



**OVATION LAUNCHES BRAND NEW REGIONAL ARTS SERIES
HEARTLAND
World Premiere – Thursday 2nd August at 8.00pm**



Ovation Channel and **Regional Arts Australia** have worked together to produce **Heartland**, a new monthly television series featuring the very best of regional arts and cultural events across Australia. Showcasing performance, visual arts, music, drama, from forests transformed by sculpture to children who just might run away with the circus, Heartland tells the stories of the creative people helping to shape our national culture.

Focusing on events outside the metropolitan areas of Australia, Heartland creates a new access for TV audiences in both metropolitan and regional areas of Australia, providing a platform for individuals and organisations whose work may not normally be shown on national television. With a stunning backdrop, from the dry red inner core of Australia to its breezy coastal towns, the program celebrates the rich and varied arts activities and success stories that are at the heart of contemporary Australian culture.

“Heartland embraces the very best of regional arts, presenting the incredibly creative and artistic diversity of work right across Australia, with all its character and eccentricities.”

Gerry Travers, MD, Ovation Channel



Produced and presented by **Michelle Hanna**, Heartland will also demonstrate how the arts are helping to unite communities and individuals in regional and remote areas of Australia, coping with issues such as poverty and drought.

Each Heartland program will also feature a one-minute spotlight on new media or animation from regional Australian artists.

The series will cover unique Australian cultural events including:-

2007 Alice Springs Beanie Festival – NT

The festival that elevates the Australian beanie to an art form, each year (now in its 11th) this remarkable festival unites communities, generates income and brings thousands of visitors to Alice Springs.

Circus Oz – WA

The creative masters of Circus Oz, recently returned from wowing audiences in New York Times Square, get their inspiration from performing a third of the year in remote areas of Australia. Currently, they offer the local community of Newman the chance to learn skills with community training sessions and classes in school curriculums, culminating in a big town performance.



Dry Humour – NSW

When the town of Wagga Wagga was in depression because of the drought and no one could afford to go to the theatre, local businesses offered to support regional towns by putting on free performances to lift people's spirits. The Riverina Theatre Company in Wagga Wagga has been so successful that they are now an integral part of the morale of this hard hit community.



Mubali – NSW

When young indigenous girls were coming into hospital to give birth, for many it was their first time in hospital. Enter Beyond Empathy, a unique arts intervention organisation that had the young girls coming in for plaster cast workshops to make moulds of their bellies and paint them, while health professionals offered advice on breastfeeding, dental and post-natal care. The award-winning Mubali program culminated in an exhibition at the Moree Plains Gallery, whilst succeeding in raising the levels of health amongst the new mothers and their babies.

2007 Cossack Art Award – WA

The Pilbara region in North Western Australia has inspired many artists; it is also the home of the most isolated acquisitive art award in the world. On display in the magnificent granite and bluestone masonry buildings in Cossack, the annual award is fast gaining a reputation as one of Australia's most exciting regional arts events. Jason Smith from the National Gallery of Victoria was the Judge for 2007.

Regional Arts Australia is the key national body representing the broad and complex interests and concerns of those working with and for the arts in regional, rural and remote Australia.



Ovation is available on AUSTAR, FOXTEL, Optus and SelecTV

For more information:

Jeanette Bevan, Publicity Manager, Ovation Channel, tel: (02) 8879 7018, email jbevan@ovationchannel.com
Michelle Hanna, Presenter / Producer, Ovation Channel, tel: (02) 8879 7022, email michelle@ovationchannel.com
Vivienne Skinner, Communications Manager, Regional Arts Australia, tel: 0411 206 224, email vivienne.skinner@countryarts.org.au