine promotes Greater Western Sydney events, profiles artists and encourages analysis of cultural events.</p> <p>Regional forums expand the level of critical debate in the cultural (and related) sectors, strengthen networks and stimulate new ideas.</p> <p>Improved information coordination makes it easier for cultural groups to collaborate and present joint events.</p>	<p><u>Health</u> Document and promote Greater Western Sydney health, cultural and creativity initiatives.</p> <p>Participate in the research by Western Sydney Area Health Service investigating the relationship between the built environment, culture and well-being.</p> <p>Investigate creative programs which engage older people, such as gardening and heritage projects.</p>	<p>Cultural Planners Network/ Councils/ Western Sydney Area Health Service (WSAHS)/ WSROC/ MACROC/ Health and Arts Research Centre (HARC)</p>
		<p><u>Business</u> Increase private sector involvement in the creative and cultural life of the region, ranging from employment of artists to providing arts groups with pro bono advice, as well as sponsorship and philanthropy opportunities.</p> <p>Identify business-arts advocates to broker relationships between the sectors.</p> <p>Encourage more cross-disciplinary partnerships between cultural institutions, and prominent industry sectors using technologies, including robotics (manufacturing industries), bio-technology (Westmead health and medical research precinct), surveillance technologies (clubs and casinos), information communications technology and animation.</p>	<p>Artswest/ Australia Business Arts Foundation (ABAF)/ Arts Managers network</p>
		<p>Facilitate a regional arts communications Task Force that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigates the reinvigoration of a <i>Postwest</i>-like publication. Develops and costs a communications strategy that promotes Greater Western Sydney cultural activities and opportunities disseminated across the metropolitan region. Improve dissemination of arts information and opportunities (such as employment, training, grants, networks) to Greater Western Sydney artists. <p>Initiate a series of public forums that explore the dynamics of Greater Western Sydney culture and arts practice.</p> <p>Investigate ways to enable marginalised communities and older people to access web-based arts information.</p>	<p>ICE/ Arts Managers Network/ UWS/ WSROC/ MACROC</p>

Issue	Goal	Critical Actions	Potential Partners
Creative collaborations that lead to public celebrations	<p>Long term goal Large regional audiences are drawn together to celebrate festivals that feature innovative collaborations between cultural groups.</p> <p>Short term outcome Increased collaborative projects and joint events amongst cultural groups, strengthens networks and expands audiences for cultural activity.</p>	<p>Investigate viable public liability insurance options for artists and groups.</p> <p>Encourage collaborative programming to engage communities on issues of regional interest, eg: <i>Western Front</i>.</p> <p>Coordinate joint gigs that present a number of projects from different cultural groups, sharing audiences and resources.</p> <p>Provide incentives for multi-artform, cross-cultural and cross-generational collaborations to develop content for festivals across the region.</p>	Community Cultural Development NSW (CCDNSW)/ Western Front/ NSW Ministry for the Arts (MFA)/ Cultural Planners Network/ Councils/ WSROC/ MACROC/ OZCO/ Regional Arts NSW (RANSW)
Access diverse and outstanding arts experiences	<p>Long term goal Greater Western Sydney people have access to outstanding regional, national and international arts experiences.</p> <p>Short term outcome State cultural institutions work in collaboration with Greater Western Sydney councils to establish locally relevant audience development strategies.</p>	<p>(For regional strategies, refer to items above and strategic direction 5)</p> <p>Develop guidelines to ensure Greater Western Sydney councils are involved in the audience development strategies of state cultural institutions and state-funded institutions.</p>	MFA/ WSROC/ MACROC/ Cultural Planners Network/ Arts Managers Network/ Councils/ OZCO
<p>Proposed partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts Managers Network Artswest Australia Business Arts Foundation (ABAF) Australia Council (OZCO) Catchment Management Authorities - Hawkesbury-Nepean, Sydney Metropolitan Councils – Auburn, Bankstown, Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Holroyd, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith, Wollondilly Cultural Planners Network Department of Employment, Education and Training (DET) – Arts Unit Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) Health and Arts Research Centre (HARC) Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE) – SWITCH Digital Access Centre Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC) Museums and Galleries NSW (MGNSW) NSW Ministry for the Arts (MFA) Regional Arts NSW (RANSW) TeamWest Regional Priorities Group Western Front Western Sydney Area Health Service (WSAHS) Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) 			



Authoring Contemporary Australia



Tony Priddle
Bazaar, 2005, Pastel on Paper

windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, colour music plays in homes, sampling all pleasures and between your arched bushes, passers-by break into song, theatre spills into public spaces,

A pastel painting of a park scene. In the foreground, a person with dark hair wearing a pink dress stands on a path. In the background, there is a large, dark, abstract sculpture of a bird or winged figure. The scene is filled with soft, blended colors of blue, green, and pink, suggesting a dreamy or artistic atmosphere.

In the west

*In the west
dreams grow wild,
canvases explode with colour,
music plays in homes, tumbling out windows,
neighbourhood centres and halls,
musicians celebrate on street corners,
sculptures sleep in parks and between your garden bushes,
passers-by break into song,
theatre spills into public places,
dancers swirl,
peoples' stories are shared,
children play without care
chasing the wind,
the sky alive with anarchic kites.
Communities thrive.*

*Now, taste the salt of your skin
and in this moment,
with eyes wide open,
watch dreams begin.*

Jonathan Nantley, 2005

V Realise the region's creative potential

...windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks and between your garden bushes, passers-by break into song, theatre spills into public places, dancers swirl, peoples' stories are shared, children play without care chasing the wind, the sky alive with anarchic kites. Communities thrive.

Realise the region's creative potential

Aim

The aim of this strategy is to develop the 'soft' infrastructure necessary to sustain a vibrant and self-replenishing creative industry in Greater Western Sydney.

This strategy focuses on the creative hub of Greater Western Sydney, that is, the artists, entrepreneurs and arts workers for whom creative invention and artistic interpretation is core business. The strategy includes assisting our artists to fulfill their creative potential and pursue opportunities in viable sectors; encouraging cultural entrepreneurs to start up businesses; strengthening marketing networks and resources; and harnessing unique cultural tourism opportunities.

Background Issues & Opportunities

This strategy arises from the need to consider the following issues:

- Our regional cultural institutions are often the first port of call for artists wishing to enter the arts industry. However, this handful of institutions must meet the needs of almost half of Sydney's population. Despite their exemplary work, the **community's demand for creative working spaces**, professional guidance, peer support, project and audience development, exceeds the current capacities of our institutions.
- Many insightful project ideas emerge from unincorporated groups or individuals, who are mentored by established cultural organisations to bring their project to fruition. This mentoring role goes beyond the auspice relationship required by funding bodies. At present, the mentoring role is not validated (or funded) as part of the core business of cultural organisations, despite **auspice relationships often being difficult for both parties**. Firstly, new groups with limited networks often have trouble securing a suitable and/ or willing auspice organisation that is a good match for their project. Secondly, incorporated organisations may hesitate to auspice projects because funding bodies are perceived to tally the total amount granted to an organisation, regardless of the number of auspiced projects, which can affect their funding eligibility for the year. Thirdly, whilst auspice organisations are entitled to an administrative fee for handling grant monies, they often take on a larger mentoring role that draws significantly on organisational resources. These auspice organisations - Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre and ICE are among them - seek to build the capacities of nascent groups to manage their own projects and eventually become incorporated, thus **building a more diverse and robust network of cultural organisations in Greater Western Sydney**.
- Although Greater Western Sydney contains about 42% of Sydney's population, it is home to **only 20% of Sydney's professional cultural workers**³¹. The 2004 Artfiles Directory lists over 1,300 individual artists and groups, which represents an increase of 60% on previous editions of the Directory³².

³¹ NSW Ministry for the Arts and Office of Western Sydney, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

³² Information and Cultural Exchange, *op.cit.*

- Greater Western Sydney is home to an increasing number of professional artists from NESB communities, including refugees and newly arrived artists. To illustrate this point, the (former) Carnivale database of 500 entries comprised 50% of artists from Greater Western Sydney. However, most refugee and newly arrived artists face resourcing and institutional barriers (cultural “keep out” signs) which prevent continuation of their arts practice. Language is a major obstacle, but artists must additionally navigate conceptual issues of “what constitutes Australian art”, and structural issues such as “how do funding bodies and the arts industry work” which can prohibit them from entering the field. Locating materials, rehearsal and exhibition space and networks of professional and cultural support are also a challenge. For these reasons, **newly arrived, refugee and migrant artists often remain invisible to the Australian arts industry**. Unique creative skills, cultural knowledges and stories remain locked in the minds of talented artists who are now working as taxi drivers and store guards trying to make a living in Australia.
- Boomali Aboriginal Artists Co-op reports that a significant proportion of their artists are from Greater Western Sydney. **Indigenous artists currently have limited formal opportunities to network in the region**. CCD NSW is taking the lead to research the viability of an Indigenous artists co-op and studio in the region, as well as conducting an audit of artistic skills and training needs in the community. In addition to navigating similar arts institutional barriers encountered by newly arrived artists, Indigenous artists must also be cogniscent of copyright, Indigenous intellectual property and “authenticity” issues.
- Tertiary institutions report that **we are losing our talented creative arts graduates**, because of the region’s limited professional development and employment pathways and its dispersed regional artistic community.
- Councils report that, despite the interest, demand and **commitment to public art projects in urban development and regeneration, there is an undersupply of suitable Greater Western Sydney public artists and artist planners** for these jobs.
- Enterprising groups have harnessed the cultural strengths of their local community and environment through **cultural tourism**. Cabramatta Food tours and Hawkesbury Harvest are two long-established initiatives that attract local, metropolitan and statewide visitors who seek a unique and memorable experience.

Strategy

This strategy will include the detailed investigation of opportunities within the following key strategic areas:

- **Implement strategic cultural services that build regional capacities, strengthen networks and develop cultural resources** – Distribute these strategic projects across regionally focused cultural institutions, which provide a base for the projects, while servicing the whole region or sub-regions (engaging geographic or cultural communities). Allocate the projects according to the existing strengths of the regional institutions to create a network of professional service nodes. These services could comprise:

- **Regional Audience Development/ Marketing** – Penrith Regional Gallery
- **Regional Communications** – Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE)
- **Targeted training for artists to develop creative content** for galleries, museums, theatres, television, radio, festivals – Parramatta Riverside Theatres and Campbelltown Arts Centre
- **Guidance for refugee, migrant and NESB artists** to enter and navigate the Australian arts industry, from addressing language barriers, assisting with funding applications, compiling portfolios, applying for arts sector jobs, advising on industry standards for fees, ITC training, project management skills and brokering relationships with arts institutions – Casula Powerhouse
- **Guidance for Indigenous artists** to enter and navigate the arts industry, including copyright, Indigenous intellectual property and “authenticity” issues, assisting with funding applications, compiling portfolios, applying for arts sector jobs, advising on industry standards for fees, ITC training, project management skills and brokering relationships with arts institutions – Blacktown Arts Centre
- **Mentoring for unincorporated organisations** to initiate and manage arts projects and build capacities to become incorporated associations – ICE and Campbelltown Arts Centre
- **Brokerage with the business community** that results in ongoing relationships, collaborative projects, industry residencies, artist employment, skills development, philanthropy and sponsorships for arts organisations – Artswest Foundation
- **Regional Arts and childhood education** – Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre
- **Regional Museums Advisor** – Parramatta Heritage Centre
- **Encourage new cultural organisations to emerge in the region** – by recognising and investing in the mentoring (more than simply auspice) role of key established cultural organisations.
- **Advocate and provide targeted training for Greater Western Sydney artists** – that open up opportunities in viable employment sectors thereby stemming the exodus of our creative talent to other parts of Sydney. Include suitable pathways for refugee, newly arrived and NESB artists, Indigenous artists and recent graduates. Harness the opportunities that urban development and regeneration brings for built-in public art, which offers employment to public artists, artist planners and community cultural development practitioners.
- **Reward creative enterprise** that maximises Greater Western Sydney’s cultural assets - and applies people’s cultural skills, knowledge and global networks to meaningful work, and contributes to a diversified regional economic structure.

Other Resources & Opportunities

- NSW Ministry for the Arts & Office of Western Sydney, *A Strategy for the Arts In Western Sydney*, 1999.
- WSROC, *FutureWest - Greater Western Sydney Regional Planning & Management Framework*, 2005.
- Museums and Galleries NSW, *Professional Cultural Consultants database*.
- Information and Cultural Exchange, *Artfiles Directory*, 2004.
- National Association for the Visual Arts, *Code of Conduct for Visual Arts*, 2004.

- Hawkesbury Harvest: <http://www.hawkesburyharvest.com.au/home.asp>
- Australia Business Arts Foundation, *A Guide to Contracts for Business Arts Partnerships*, 2003.
- Health and Arts Research Centre website: <http://www.placemaking.com.au>

Key Performance Indicators

Key performance indicators for monitoring the achievement of this strategic aim and long-term goals are being developed.

Realise the region's creative potential

Issue	Goal	Critical Actions	Potential Partners
Implement strategic regional cultural services	<p>Long term goal The cultural life of Greater Western Sydney - including artist and audience activity - is self-renewing and self-sustaining.</p> <p>Short term outcome Sound investment in strategic regional projects has built up professional skills and resources and strengthened regional cultural networks.</p>	<p>Develop a series of strategic regional projects that address regional gaps in: communications, audience development, artist services (esp. NESB and Indigenous), auspice, corporate support for the arts and artists' professional development.</p> <p>Secure resources through government and corporate sectors to implement these projects.</p>	Arts Managers Network/ NSW Ministry for the Arts (MFA)/ WSROC/ MACROC/ Artswest/ Australia Council (OZCO)/ Powerhouse Museum
New cultural organisations in the region	<p>Long term goal Greater Western Sydney is home to an abundance of established and emergent cultural organisations that are well-networked.</p> <p>Nurturing new cultural organisations is encouraged in the region.</p> <p>Short term outcome Flagship cultural institutions and other incorporated organisations have sufficient resources to mentor emerging groups to manage arts projects.</p>	<p>Lobby for funding categories that recognise the mentoring (in addition to auspice) role undertaken by many Greater Western Sydney cultural organisations.</p> <p>Include as a strategic regional project: Auspice/ mentoring for unincorporated organisations. This project could (a) broker arts ideas with suitable auspice organisations; (b) mentor unincorporated groups to initiate and manage arts projects and build their capacities to become incorporated associations.</p> <p>With industry partners, investigate viability of an agency for visual and performing artists (esp. NESB and Indigenous) from Greater Western Sydney.</p>	Arts Managers Network/ WSROC/ MACROC/ MFA/ OZCO/ Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE)/ TV Sydney
Advocate for artists	<p>Long term goal The capacities of Greater Western Sydney artists are widely respected and they can pursue arts employment opportunities across a range of industries.</p> <p>Short term outcome An increasing number of Greater Western Sydney artists find employment on cultural projects.</p>	<p>Promote best practice guides and artist directories to councils and encourage employment of artists in CCD and community engagement initiatives, festivals and events, urban design and public art programs.</p> <p>Promote the MGNSW Professional Cultural Consultants database and Artfiles Directory to local and state government and developers.</p> <p>Develop partnerships with organisations that promote the region, to include arts and culture in their marketing strategies.</p> <p>Acknowledge that fulltime artist careers are difficult to sustain, and so investigate multi-layered support services for artists that include short term projects, business management and honing their arts skills to related industries.</p>	WSROC/ MACROC/ National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA)/ Artfiles/ Museums and Galleries NSW (MGNSW)/ Sydney West Marketing/ GWS Economic Development Board (GWSEDB)/ ICE/ Community Cultural Development NSW (CCDNSW)/ OZCO/ Regional Arts NSW (RANSW)
Skill up professional artists	<p>Long term goal Arts training translates into employment in viable sectors.</p>	<p>Develop targeted artist training programs and hands-on projects with a focus on content development for museums, galleries, theatres,</p>	Arts Managers Network/ Cultural Planners Network/ UWS Arts Consultative Committee/

Issue	Goal	Critical Actions	Potential Partners
	<p>There is a strong community of artists skilled in screen arts and digital media in Greater Western Sydney, who work on projects within the region and abroad.</p> <p>There is a strong community of skilled public artists and artist planners in Greater Western Sydney, who work on projects within the region and abroad.</p> <p>Short term outcome A consortium of cultural and training organisations is established to develop targeted artist training programs and initiate projects.</p>	<p>contemporary music, screen arts, gaming and information technologies, and applying cross-cultural knowldges.</p> <p>Develop targeted artist training and mentor programs in public art – include small business and project management training and provide incentives to stay in the region.</p> <p>Develop training units and projects that “induct” artists into local government and business cultures.</p> <p>Establish Greater Western Sydney residencies for international artists.</p>	<p>TAFE/ MFA/ GWSEDB/ TV Sydney/ Community radio/ ICE – SWITCH/ WSROC/ MACROC/ OZCO</p>
NESB artists	<p>Long term goal Institutional barriers that prevented newly arrived and NESB from continuing their arts practice are eroded.</p> <p>The creative expressions of NESB artists are valued as part of the evolving Australian consciousness.</p> <p>Short term outcome There is increased and informed critical debate about Greater Western Sydney arts practice and the complexities of cultural identity within the arts, especially regarding resourcing and institutional barriers.</p>	<p>Hold the Art-iculate Conference to highlight the range of issues faced by NESB artists in Greater Western Sydney.</p> <p>Based on the content and feedback from the Conference, develop policy positions that improve opportunities for NESB artists, and advocate to funding bodies.</p> <p>Continue to investigate a range of training services and hands-on projects for artists, including accessible informal and accredited training.</p> <p>Implement a program for ethnic cultural groups to fine tune their arts practice and increase their professional opportunities. Masterclasses could focus on: stage craft, costume design and construction, curating.</p>	<p>Art-iculate Steering Committee/ Fairfield Community Resource Centre (FCRC)/ MFA/ OZCO/ UWS Arts Consultative Committee/ Liverpool Artists Co-op/ Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre/ WSROC/ MACROC/ TV Sydney</p>
Indigenous artists	<p>Long term goal Indigenous artists are well networked and can access diverse employment, exhibition and performance opportunities.</p> <p>Greater Western Sydney's Indigenous communities are known for their strong arts and cultural practices.</p> <p>Short term outcome There is a sound understanding of Greater Western Sydney Indigenous arts practice leading to increased opportunities to network and collaborate on cultural projects.</p>	<p>Support CCDNSW to conduct an audit of Indigenous artists and arts practices in the region and organise a seminar to explore training and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Support CCDNSW to establish an Indigenous artists Co-op and studio in Greater Western Sydney.</p> <p>Investigate Indigenous cultural and heritage traineeships.</p> <p>Continue to investigate a range of training services and hands-on projects for artists, including accessible informal and accredited training.</p>	<p>CCDNSW/ Muru Mittigar/ Western Sydney Area Assistance Scheme (WSAAS)/ Koori Interagencies/ Network of Indigenous Australian GWS cultural organisations/ UWS-Office of Regional Development/ WSROC Group Apprentices/ WSROC/ MACROC/ Campbelltown Arts Centre/ MFA/ OZCO/ TV Sydney/ VISCOPY</p>
Young and emerging artists	<p>Long term goal Skilled and creative young people chose to live in Greater Western Sydney.</p>	<p>Build programs between university and TAFE colleges and pivotal arts venues, to provide ‘hands on’ professional development opportunities for students.</p>	<p>UWS Arts Consultative Committee/ TAFE/ UWS-ORD/ ICE/ Bankstown Youth Development Service (BYDS)/ FCRC/</p>

Issue	Goal	Critical Actions	Potential Partners
	<p>Short term outcome</p> <p>Young people develop practical and creative skills that open up employment opportunities.</p> <p>A consortium of cultural and youth training organisations is established to develop youth arts training programs.</p> <p>UWS creative arts departments have forged forward-looking strategic partnerships with cultural organisations.</p>	<p>Establish an incentives fund for UWS students to launch artist run initiatives or projects that nurture arts management skills, and provide reasons to stay in the region.</p> <p>Engage young people in targeted programs that build practical and creative skills, reflective of employment opportunities in the region, including multimedia, CCD, events.</p> <p>Increase opportunities for cultural traineeships and mentorships, in CCD organisations, councils and arts venues.</p> <p>Continue to investigate a range of training services and hands-on projects for artists, including accessible informal and accredited training.</p>	<p>Arts Managers Network/ Cultural Planners Network/ WSROC Group Apprentices/ WSROC/ MACROC/ Councils/ MFA/ OZCO/ TV Sydney</p>
Creative industries	<p>Long term goal</p> <p>The region has harnessed it's diverse and unique creativity and cultural potential, which contributes to the information and knowledge economy.</p> <p>Cultural and creative businesses help to diversify the regional economic structure and strengthen the economy.</p> <p>Greater Western Sydney enjoys increased tourism and a stronger regional identity.</p> <p>Short term outcome</p> <p>There is sound knowledge of the potential of creative industries in Greater Western Sydney.</p> <p>NESB and Indigenous people are encouraged to apply their cultural knowledge, skills and networks in small business/ new industry development.</p> <p>Migrants can apply their professional skills and qualifications in relevant work.</p>	<p><i>(for strategies which relate to access to artist spaces, see strategic direction 2)</i></p> <p>Support the University of Western Sydney to convene a Creative Industries Conference.</p> <p>Research the shape and viability of creative and cultural industry development in Greater Western Sydney, including an audit of creative and cultural businesses and skills.</p> <p>Investigate establishing an agency to broker partnerships between artists/ cultural institutions, businesses and community groups, which sees the development of creative projects with social, economic and artistic outcomes.</p> <p>Develop a program to support the start-up of creative enterprises including small business training, peer networking and guidance, business incubation, and economic incentives for invention of marketable products.</p> <p>Encourage artists to undertake small business training under the New Enterprise Incentives Scheme (NEIS) provided by Centrelink.</p> <p>Develop a program to support the application of diverse cultural knowledge, skills and global networks in small business and/or creative employment, eg: cultural and heritage tourism, Indigenous dance performances, ethnic food tours,</p>	<p>UWS Arts Consultative Panel/ GWSEDB/ GROW/ Dept of State and Regional Development (DSRD)/ Councils/ WSROC/ MACROC/ ICE/ Centrelink/ CCDNSW/ MFA/ OZCO/ TV Sydney/ Arts Managers network</p>

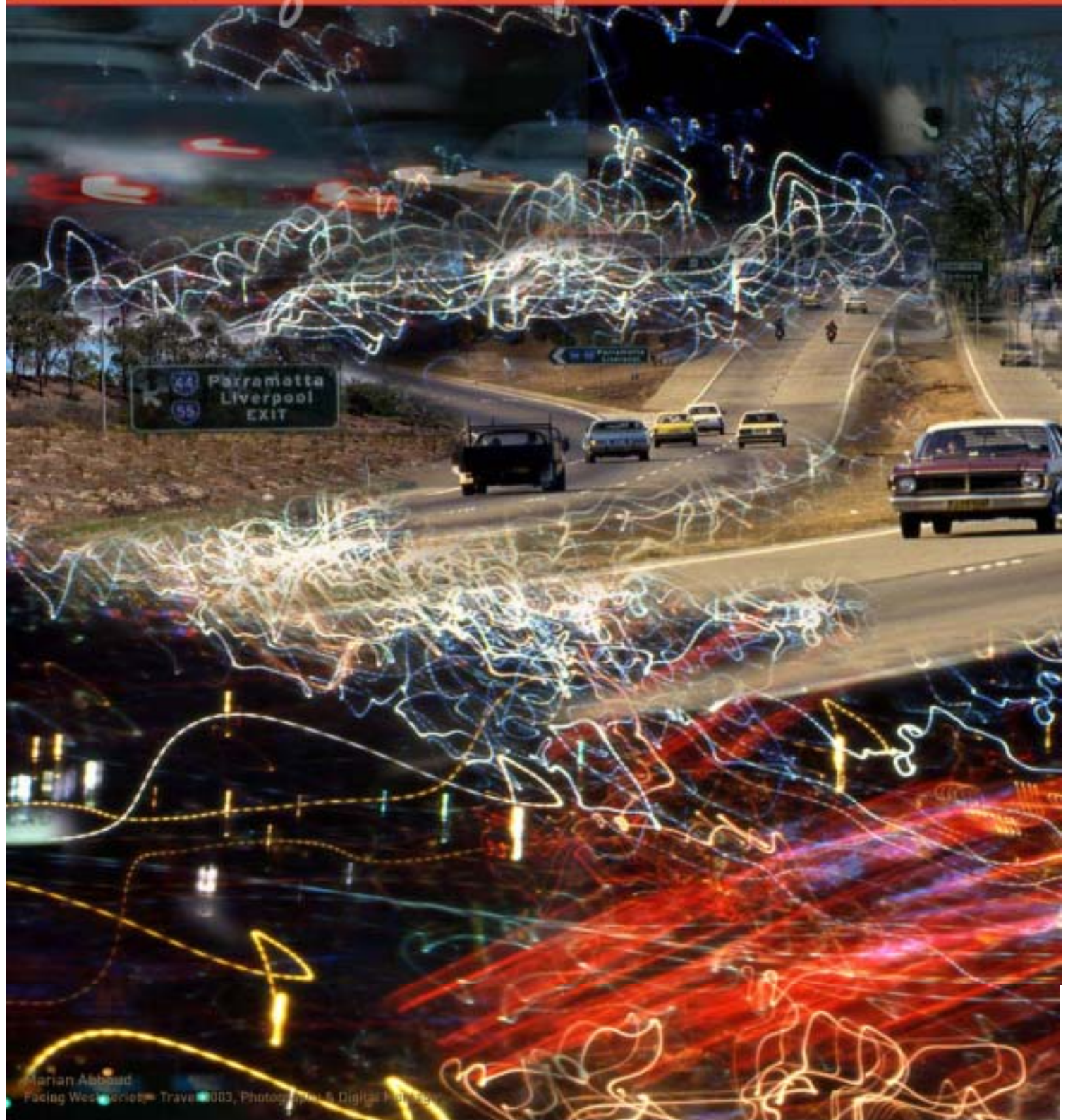
Issue	Goal	Critical Actions	Potential Partners
		catering, restaurants, production of traditional costumes and handicrafts, recorded music etc.	
		Develop innovative ways to package and market the region's unique culture and heritage, using successful initiatives such as Cabramatta Food tours, and Hawkesbury Harvest as a guide. For example, a "Be nourished by Greater Western Sydney" package that capitalises on the region's fresh produce and culinary diversity, including agricultural activities, specialty grocery stores and ethnic restaurants.	Tourism NSW/ GWSEDB/ GROW/ DSRD/ Councils/ WSROC/ ICE/ Migration Heritage Centre (MHC)/ TV Sydney

Proposed Partners

- Artfiles Directory
- Art-iculate Steering Committee
- Arts Managers Network
- Artswest
- Australia Council (OZCO)
- Bankstown Youth Development Service (BYDS)
- Campbelltown Arts Centre
- Centrelink
- Community Cultural Development NSW (CCDNSW)
- Councils – refers to the local government authorities of Greater Western Sydney Auburn, Bankstown, Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Holroyd, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith, Wollondilly
- Cultural Planners Network
- Dept of State & Regional Development (DSRD)
- Fairfield Community Resource Centre (FCRC)
- Greater Western Sydney Economic Development Board (GWSEDB)
- GROW Sydney's Area Consultative Committee (GROW)
- Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE)
- Koori Interagencies (including those of Western Sydney, South-West Sydney, Fairfield/ Liverpool, Bankstown and Hawkesbury)
- Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC)

- Migration Heritage Centre (MHC)
- Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural Centre
- Museums & Galleries Foundation of NSW (MGNSW)
- National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA)
- Network of Indigenous Australian GWS cultural organisations (includes: Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture & Resource Centre, Cubbitch Barta Native Title Claimants Aboriginal Corporation, Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation, Darug Tribal Aboriginal Corporation, Gundungurra Tribal Council, Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre, Local Aboriginal Land Councils and Koori Interagency Network)
- NSW Ministry for the Arts (MFA)
- Powerhouse Museum
- Regional Arts NSW (RANSW)
- SWITCH Digital Access Centre
- Sydney West Marketing (SWM)
- TAFE
- Tourism NSW
- TV Sydney
- UWS Arts Consultative Committee
- VISCOPY
- Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC)
- WSROC Group Apprentices

Authoring Contemporary Australia



Marian Alsboud
Facing West, Series 1, Travel 2003, Photographs & Digital Manipulation

windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, colour, music plays in homes, sampling old recordings and between your arched bushes, passers-by break into song, theatre spills into public spaces, celebrate a

Councils
With a shout out to C.J. Dennis.

Council's more than roads, rates or rubbish diggin' 'oles or fillin' 'em in an' taking away the garbage in a fancy wheely-bin.
It's people plannin' for the future making a place you'd want to live.

But 'ow on earth they'd make it
- well there's the bloomin' rub -
When there's those that reckon, us westies
cares just for cars and charcoaled grub.
Well it's not as if that ain't true
'cause it only partly is,
there's music, art and poetry
an' lots more that people give.
It's helpin' out the neighbours
When they're in a bit o' strife.
Not carin' where they come from
Just gettin' on with life.
Sayin' "Hiya" to the kids
and listenin' to their bands.
A council's really just a place
where they're extendin'
a helpin' hand.

Jonathan Noddy, 2005

VI Secure equitable cultural investments in Greater Western Sydney

windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in car
colours, music plays in lanes, canals, old, painted
and between your articles books, subjects by break into song, theatre spills into public space.

Secure equitable cultural investments in Greater Western Sydney

Aim

The aim of this strategy is to secure equitable State and Federal Government investment in the cultural development of Greater Western Sydney, commensurate with the region 'doing its part' to accommodate almost half the growing metropolitan population.

This requires governments to address historical imbalances and backlogs in cultural infrastructure provision. Equally, we must meet the *new* demands of growth and expansion of the metropolitan population by 510,000 new residents over the next 15 years. Policy responses must be appropriate to the cultures of Greater Western Sydney and should therefore be developed in partnership with local government, cultural organisations and communities. An inclusive, whole-of-government approach to policy development will secure a sustainable, forward thinking framework for cultural development in Greater Western Sydney, from which enduring and relevant cultural programs can grow.

Priorities include addressing the social and cultural impacts of urban development, consolidation of the region's flagship cultural institutions and planning for their expansion and emergence of new organisations, as well as disseminating the unique stories of the region.

Background Issues & Opportunities

This strategy arises from the need to consider the following issues:

- State and Federal Government provision of cultural infrastructure and services in Greater Western Sydney has not kept pace with rapid population growth and land development. Recent government strategies are seeking to **address this historical imbalance and backlog of infrastructure provision**. The effectiveness of these strategies depends on stable commitment, integration of cultural development into other government plans - such as environment action plans and structure planning for housing and transport - and an understanding of the region's distinct cultural and social life, artistic practices and networks. Likewise, Greater Western Sydney must be prepared to meet the new demands of growth and expansion of the metropolitan population.
- Over the next 15 years, another 258,000 homes will be built in Greater Western Sydney along with new roads, transitways and other physical infrastructure to accommodate 510,000 more people. Without **sophisticated policy responses**, these dramatic physical changes to the landscape can fragment communities and decimate the memories and sense of identity associated with places, thereby diminishing social capital.
- None of the well-funded State cultural institutions or major independent arts organisations is located in Greater Western Sydney. Our flagship regional cultural institutions, such as Casula Powerhouse, contribute to the cultural development of the whole Sydney metropolitan area and regularly implement programs that are of regional, national, even international significance. Yet they **cannot access the same funding opportunities as the Sydney-based State cultural institutions**.

- Our regional cultural institutions generate exhibitions and performances that **tell nationally significant stories about Greater Western Sydney events, people and places**. The insightfulness with which these stories unfold, such as the “Anita and Beyond” exhibition which remembered the life of Anita Cobby and the community’s response to her rape and murder, demonstrate the curatorial sophistication of our institutions and their courage to confront the complex layers of contemporary life. These projects deepen the national consciousness and are true Australian stories.
- *A Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney* reports that, aside from the funding to national organisations, Community Cultural Development (CCD) is the strongest Federal Government funding category for Greater Western Sydney, with the region receiving 72% of NSW money. Other **categories such as music, visual arts, dance and new media are all well below equitable levels**.
- The Australia Council has announced plans for an organisational restructure during 2005. This restructure involves dismantling the CCD and New Media Boards – the two Boards which have provided almost half the Federal arts funding to Greater Western Sydney since 2000. It will be important for the region’s peak cultural bodies to **ensure that community-generated and cross-artform works will have equitable access to Australia Council funds**.
- Recent research undertaken by the Australia Council commends CCD as a valuable process for public planning and policy development. CCD exemplifies an inclusive sustainable public planning process, because at its core, is the communication of the values, experiences and habits of the very people who structure demand for urban services and resources. CCD can therefore join up community perceptions with government decision-making processes. Greater Western Sydney is an **exemplary test-bed for implementing an inclusive public and urban planning approach** that sees planners and policy-makers draw on the CCD expertise of cultural organisations and council staff.
- During 2004, the NSW Ministry for the Arts undertook an evaluation of the ***Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney***. From 2000-03 the Strategy has enabled arts funding categories to respond to the distinct needs of Greater Western Sydney artists and institutions. Some recommendations such as the Local Government Incentives Fund have contributed to a growth in cultural activity in the region, while corporate support for the arts and Indigenous artists training strategies are yet to be implemented.
- The *Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney* was developed in **response to structural inequities**, such as lower rates of participation and employment in cultural activity than the rest of Sydney, and historical patterns of government funding “which, despite policy changes and targeted programs with their resulting improvements, remains in favour of the Rest of Sydney³³”. During the next phase of the Strategy’s implementation, the role of the NSW Ministry for the Arts in the region will continue to be critical. This role could include brokering cross-departmental activities with other state government departments active in the region (such as the

³³ NSW Ministry for the Arts and Office of Western Sydney, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources' Metropolitan Strategy and the Western Sydney Heritage Action Plan of the NSW Heritage Office), and continuing to fund strategic areas "to make the cultural life of the region self-sustaining and self-renewing³⁴".

- The State Government released **Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government** in 2004, to encourage integrated, best-practice cultural planning. Since Greater Western Sydney councils differ significantly in their awareness of, and access to support for cultural planning, WSROC advocated for the Guidelines to be accompanied by capacity-building resources, including training and a case studies manual so the Guidelines could be implemented effectively.

Strategy

This strategy will include the detailed investigation of opportunities within the following key strategic areas:

- **Secure long term commitment to the *Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney*** – including resource allocations to consolidate growth of flagship regional cultural institutions, development of touring shows and increased funding so the region can meet the cultural needs of almost half the metropolitan population. Continued commitment to the *Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney* will address historical backlogs and stabilise cultural infrastructure leading to a self-replenishing cultural life.
- **Investigate mechanisms for improved coordination of Local, State and Federal Government activities in Greater Western Sydney** – so that urban development leads to positive social and cultural outcomes. It is imperative that government agencies responsible for cultural infrastructure, urban planning and open space, housing, heritage and transport, are coordinated in their plans for Greater Western Sydney and consider the cumulative and cultural impacts of their activities. This strategy includes preparing a State and a Federal cultural planning framework and investigating a Percent for Public Art Scheme for State and Federal developments.
- **Implement strategic CCD research projects in Greater Western Sydney that develop tools for embedding CCD processes into urban planning** – the dynamic environments of Greater Western Sydney, and depth of experience of our cultural organisations and workers, provide the ideal conditions for developing model processes and tools.

Other Resources & Opportunities

- NSW Ministry for the Arts, Evaluation of *A Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney*
- NSW Ministry for the Arts & Department of Local Government, *Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government*, 2004.
- WSROC, *FutureWest - Greater Western Sydney Regional Planning & Management Framework*, 2005.
- Deborah Mills and Paul Brown, *Art and Wellbeing*, Australia Council, 2004.
- Martha Jabour and Marla Guppy, *Living Streets – A Project About People and Place*, Liverpool City Council, 2000.

³⁴ *Ibid*, p.21.

- Health and Arts Research Centre website: <http://www.placemaking.com.au>
- Community Cultural Development in Australia website: <http://ccd.net/>

Key Performance Indicators

Key performance indicators for monitoring the achievement of this strategic aim and long-term goals are being developed.

Secure equitable cultural investments in Greater Western Sydney

Issue	Goal	Critical Actions	Potential Partners
Western Sydney Arts Strategy	<p>Long term goal There is an equitable distribution of quality cultural institutions and services across Sydney that befits the growth and regionalisation of the metropolitan population.</p> <p>Greater Western Sydney is regarded as an author of contemporary Australian life.</p> <p>Short term outcome State and Federal Governments invest in equitable cultural outcomes for Greater Western Sydney.</p> <p>Greater Western Sydney stories are broadcasted.</p> <p>NSW Ministry for the Arts continues to play a critical role in the region's cultural and arts development.</p>	<p>Make presentations to NSW Ministry for the Arts' and Australia Council' Directors and Committees/ Boards promoting GWS arts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote diversity and innovation of arts practice and curatorial approaches; Lobby for triennial funding to flagship regional cultural institutions to consolidate their growth, enable long term planning, business and program development. <p>Fund strategic regional projects that build regional capacities and resources in communications and artist development (<i>see Strategy 5</i>).</p> <p>Increase the number of Greater Western Sydney exhibitions and performances that are developed for statewide and national touring.</p> <p>Develop guidelines and reporting criteria for State cultural institutions and State-funded institutions to implement Greater Western Sydney audience development strategies.</p> <p>Investigate funding for regional, sub-regional and local cultural facilities.</p> <p>Coordinate relevant State agencies as partners in the Western Sydney Arts Strategy.</p> <p>Develop resources for the effective implementation of the Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government.</p>	NSW Ministry for the Arts (MFA)/ Office of the Minister for Western Sydney (OMWS)/ Australia Council (OZCO)/ WSROC/ MACROC/ Cultural Planners Network/ Arts Managers Network/ Councils
	<p>Long term goal Urban development has been well-planned and the benefits are evenly distributed and lead to positive social and cultural well-being.</p> <p>Government agencies and developers in Greater Western Sydney coordinate and masterplan their activities, and seek community input early in the process.</p> <p>Public art is included in all State Government capital works.</p> <p>Short term outcome State and Federal Government agencies adopt community cultural development processes.</p>	<p>Review State Environment Planning Policies (SEPP) to support local government cultural development initiatives (including public art and community engagement).</p> <p>Develop a State government cultural planning framework that clarifies the interrelationships of State agencies to local cultural planning and quality of life, and encourages jointly-funded strategic cultural research and projects.</p> <p>Investigate establishing a State Government Public Art Scheme that allocates a percentage of capital works budgets to public art and community cultural development.</p>	
Coordination of government activities in Greater Western Sydney			MFA/ Dept of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR)/ WSROC/ MACROC/ Dept Housing/ Dept Transport/ Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA)/ Cultural Planners Network/ Councils/ developers/ OZCO/ Regional Arts NSW (RANSW)

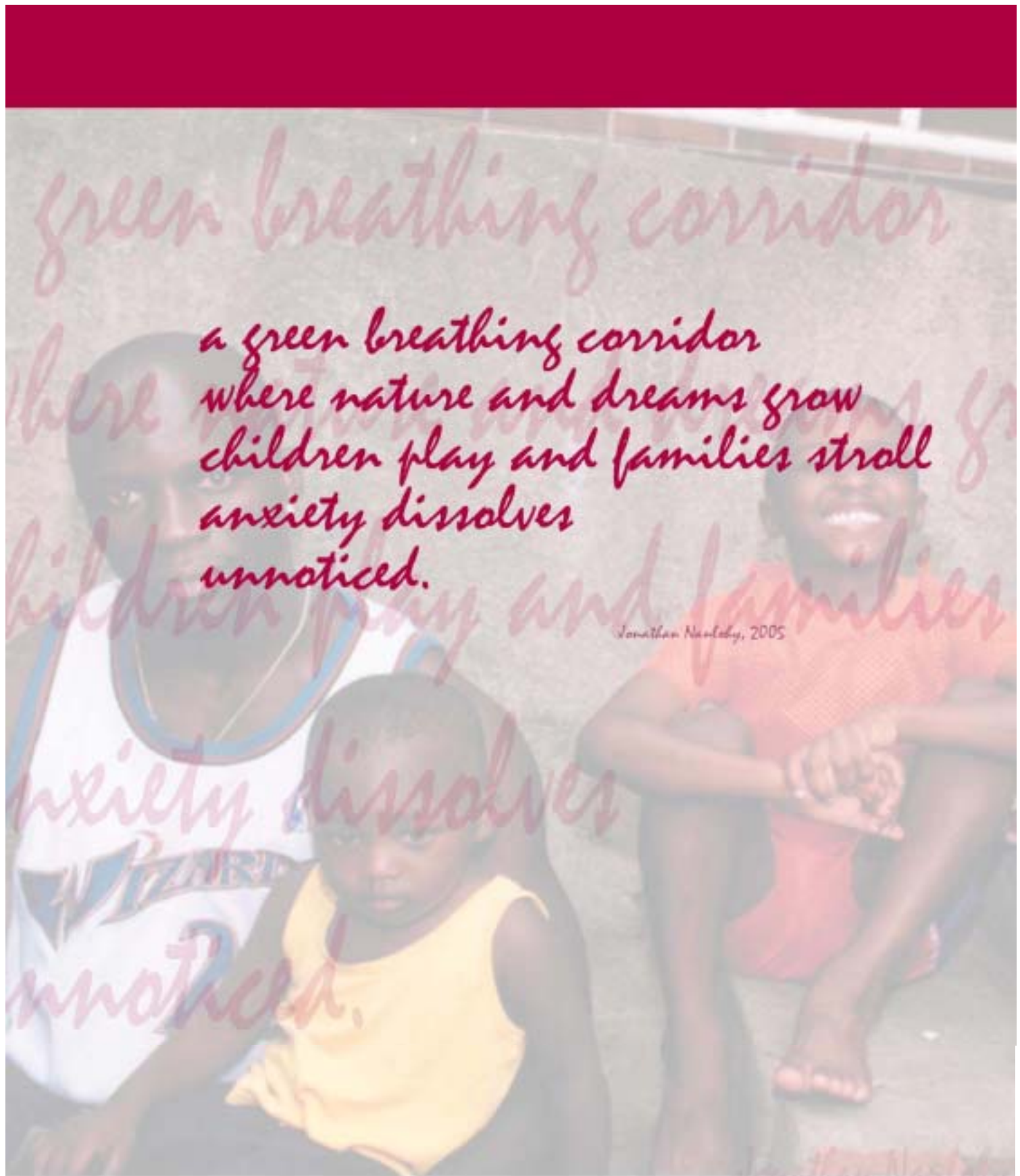
Issue	Goal	Critical Actions	Potential Partners
		Develop a Federal government cultural framework that clarifies the interrelationships of Federal agencies to local cultural planning and quality of life, and encourages jointly-funded strategic cultural research and projects.	
Strategic CCD research projects for urban planning	<p>Long term goal A through understanding of culture and CCD processes is embedded in the urban planning.</p> <p>A suite of tools for engaging communities through CCD is developed for urban planning.</p> <p>Short term outcome CCD practitioners are engaged by urban planners to facilitate community input into developments.</p>	<p>Develop strategic research partnerships to analyse the application of CCD in Greater Western Sydney urban planning and develop a suite of tools.</p> <p>Promote the use of these tools to government and private developers.</p>	WSROC/ MACROC/ Community Cultural Development NSW (CCDNSW)/ MFA/ OZCO/ UWS-Centre for Cultural Research (UWS-CCR)/ University of Technology (UTS)/ Councils/ Cultural Planners Network/ Delfin Lend Lease
<p>Proposed Partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arts Managers Network Australia Council (OZCO) Community Cultural Development NSW (CCDNSW) Councils – refers to the local government authorities of Greater Western Sydney – Auburn, Bankstown, Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Holroyd, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith, Wollondilly Cultural Planners Network Delfin Lend Lease Department of Housing Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) Department of Transport Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC) NSW Ministry for the Arts (MFA) Office of the Minister for Western Sydney (OMWS) Regional Arts NSW (RANSW) Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) University of Technology (UTS) UWS Centre for Cultural Research (UWS-CCR) UWS Office of Regional Development (UWS-ORD) Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) 			

Authoring Contemporary Australia



Photograph: Antoinette Chiha

In the windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, colour music plays in homes, dancing out, ping-pong, and between your arched lashes, passers-by break into song, theatre spills into public spaces, celebrate a



*a green breathing corridor
where nature and dreams grow
children play and families stroll
anxiety dissolves
unnoticed.*

Jonathan Nantahy, 2005

5 Regional Management

On the west, children grow up in a world of windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, colour, music, plays, in homes, temples, and between your arched bushes, passers-by break into song, theatre spills into public spaces, celebrate a

REGIONAL MANAGEMENT

WSROC has secured 12 months funding from the NSW Ministry for the Arts to continue the Regional Cultural Planning Coordination (RCPC) project, with the core objective of coordinating the implementation and management of the Regional Cultural Strategy.

The following management framework provides the necessary basis for review and monitoring, evaluating and modifying the Regional Cultural Strategy over time. Effective management must consider:

- Mechanisms for **regional engagement** in the monitoring and review of cultural development in the region;
- **Coordination of partnerships and networks** to implement critical actions identified in the Strategy;
- **Performance indicators** at a regional scale to evaluate the progress and impact of the Regional Cultural Strategy. Regional measures of performance are currently being developed in line with *FutureWest - Greater Western Sydney Regional Planning & Management Framework*.

Regional management

It is proposed that the current RCPC Reference Group is expanded to become a Regional Cultural Management Group (RCMG), overseeing the implementation of the Regional Cultural Strategy and promoting cultural initiatives in their own organisations. The RCMG will work closely with WSROC to provide professional advice and advocacy.

The RCMG would be chaired by the WSROC Cultural Development spokesperson (a member of the WSROC Executive Management Committee). It would include the current membership (WSROC Board, WSAAS, Community Cultural Development NSW, Information and Cultural Exchange, UWS Centre for Cultural Research, Museums and Galleries NSW, NSW Ministry for the Arts, Parramatta City Council and MACROC – Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils), and invite representatives from the Cultural Planners, Heritage Planners and Arts Managers Networks.

The RCMG would also lobby State and Federal Government agencies to achieve equitable cultural development policies for Greater Western Sydney.

Regional engagement

The Regional Cultural Strategy aims to be accessible and responsive to the social dynamics and emerging cultural needs of Greater Western Sydney communities. It should encourage open discussion and debate about regional cultural development.

It is proposed that WSROC, MACROC and the Cultural Planners Network organise bi-annual forums for Councils, arts institutions, community cultural organisations, artist groups and peak bodies to review the Strategy and discuss emerging issues and new opportunities.

Coordination of partnerships

The Regional Cultural Strategy has at its core a program of broadly-stated actions critical to addressing key cultural regional issues. These provide the basis both for obtaining regional concurrence and priority-setting and a reference point for agencies when developing their own plans. The program provides a foundation for assigning unambiguous responsibility for activities and outcomes and assessing performance towards achieving the region's cultural vision.

The tables included in the Regional Cultural Strategy nominate potential partners to progress critical actions. It is proposed that WSROC brings these organisations together to identify existing information and other possible partners, and workshop action plans to achieve the desired outcomes.

Performance Indicators

The guiding principles for the Regional Cultural Strategy provide the basis for developing regional cultural indicators:

1. Sustainability
2. Dynamism and Diversity
3. Inclusion and Community relevance
4. Openness and Continuity
5. Integration and Connectivity
6. Distinctiveness
7. Creativity

These indicators will link to the goals and outcomes within the Regional Cultural Strategy for each strategic direction.

APPENDIX 1:

Glossary of Terms

Community - refers to people who have things in common. In a local government context, the community shares the common geography of the local area. People are also linked through common interests such as ethnicity, age, class, religion, occupation. Interest communities are not confined by territorial boundaries, and people will identify with many diverse communities at the same time. It is important to acknowledge the diversity of interests and cultures that constitute a community.

Community Based Heritage Studies (CBHS) – is a heritage study of a local area in which communities are not just consulted, but rather are actively involved in researching and nominating items and in considering recommendations for their future management and promotion. It aims to give the community greater ownership of the study process, and places value on the community's intimate local social and cultural knowledges.

Community Cultural Development (CCD) - describes processes in which communities interact at a grass-roots level with all forms of arts and culture. CCD is a process of community self-discovery and nurturance of identity and purpose, which unleashes capacities to express and enact those values, in pursuit of artistic, social and economic aspirations. CCD liberates people's confidence in their knowledge and resourcefulness, and fosters an amenable environment for dynamic cultural (ex)changes. A managed CCD project often involves professional artists acting as facilitators, whilst communities direct the process through a variety of artforms.

Creative products – are that produced through creative activity, for example, books, paintings, historical publications, stories, plays, playgrounds*.

Culture - refers to a community's way of life and likewise how their values, beliefs and traditions change over time. Cultural practices transmit shared values that affirm identity and reinforce social bonds. Our attitude to issues such as work, health and relationships is a product of, and responds to, broad cultural trends and habits. It is our culture, and the ways we celebrate it, that makes us and the place we live, unique.

Cultural activities - encompasses social gatherings and activities which contribute to development of creative skills, networks and/ or cultural knowledge; the visual, performing and literary arts; festivals, celebrations, commemorations; community, recreation and cultural planning, public art, urban planning and design, heritage conservation.

Cultural development - is about fostering and linking various actions that contribute to cultural vitality. These functions may include: developing and/ or supporting arts and cultural festivals, performances and exhibitions, cultural and community facilities, community services, urban and landscape design, heritage conservation and environmental education, recreation and parks, landuse planning and development controls, economic development and marketing.

Cultural Impact Assessment – aims to predict, understand and evaluate the impact of a development on community cultural life. A Cultural Impact Assessment would include a sound community involvement process, and identify distribution of impacts among different groups, impacts on community identity, relationships/ interactions, amenity and quality of life, research into the site history and character, access and use of the development, site constraints, potential audience and site lines. It would further propose options to evenly distribute the benefits of the development, and propose themes for cultural projects and public art. Requirements for a Cultural Impact Assessment should be hardwired into local planning instruments, such as Local Environment Plans and Development Control Plans.

Cultural indicators – are measuring systems that capture the impact of planning activity on cultural vitality and community wellbeing. The development of cultural indicators should be integrated into broader economic, environmental and social sustainability indicators. Cultural indicators should consider impacts on cultural content, cultural practice and cultural results.

Cultural mapping – techniques for understanding how people are experiencing their place and culture*.

Cultural planning - is a strategic planning process that gives significance to the values of communities, and by taking account of the relationships, opportunities and democratic processes in local government, strategically aligns them with broader planning agendas to enhance quality of life.

Cultural resources and assets - are banks of existing things on which people can draw to provide a foundation for ongoing cultural activities. They include both hard and soft cultural infrastructure such as cultural facilities, places of significance and collections; directories and businesses; and people's knowledge, skills, networks and services³⁵. In Greater Western Sydney, the diversity of communities is a cultural resource and asset, the significance of which is yet to be realised.

Cultural vitality – community wellbeing as expressed through creativity, diversity of cultural expression and innovation*.

Flagship regional cultural institutions – these are the cultural institutions in Greater Western Sydney that provide leadership in regional cultural development and maintain strong communication and coordination of their activities. These institutions contribute to the cultural development of the whole Sydney metropolitan area and regularly implement programs that are of regional, national, even international significance. They are located in significant centres, and include: Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Penrith Regional Gallery and Lewers Bequest, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Information and Cultural Exchange, Parramatta Riverside Theatres, Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre and Parramatta Heritage Centre.

Social planning – the process of investigating and responding to the social needs and aspirations of all the people who live or work in a local government area³⁶.

³⁵ Australia Street Company, 2003.

* definitions from NSW Ministry for the Arts, *Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government*, 2004.

³⁶ NSW Department of Local Government, *Social/ Community Planning and Reporting Guidelines*, June 2002.

Specialised cultural facilities – these are the cultural facilities that support specialised arts production and presentation with a local and sub-regional geographic focus in Greater Western Sydney. Their activities complement the leadership role of flagship regional cultural institutions. They include: Fairfield Museum and Gallery, Blacktown Arts Centre and Camden Museum, among others.

State cultural institutions – these are the cultural institutions whose collection and programming activities resonate with statewide, national and international relevance. All the State cultural institutions can access significant levels of funding and are located east of Auburn. They include: the Art Gallery of NSW, Museum of Contemporary Art, the Powerhouse Museum and the Sydney Opera House, among others.

APPENDIX 2:

Index of Organisations & Resources

- **A Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney** – was launched by the NSW Government in 1999, in recognition of the key role the region plays in the cultural life of New South Wales. The Strategy sets out priorities that build on existing extensive cultural activity in Western Sydney and government support, to achieve a more equitable distribution of resources across the region, at the same time giving expression to local differences. It aims to encourage local arts and cultural activity, increase participation in arts activity by the community, develop the potential of artists, nurture the arts industry and encourage cultural development at a regional level. After the fourth full year of implementation, the NSW Ministry for the Arts has undertaken an evaluation to assess the impact and effectiveness of the Strategy in supporting cultural development in Western Sydney.
- **Artfiles Directory** – is a year-round resource that lists artists and groups, educators, cultural and arts workers, venues, councils and educational institutions throughout Greater Western Sydney. *Artfiles* is an initiative of Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE).
- **Art-iculate Steering Committee** – is a partnership between CCD NSW, Information and Cultural Exchange, Fairfield City Council, WSROC and others, to address the institutional and cultural inequities that prevent refugee, newly arrived and migrant artists from pursuing their arts practice. The Committee is planning for a Conference, for funding bodies, arts industry representatives and local artists to examine these issues in 2006.
- **Arts Managers Network** – a WSROC-convened network of managers and directors from regional and local arts organisations in Greater Western Sydney. The Network meets quarterly.
- **Artswest Foundation** - has recently reconstituted and refocussed itself after 22 years as an artists' membership organisation which supported and promoted the arts in Western Sydney. It's expanded purpose is to 'promote, support and lobby for arts and cultural activities in Greater Western Sydney and to enrich local communities via business engagement with the arts' (www.artswest.com.au). It is a volunteer-based organisation that aims to advocate and catalyse engagement between business, arts and cultural communities.
- **Australia Business Arts Foundation (AbaF)** - AbaF's mission is to increase private sector support for the arts. It works with both business and the cultural sector, with the aim of bringing benefits to business, arts organisations and the Australian community. It is supported by the Federal Government through the Cultural Development Program of the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts.
- **Australia Council (OZCO)** - is the Federal Government's funding and advisory body for the arts. The OZCO is a service organisation which seeks to enrich the life of the nation by supporting and promoting the practice and enjoyment of the arts.
- **Australian Museums On-Line (AMOL)** – is an online cultural heritage industry portal linking museums and galleries throughout Australia. It is soon to be replaced

by a new online initiative called Collections Australia Network (CAN), to give greater focus to small to medium sized collection which, though often under resourced, geographically dispersed and physically remote, collectively shoulder responsibility for managing the bulk of Australia's cultural-heritage assets: www.amol.org.au

- **Bankstown Youth Development Service (BYDS)** – a youth and community based service which initiates, enables and produces arts and cultural projects in the Bankstown local government area, as well as regionally.
- **Blue Mountains Aboriginal Cultural and Resource Centre** - develops activities and programs that bring Aboriginal people together; advocates for social justice and rights; works with local services to assist in program development; and supports and resources activities that are initiated by local Indigenous people as requested, eg: cultural activities, art, music and dance exhibitions.
- **Boomali Aboriginal Artists Co-op** - is a member based Aboriginal arts organisation incorporated to promote Aboriginal culture and independence through the visual arts. With a current artist membership of 70, Boomalli artists work in a range of mediums producing thought provoking, stimulating, imagery that continues to re-establish their artistic lineage and importantly, the history of Aboriginal people in Australia. The Co-op is based in Leichardt and offers an art gallery, retail outlet, studio space, slide archive, information resources library, artist and advocacy services.
- **Catchment Management Authorities (CMA)** – have been established by the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR) for improved management of native vegetation and protection of natural resources. The Greater Western Sydney region is served by the Sydney Metropolitan and Hawkesbury-Nepean CMAs, which will be developing and implementing ten year Catchment Action Plans (CAP's) to guide the way natural resources are managed at the catchment scale. The scope of the CMA's activities extends to management of water, native vegetation, salinity, soil, biodiversity and coastal and marine issues. Through the Natural Resource Management Facilitators, Community Support Officers and Aboriginal Community Support Officers, the CMA's aim to forge direct community links to achieve the involvement, commitment and local knowledge needed to implement the CAP's.
- **Commonwealth Heritage List** - is a list of natural and cultural heritage places owned or controlled by the Australian Government. These include places connected to defence, communications, customs and other government activities that also reflect Australia's development as a nation. The list is comprised of places, or groups of places, in Commonwealth lands and waters, that are identified as having Commonwealth heritage values. These places are protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Under the *Australian Heritage Council Act 2003*, the Australian Government Minister for the Environment and Heritage was able to transfer to the Commonwealth Heritage List those places in Commonwealth areas that were previously on the Register of the National Estate. (see also entry **Register of the National Estate**)
- **Community Cultural Development NSW (CCDNSW)** – is the peak body for community cultural development in NSW, and is part of a national network of CCD agencies. CCD NSW promotes and supports community based arts projects where communities and participants have an active role in directing and controlling activities. CCD NSW maintains focus on cultural projects that have a tangible social, community and artistic development outcomes.

- **Councils** – refers to the 14 local government authorities of Greater Western Sydney – Auburn, Bankstown, Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Holroyd, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith, Wollondilly. This includes the 11 local government areas (LGA's) that comprise WSROC and the three LGA's of MACROC.
- **Cultural Planners Network** – a WSROC-convened network of cultural planners and cultural development officers from Greater Western Sydney councils. The Network meets quarterly.
- **Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government** – developed by the NSW Ministry for the Arts and Department of Local Government, the Guidelines outline the principles that underlie best-practice cultural planning and provide a practical framework to help councils develop and implement effective cultural plans.
- **Darug Tribal Aboriginal Corporation (DTAC)** – based in Blacktown, one of the main objectives of DTAC is to trace the family history of Darug people and to collect information about individuals with Darug ancestry.
- **Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council (DLALC)** – Aboriginal Land Council based in Mt Druitt (see also entry **Local Aboriginal Land Councils**).
- **Delfin Lend Lease (DLL)** - is Australia's largest developer of masterplanned communities, with more than 20 projects across the country, including Ropes Crossing at St Marys. DLL recognises the importance of community development, and is preparing a cultural strategy for Ropes Crossing that links with local government and communities, including processes for community consultation and programs of activity and public art.
- **Development Control Plans (DCP)** - Councils use Development Control Plans to make more detailed local planning controls, or adopt their own codes. These allow the Council to provide specific, more comprehensive planning policies for individual types of development, or particular sections of the local government area. Both Local Environmental Plans and Development Control Plans are prepared under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. (see also entry **Local Environmental Plans**)
- **Digital Cultural Atlas for GWS (DCAGWS)** – A research project between WSROC and the UWS Centre for Cultural Research which aims to develop a powerful new information management portal, the Digital Cultural Atlas for GWS, to manage cultural information for the region and integrate it with other planning data. It will connect a range of cultural information sources, such as online community directories and heritage lists, and could additionally manage information from cultural impact studies and CCD projects. Based on a GIS system with a sophisticated indexing capacity and image collection, the Atlas maps cultural assets and enables the user to search for information, projects and photos/ videos on specific themes or locations. The Atlas will be a resource to develop cultural indicators.
- **Fairfield Community Resource Centre (FCRC)** - is a community based organisation with emphasis on particular target groups - migrants, women, children, youth, people with disabilities and aged. It is community based because of it's belief in people's power to make decisions about the development of their own local community. It believes in encouraging local residents to participate in FCRC projects so that they can take control of the directions of those projects.

- **FutureWest – Greater Western Sydney Regional Planning & Management Framework** – FutureWest is a framework driven by thirteen Greater Western Sydney councils in partnership with WSROC, to better manage growth and change in the region. It addresses issues such as the equitable provision and funding of infrastructure, support for diversity, protection of the environment and employment opportunities. FutureWest is founded on detailed studies of the social, economic and environmental dimensions of Greater Western Sydney.
- **Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council (GLALC)** - Aboriginal Land Council based in Liverpool. GLALC boundary covers 8 Local Government Areas including Parramatta, Penrith, Fairfield, Auburn, Bankstown, Holroyd, Sutherland and Liverpool. GLALC delivers affordable housing to community members, manages training schemes for young people that build their skills and contribute to community wellbeing, work with government to protect significant Indigenous cultural and heritage sites and provide community education and a retail outlet for its artists. (see also entry **Local Aboriginal Land Councils**)
- **GROW** – is Sydney's Area Consultative Committee (ACC), and one of a national network of ACC's. GROW works with business, community and across the three sectors of government to take action that will help the growth of Sydney and its regions. It acts as a broker between these sectors to secure funding and partnerships for viable projects.
- **Gundungurra Tribal Council (GTC)** – based in Katoomba, the Gundungurra Tribal Council is the representative body for the traditional people of the Blue Mountains. Claimants for native title in the Gundungurra nation traditional lands include areas now known as the Blue Mountains, the Southern Highlands and the Goulburn Plains. Having survived repeated disposessions, Gundungurra people are working to revive language and cultural practices.
- **GWS Economic Development Board (GWSEDB)** - is the voice of employment growth and economic development for Greater Western Sydney. It initiates and supports a diverse range of projects designed to create employment, trade and investment opportunities for the region's 1.7 million people and 72,000 businesses. It is supported by the NSW Department of State and Regional Development, and works in partnership with government agencies, councils and other regional organisations with an interest in progressing employment growth and economic development within Greater Western Sydney.
- **Hawkesbury Harvest** – is a community based organisation whose members share a common commitment to preserving the farming and agricultural heritage of the region. It aims to increase consumer access to nutritious, safe foods while developing the opportunity for agri-based tourism.
- **Health and Arts Research Centre Inc (HARC)** - is a not for profit organisation based in Goulburn, but working extensively in Greater Western Sydney, whose purpose is to research, publish, train, and create employment for local artists and cultural workers, and further advance the synergy between arts, culture and wellbeing. HARC focuses on design and health, community cultural development, environmental design research and community arts.
- **Heritage Planners Network** – a WSROC-convened network of heritage planners and advisors from Greater Western Sydney councils. The Network meets quarterly.

- **Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE)** – is a dynamic community-based cultural organisation that works across Greater Western Sydney. ICE undertakes community cultural development, arts and information and communications technology initiatives that enhance access, participation, capacities, economic independence and opportunities for socially excluded communities in the region. Among its varied activities, it manages SWITCH, Western Sydney's art multimedia centre and publishes the *Artfiles Directory*.
- **Koori Interagency Network** – Koori Interagencies operate in Greater Western Sydney, in the areas of Western Sydney, South-West Sydney, Fairfield/ Liverpool, Bankstown and Hawkesbury. The Koori Interagencies bring together local and state government, elders groups, artists and cultural workers from non-government organisations to share information and resources, and for joint advocacy and improved coordination of their services and cultural activities.
- **Local Aboriginal Land Councils** – Aboriginal Land Councils aim to secure a better future for Aboriginal people by working for the return of culturally significant and economically viable land, pursuing cultural, social and economic independence for it's people and being politically pro-active and voicing the position of Aboriginal people on issues that affect them. The Greater Western Sydney region sits within the boundaries of three local Aboriginal Land Councils – Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council, Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council, Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council.
- **Local Environment Plans (LEP)** - are prepared by councils to guide planning decisions for local government areas. Through zoning and development controls, they allow councils to supervise the ways in which land is used. Both Local Environmental Plans and Development Control Plans are prepared under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. (see also entry **Development Control Plans**)
- **Local Government and Shires Association (LGSA)** – is the peak representative body for local government in NSW. LGSA and the NSW Ministry for the Arts have signed off on the Second Cultural Accord 2002-05, which is a framework for the collaborative development of strategies, resources and support for local government on arts and cultural development matters. The Second Cultural Accord specifies that it will actively support and assist the Western Sydney region.
- **Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils (MACROC)** – is the association of the Macarthur region's three local government authorities – Camden, Campbelltown and Wollondilly. MACROC is guided by the need to build on and protect the region's natural environment and cultural heritage and to continually upgrade the social environment and amenities of the region to provide residents with continuing opportunities to improve their quality of life.
- **Migration Heritage Centre (MHC)** – The Migration Heritage Centre at the Powerhouse Museum is a NSW Government initiative supported by the Community Relations Commission. This small independent unit brokers partnerships across community and government, educational and cultural networks, to identify, record, preserve and interpret the heritage of migration throughout New South Wales. The MHC aims to give new perspectives on Australian history, to ensure a more representative heritage is preserved for future generations, validate the experiences of migrants and challenge myths and prejudices.

- **Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre** - is an Indigenous, not for profit business based at Penrith Lakes. It was opened in 1998 and has grown into a popular destination for inbound tourists, and features a cultural museum and retail centre and the Molucanna Provenance Nursery which specialises in growing indigenous native provenance stock in forestry tubes. Muru Mittigar acknowledges the Darug people as the traditional custodians of the local area and aims to create an environment that maintains and honours Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- **Museums and Galleries NSW (MGNSW)** – is the key agency supporting the development of museums and galleries in NSW. MGNSW works with museums, public galleries, Keeping Places, artist-run initiatives, and contemporary art, craft and design centres in regional and metropolitan NSW.
- **National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA)** - Established in 1983, NAVA is the peak body representing the professional interests of the Australian visual arts and craft sector through advocacy, representation and service provision. It provides direct assistance to its member artists and publishes valuable artist resources such as the Code of Practice for the Visual Arts, grant handbooks and a web portal for artists.
- **National Heritage List** – lists places with outstanding heritage value to our nation, including places overseas. So important are the heritage values of these places that they are protected under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, and through special agreements with state and territory governments and with private owners.
- **National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS)** – is the NSW Government body responsible for developing and maintaining the parks and reserve system, and conserving natural and cultural heritage. It is part of the Department of Environment and Conservation. NPWS recognises that the landscape is imbued with cultural meaning, and has initiated research projects that explore the significance of the natural environment from different cultural perspectives, such as Indigenous groups, Macedonian and Vietnamese communities.
- **Network of Indigenous Australian cultural organisations in GWS** – refers to Indigenous Australian cultural organisations across the region, which have as a key objective, promoting Indigenous heritage and culture in the region. The Network includes: Blue Mountains Aboriginal Culture & Resource Centre, Cubbitch Barta Native Title Claimants Aboriginal Corporation, Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation, Darug Tribal Aboriginal Corporation, Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council, Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council, Gundungurra Tribal Council, Muru Mittigar Aboriginal Cultural and Education Centre, Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council, as well as the Network of Koori Interagencies (refer also to individual entries).
- **New Enterprise Incentives Scheme (NEIS)** - is a Federal Government program to help eligible social security recipients into self-employment. The program includes training in small business management, help with developing a business plan and mentor support. NEIS is available to Centrelink jobseekers with a viable business idea, who are social security recipients.
- **NSW Department of Education and Training (DET)** – Arts Unit - is based in Westmead, with two Regional Arts Coordinators covering the Western Sydney and South West Sydney regions. They coordinate dance, drama and music festivals,

public speaking competitions and visiting artist programs, organise arts camps and intensive workshops for talented students, and run an arts grant program.

- **NSW Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC)** – tackles priority issues for the environment, conservation, sustainability and cultural heritage of New South Wales. DEC brings together the Environment Protection Authority, National Parks and Wildlife Service, former Resource NSW and Botanic Gardens Trust. It also has strong links to the Sydney Catchment Authority (SCA).
- **NSW Department of Housing** - is one of the largest providers of public housing in the world, providing a range of housing solutions to meet the needs of today's community. In partnership with the community, industry and individuals, the Department aims to provide safe, decent and affordable housing opportunities for people on low incomes so that they can live with dignity, find support if needed and achieve sustainable futures.
- **NSW Department of Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources (DIPNR)** - drives, coordinates and streamlines land-use and transport planning, infrastructure development and natural resource management in New South Wales. It is currently preparing a *Sydney Metropolitan Strategy* to better manage growth and change across the Greater Sydney Metropolitan region.
- **NSW Department of State and Regional Development (DSRD)** - aims to advance the economic development of New South Wales and bring new business to the State by attracting domestic and international investment, encouraging exports, improving enterprise skills, increasing innovation and providing a competitive business climate. Through the Small Business Development Division, DSRD delivers support to the small to medium enterprises in NSW.
- **NSW Heritage Office** – is the NSW Government agency that provides advice and funding to communities to help them identify and conserve their heritage. It also administers the State Heritage Register, which lists items of particular importance to the people of New South Wales.
- **NSW Ministry for the Arts (MFA)** – is the NSW Government agency that supports the arts and cultural sector, providing advice to Government and advocates a meaningful role for the arts in everyday life. It supports excellence and innovation in the arts in NSW through its funding programs.
- **NSW Ministry of Transport** – is the NSW Government authority responsible for providing public transport services. It aims to deliver safe, reliable and clean transport services, addressing customer and community needs through best use of resources. The transport service reforms are based on these priorities in delivering sustainable transport services based on agreed performance standards
- **Office of the Minister for Western Sydney (OMWS)** – the Office of Western Sydney was established by the State Government in 1998 as a key agency to advance the interests of Greater Western Sydney. As the first point of contact between State Government and the region, its key roles were to provide strategic policy advice to the State Government on Western Sydney issues and drive integrated regional and whole-of-government initiatives. In 2004, it became the Office of the Minister for Western Sydney.
- **Powerhouse Museum** – is Australia's largest and most popular museum, located in Darling Harbour, Sydney. Its unique and diverse collection of 385,000 objects spans

history, science, technology, design, industry, decorative arts, music, transport and space exploration. Through its regional programs and services, the Powerhouse Museum is committed to working with communities and organisations to support the care and management of the cultural heritage of Greater Western Sydney (cultural heritage covers the natural and built environment, movable heritage and cultural beliefs and practices). This includes professional advice, site visits, workshops and seminars in Greater Western Sydney locations and at the Powerhouse Museum.

- **Regional Arts NSW (RANSW)** - is the peak body for the arts and community cultural development in regional and rural NSW. It is the professional association for the 13 Regional Arts Boards (RAB's) across the state. The RAB's are comprised of representatives from local arts groups and arts councils, from local government, tourism, community organisations, individual artists and community members. Each employs a Regional Arts Development Officer (RADO) who manages the delivery of cultural programs in their area. From the Greater Western Sydney region, Wollondilly is serviced by the RADO for the Southern Tablelands.
- **Register of the National Estate** - is a list of important natural, Indigenous and historic places throughout Australia. It is a statutory register established under the Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975. Under that Act, the Australian Heritage Commission compiled a record of more than 13,000 places. The Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975 has now been repealed but the Register of the National Estate has been retained under the Australian Heritage Council Act 2003, and maintained as an evolving record of Australia's natural, cultural and Indigenous heritage places that are worth keeping for the future. The Australian Heritage Council compiles and maintains the Register. Places on the Register that are in Commonwealth areas, or subject to actions by the Australian Government, are protected under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. (see also entry **Commonwealth Heritage List**)
- **Roads and Traffic Authority, NSW (RTA)** - is responsible for promoting road safety and traffic management, driver licensing and vehicle registration in NSW. It is also responsible for the maintenance and development of the National Highway and state road network in NSW.
- **State Heritage Register (SHR)** - is a list of places and objects of particular importance to the people of NSW compiled by the Heritage Council. Listing on the State Heritage Register means that the heritage item is legally protected as a heritage item under the *NSW Heritage Act* and requires approval from the Heritage Council of NSW for major changes.
- **SWITCH Multimedia and Digital Arts Access Centre** – was established in 2004 by Information and Cultural Exchange with assistance from the NSW Ministry for the Arts and Parramatta City Council. The state-of-the-art centre attempts to engender local artist and communities' partnerships, provide access for those who typically lack access to digital art and new media technologies, act as both a hub and outreach to Western Sydney and be a centre for innovation and excellence in new media arts practice.
- **Sydney Olympic Park Authority (SOPA)** - Located on its the eastern fringe, but with an orientation towards service delivery in the Western Sydney region, SOPA is potentially a significant player in the region's cultural development. SOPA's business objectives include becoming 'a regional centre for culture, the arts, food and entertainment — an active, lively place that offers a distinctive array of social and

cultural opportunities through events and other activities'. It has recently appointed a Director, Arts Development, and plans to include a gallery, performance spaces, and individual and shared studio spaces in its redevelopment of buildings on the Newington Armoury site, which contains over 100 heritage buildings of varying ages.

- **Sydney West Marketing (SWM)** - is an independent regional promotional organisation involved in the growth and development of Greater Western Sydney. It coordinates marketing activities to promote Greater Western Sydney as a preferred dynamic place to live, work, invest and build a future, to actively encourage suitable employment generating investment. It recently allied with Western Sydney Business Connection, an independent business that focuses on export opportunities and targets young professionals and future business managers and owners.
- **TeamWest Regional Priorities Group (TeamWest)** - TeamWest is a process through which Greater Western Sydney identifies common goals and priorities for the region and then advocates these priorities to State and Federal Governments. Member organisations include the peak representative bodies across environmental, community, economic development and arts and cultural sectors, and meet on a regular basis through the TeamWest Regional Priorities Group (RPG).
- **Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council (TLALC)** – is based in Wollondilly (see also entry Local Aboriginal Land Councils). Tharawal land spans the three Local Government Areas of Wollondilly, Camden and Campbelltown. TLALC manages a cultural centre and arts and craft outlet and administers the Community Development Employment Project.
- **Tourism NSW** - is the NSW Government's tourism marketing and policy agency. As well as marketing the destination and its holiday experiences internationally and within Australia, Tourism NSW provides strategic direction and leadership to the tourism industry to support the development of tourism in the State.
- **TV Sydney** – the Channel 31 community television license has been awarded to a consortium of educational and community groups called TV Sydney, of which UWS is a significant member. The channel begins broadcasting early in 2005 with opportunities to provide practical experience for students in the School of Communication Design and Media, extension of screen training courses to regional galleries and communities and potential for partnerships and collaborations.
- **University of Sydney** – was founded in 1850, and has built an international reputation for its outstanding teaching and as a centre of research excellence. The renowned Archaeological Computing Laboratory (ACL) is a part of the University's newly formed Spatial Science Innovation Unit (SSIU) and is well equipped for applied archaeological computing, including statistical and GIS analysis.
- **University of Technology (UTS)** – is focused on the advancement and integration of knowledge, professional skills and technology, and their intelligent, sustainable and enterprising application for the benefit of humanity. The Centre for Popular Education at UTS was set up in mid-1996 to undertake research, consulting and teaching activities that are concerned with education and social justice. The Centre is recognised for its leading research into the benefits of community cultural development.
- **University of Western Sydney - Arts Consultative Committee (UWS-ACC)** – was constituted by UWS in 2004 to expand the existing framework of engagement with the region's arts community based on its teaching and research. Membership of the

Committee includes arts teaching and cultural research staff, local and state government representatives and directors of the region's flagship cultural institutions.

- **University of Western Sydney - Centre for Cultural Research (UWS-CCR)** – Research at CCR addresses the cultural challenges and contradictions of an increasingly globalised, heterogeneous and technologically mediated world. It is one of the most dynamic research centres in its field, and is at the forefront of producing knowledge that engages with real world contexts.
- **University of Western Sydney - Office of Regional Development (UWS-ORD)** - builds strategic alliances between regional stakeholders including industry, community organisations, government and the UWS community. ORD acts as a catalyst to exchange knowledge, harness community expertise and energy for mutual benefit, and build strategic alliances that contribute to the region's development, prosperity and social capital. It encourages scholarship with a particular focus on regional and community development and university engagement.
- **University of Western Sydney (UWS)** - is the major provider of professional arts higher education within the region. In 2004 UWS completed a restructuring of its undergraduate programs, with specialised art-form based degrees replaced by an integrated Bachelor of Performance with majors in Fine Arts, Electronic Arts, Music and Performance (including Theatre and Dance). The new course structures are designed to facilitate collaborative and interdisciplinary work that develops strong links with the region and thus aims to contribute significantly to community and cultural development in the Greater West.
- **VISCOPY** – is the copyright collecting society for visual artists in Australia and New Zealand that works to protect artists' intellectual property and related contractual rights. It licenses the copyright in artistic works and pays the artist or copyright owner a royalty for the reproduction. VISCOPY represents its artist members for the full range of rights, reproduction, publication and communication, thereby providing copyright users with authorised access to thousands of artistic works for commercial, non-commercial and educational purposes. Through its dedicated Indigenous Visual Copyright Education Officer position, VISCOPY aims to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and their families protect their rights to future income from the exploitation of their work by others.
- **Western Front** – is a contemporary visual arts program, coordinated by Blacktown Arts Centre spanning a multitude of venues across Greater Western Sydney.
- **Western Sydney Area Assistance Scheme (WSAAS)** – is an annual grants program for projects that improve community infrastructure, with a focus on areas that are experiencing significant social and economic stress and change. The Scheme is a partnership between the NSW Government, local councils and the community. An initiative of the former PlanningNSW, WSAAS is now administered by the Department of Community Services.
- **Western Sydney Area Health Service (WSAHS)** – is a unit of NSW Health that aims to improve the health of, and ensure comprehensive health care services for, the communities of Greater Western Sydney. Recent projects of WSAHS have focused on the relationship between the built environment, cultural identity and health and wellbeing.
- **Western Sydney Information and Research (WESTIR)** - was established by WSROC in 1981. WESTIR is a not for profit community organisation which assists

with the provision and availability of information and data for the community, public and private sectors throughout the Greater Western Sydney region.

- **Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC)** - is an association of eleven local government bodies that aims to secure through lobbying and research, a sustainable lifestyle for the people of Greater Western Sydney. Since 2002, WSROC has been managing a Regional Cultural Planning Coordination project that focuses on the diverse communities and cultural life of Greater Western Sydney.
- **WSROC Group Apprentices** – was established by WSROC in 1982. It is a not for profit organisation that aims to give young people the opportunity for employment and training based on trade and other business areas.

APPENDIX 3:

Artist and Photography Credits and Contact Details

Credits

All works copyright of the artist, reproduced with permission.

- Cover: (left) Photograph by Antoinette Chiha, *Untitled*, 2003, Blacktown (detail)
(right) Tony Priddle, *Colours*, 2005, pastel on paper (detail)
- p 1: Photograph by John Skennar, *Untitled*, 2003, Katoomba (detail)
- p 2: Poetry by Jonathan Nanlohy, *A note to readers*, 2005
- p 11: Marian Abboud, *Facing West series – graffiti*, 2003, photograph & digital montage
- p 12: Haikus by Jonathan Nanlohy, *Untitled*, 2005
- p 31: Birgitte Hansen, *Lights*, 2005, acrylic paint with oil glaze on oil paper (detail)
- p 32: Poetry by Jonathan Nanlohy, *Visions in Culture*, 2005
- p 37: Photograph by Ian Hobbs. (Penrith Regional Gallery & Lewers Bequest)
- p 38: Photograph by Adam Hollingworth. (Penrith Regional Gallery & Lewers Bequest)
- p 39: Tony Priddle, *Colours*, 2005, pastel on paper (detail)
- p 40: Poetry by Jonathan Nanlohy, *Untitled*, 2005
- p 47: Tony Priddle, *Grandma*, 2005, pastel on paper (detail)
- p 48: Poetry by Jonathan Nanlohy, *Western Sydney Regional Park*, 2005
- p 57: Birgitte Hansen, *"T"*, 2005, acrylic paint with oil glaze on oil paper (detail)
- p 58: Poetry by Jonathan Nanlohy, *Out West*, 2005
- p 65: Birgitte Hansen, *"A"*, 2005, acrylic paint with oil glaze on oil paper (detail)
- p 66: Poetry by Jonathan Nanlohy, *Saying "Hello"*, 2005
- p 74: (clockwise from top left) Orange Blossom Festival -Photograph courtesy Baulkham Hills Shire Council; Photograph by Lin Mountstephens; Laurissa Onato, *Women's Reclaim the Night*, 2003, mural; DJ Pogo workshop - Photograph courtesy Information and Cultural Exchange; Lee Van Tai, *Unity of Australia*, 2003, acrylic on canvas
- p 75: Tony Priddle, *Bonsai*, 2005, pastel on paper (detail)
- p 76: Poetry by Jonathan Nanlohy, *In the West*, 2005
- p 85: Marian Abboud, *Facing West series – travel*, 2003, photograph & digital montage
- p 86: Poetry by Jonathan Nanlohy, *Councils (with a shout out to C.J. Dennis)*, 2005
- p 93: Photograph by Antoinette Chiha, *Untitled*, 2003, Blacktown (detail)
- p 94: Photograph by Antoinette Chiha, *Untitled*, 2004, Blacktown (detail)
- p 94: Poetry by Jonathan Nanlohy, *Untitled*, 2005

Tony Priddle

About the Artist

Art and Artists – “I live in Sydney. I am a Sydney Artist. Sydney is a medium-large fast growing metropolis. Its geographical centre is Prospect Reservoir, but development is most intense on the Eastern perimeter. However it is the West which increasingly supplies the raw material and new ideas with which to make our social future.

Art is human consciousness looking at itself. It is a thing we do which partly defines our humanness. It does not shelter us from storms, or feed hunger. But for a while at least, it is our record that we were here, and that we endeavored to understand our worlds. It is the language by which any future will understand us.”

Tony Priddle visual artist
W: www.apriddle.net.au
E: apriddle@iprimus.com.au

About the Artwork - “Other Australias”

A Series of 7 Artworks for WSROC on the theme, ‘Authoring Contemporary Australia’

Artist Statement - “We Luv Football, Meat pies, Kangaroos and Holden Cars” ... not so long ago a popular anthem for our National Culture! Thank heavens we have come a long way since then... ya reckon!

Not quite all of us feel that a grown man in small shorts manhandling large caged aquatic reptiles for celebrity, with all the maturity and appeal of a hyperactive 12 year old, is quite the icon of national identity we would choose!

There have always been other Australias.

When the First Fleet anchored in the deepwater estuary of the Parramatta, Toongabbie and other rivers with now lost names, they opened a new and drastic chapter in fifty thousand years of sustained and balanced human history here. The First Fleet brought new human genetic material; the British amalgam of Nordic tribes, Ancient Britons, the Romans and the French. Among the convict cargo a Negro, from Madagascar; and the blood of Irish and Cornish Celts, Scottish Picts, Jews and Gypsies. When the deserts were crossed, it was with men from Afghanistan, and their camels. When we grew sugar it was the Kanaks who laboured in the fields. When we found gold it was the Chinese who showed us that they too could work hard for little reward. When we grew wine it was the people of the Rhine and the Mediterranean who showed us how it was done.

200 years is a little time in human history, let alone the history of the ancient island we live on.

Australia is still very much a work in progress.”

Details:

Bonsai, 2005, pastel on paper, 210 x 150 mm.
Grandma, 2005, pastel on paper, 210 x 150 mm.
Colours, 2005, pastel on paper, 210 x 150 mm.

All works acquired in 2005 for the WSROC Art Collection.
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Birgitte Hansen

About the Artist

Birgitte Hansen was born in 1951 at Odense, Denmark and migrated in 1957 to Australia, where she has since resided. She has been a professional artist since 1968. Birgitte is an artist of exceptional skill and intensity telling multilayered visual stories. After living in Newcastle for 20 years she now leads a creative life in her colorful, controversial mural painted house at Blackheath, in the Blue Mountains. She spends her time teaching children art classes, artworking and renovating.

Birgitte has painted 28 murals around Australia, for clients including councils, community arts centers, service clubs, pubs, townships, businesses and museums. Birgitte is highly acclaimed for her work on Trade Union Banners. Sixteen naming-banners have been commissioned by unions and 15 issue-banners for Newcastle Trades Hall Council's Mayday. These works catapulted Birgitte to the forefront of banner painting and have been featured in many publications and exhibited throughout Australia and overseas.

Birgitte is a skilled painter, able to work in many genres but story-telling and figurative themes runs strongly throughout her portfolio. She works with acrylic, oils, pastels, watercolors, pencils, etching, computer graphics, ceramic tiles, collage and prefers to work on large-scale paintings.

Sculpture is a late-blooming domain for Birgitte, with *papier mache*, dough dolls and casting her medium of choice. The sympathetic and sensuous nature of working with paper and "pushing the envelope" has seen Birgitte develop rapidly in this field in recent years.

Birgitte Hansen visual artist
W: www.birgittehansen.com
E: birgitte_hansen@optusnet.com.au

About the Artwork

Birgitte responded to the WSROC brief, through a series of four works using acrylic paint with glaze on oil paper. She chose to examine the cultures of three life stages – child, youth, elder – combining popular culture with tradition and everyday creative expression.

Details:

"A", 2005, acrylic paint with oil glaze on oil paper, 297 x 420 mm.

"T", 2005, acrylic paint with oil glaze on oil paper, 297 x 420 mm.

Lights, 2005, acrylic paint with oil glaze on oil paper, 297 x 420 mm.

All works acquired in 2005 for the WSROC Art Collection.

Copyright of the artist, reproduced with permission.

Jonathan Nanlohy

About the Artist

Jonathan is a Blacktown-based musician and writer. As bass guitarist for a number of bands, including Heval and Tribe, he brings a style that merges funk and jazz, soul, world music and two decades of experience. Jonathan and Heval are currently recording their second album.

Recently, Jonathan script, "*How Things Change*" was performed at the Parramatta Riverside Theatres, as part of the "10x6" program of short plays.

Jonathan Nanlohy musician/ writer
M: 0414 999 190
E: jnanlohy56@optusnet.com.au

About the Artwork

Details:

A note to readers, 2005.
Visions in Culture, 2005.
Western Sydney Regional Park, 2005.
Out West, 2005.
Saying "Hello", 2005.
In the west, 2005.
Councils (with a shout out to C.J. Dennis), 2005.
(various haikus), 2005.
Copyright of the artist, reproduced with permission.

Marian Abboud

About the Artist

Marian's art practice continues to evolve from the myriad of thoughts and ideas associated with living and working in Western Sydney. Her work explores a range of themes, most particularly the impact of the environment upon people, including those from non-English speaking backgrounds. Social, cultural, political, racial and economic concerns also strongly inform her practice.

Marian studied a Bachelor of Visual Communications, Photography and Digital Imaging at the University of Western Sydney and has continued to work in the medium of new technology. Her recent work illustrates a shift towards the use of digital imaging, multimedia video and sound work, which alters reality and explores other dimensions.

Marian Abboud photography graphic design multimedia
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About the Artwork – “Facing West”

Facing West is a series of ten framed photographic and digital media montages. By tapping into the collective memories and experiences of people in Western Sydney, Marian tells a lively story of the region's history and contemporary character.

Familiar Western Sydney issues, such as transport, housing and industry, are refreshed through seductive overlays of rich, sensual textures and gutsy image juxtapositions. Amidst the region's chaotic, demanding and rapidly-changing environments, Marian uncovers the enchanting rhythms of Western Sydney life, so that these hidden pleasures become palpable.

Facing West commemorates Western Sydney people coming together - rallying to a just cause, sharing a celebration and performing what they believe. The multitude of complex landscapes, people, histories, celebrations and achievements are players in this exploration of Western Sydney life.

Facing West was commissioned for WSROC's 30th anniversary, and is part of WSROC Art Collection.

Details:

Facing West series – travel, 2003, photograph & digital montage, 400 x 400 mm.

Facing West series – graffiti, 2003, photograph & digital montage, 400 x 400 mm.

All works acquired in 2003 for the WSROC Art Collection.

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Antoinette Chiha and Renee Paxton

About the Artwork

In 2003, students Antionette Chiha and Renee Paxton initiated a research project about the migration and settlement experiences of African communities in Blacktown. This project evolved into an exhibition at the Blacktown Arts Centre. *Recognition: Exhibiting Africa in Blacktown* was photo-documentary in style and brought together shared stories, personal pictures and histories of emigrants from Gambia, Ghana, Sierra Leone and The Sudan.

“*Recognition: Exhibiting Africa in Blacktown* united two journeys. Firstly, two independent researchers’ quest to understand how recognition can be both offered and received, and secondly a recently-formed community’s journey of strength, struggle, determination and hope³⁷.”

The Vision of the **Blacktown Arts Centre** is to support the growth of professional arts practice in Western Sydney and local cultures through the presentation of contemporary cross-artform programs and to promote a positive cultural image of Blacktown. The Arts Centre curated *Recognition* as “a chance to mirror ourselves in our own environment of cultural differentiation and at the same time it proffers and understanding of the cultural diversity evolving around us in our present-day world³⁸.”

³⁷ Antoinette Chiha and Renee Paxton, *Recognition: Exhibiting Africa in Blacktown*, 2004, exhibition catalogue.

³⁸ *ibid*

Details:

The photographs which appears in this report were been selected from the 35 photographs in *Recognition: Exhibiting Africa in Blacktown*. In the exhibition, the photographs were displayed in a storytelling mode, following personal journeys from each of the focus countries – Gambia, Ghana, Sierra Leone and The Sudan.

Photograph by Antoinette Chiha, *Untitled*, 2003, Blacktown. (friends - Gambia)

Photograph by Antoinette Chiha, *Untitled*, 2004, Blacktown. (family - Gambia)

Copyright of the artist, reproduced with permission.

Lee Van Tai**About the Artwork – “Unity of Australia”**

Artist Statement - “This is not a voice call for the Unity of Australia; it’s a SONG about living reality and interfaith of this heterogeneous face of Australia; living cohesively and harmoniously – as it was, is and will be – with everyday Australians growing up and signing together with their souls.”

Unity of Australia was first exhibited in *A Sideways Glance*, curated by the Fairfield Interfaith Committee at Fairfield Gallery and Museum. “(Fairfield City) comprises individuals born in over 133 countries, with many diverse forms of religious practice. Every religion has permeated and been permeated by a variety of diverse cultures, thus adding to the richness of human experience. Thus we are dealing, not just with a few main religions, but with many sub-traditions³⁹.” The Fairfield Interfaith Committee itself comprised Muslim and Christian, Buddhist, Hindu and Bahai’i members who wanted, through art, to explore deeper areas of human and spiritual commonality in the Fairfield area.

The Vision of the **Fairfield City Museum and Gallery** is to involve and strengthen our changing community through arts, culture and heritage. Through an extensive program of changing exhibitions both the Stein Gallery and the community space and associated public programs we endeavor to reach out to all the Fairfield Community and also showcase our unique cultures and heritage to the wider Australian community.

Details:

Le Van Tai, *Unity of Australia*, 2003, acrylic on canvas.

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³⁹ *A Sideways Glance*, 2003, exhibition catalogue, Fairfield City Museum and Gallery.

PARTICIPATING COUNCILS

WSROC

AUBURN

BANKSTOWN

BAULKHAM HILLS

BLACKTOWN

BLUE MOUNTAINS

FAIRFIELD

HAWKESBURY

HOLROYD

LIVERPOOL

PARRAMATTA

PENRITH

MACROC

CAMDEN

CAMPBELLTOWN

WOLLONDILLY

Greater Western Sydney
Local Government Areas



For further information, to enlist as a partner, or to obtain a full copy of Authoring Contemporary Australia contact WSROC or visit the website; www.wsroc.com.au

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In the west dreams grow wild, canvases unfold, windows, neighbourhood centres and halls, musicians celebrate on street corners, sculptures sleep in parks, colour, music plays in fountains, dancing on pavements and between your garden bushes, posters fly break into abstract swirls into public places, a