

A STRONG COMMUNITY

empowerment, reconciliation and celebration

Country communities have always tended to be more self-reliant than their metropolitan counterparts. A relative paucity of support services and a high degree of social interdependence means that, to most country people, community development is more than just a vague realm of government policy. Rather, it's something people practice all the time in order to address a diverse range of issues, spanning across all sections of the community.

The projects included in this final section of the publication demonstrate how art projects can be effective tools for communicating and addressing all manner of social issues and for building stronger, healthier communities.

- ◆ Southern Edge Arts has brought together 100 local performers, an international choreographer, a rock band and the local police to develop *Speedway Ballet*, an acclaimed theatrical production conveying road safety messages to a predominantly young audience in Albany, Western Australia.
- ◆ *Uniting Our Communities*, an initiative of the Foundation for Australian Agricultural Women, involved over 100 women from all parts of East Gippsland in arts projects which developed leadership skills, created development opportunities and consolidated communities.
- ◆ The *Desert Acrobats* program adopts a holistic approach to promoting the health of young people in remote Aboriginal communities throughout the Kimberley region of Western Australia.
- ◆ South Australia's Riverland Multicultural Arts Program is proving to be a successful pilot for professional support of arts projects involving ethnic communities in rural areas.
- ◆ Initiated by the Tasmanian Women's Midlife Information Service, *Bold Bags & Old Baggage* was a successful art and health project focussing upon major transitional periods in women's lives.
- ◆ Based in Cairns, Graft 'n' Arts operates broad ranging youth arts programs which address young people's concerns and create genuine training and employment opportunities.
- ◆ Coordinated by Cornwall Arts Council, *Individually Beautiful* was a highly successful dance project involving people with physical, intellectual or emotional disabilities and creating connections with the broader community.
- ◆ Conducted annually, *Tribute to Our Seniors* is a photographic project which acknowledges the contributions of elderly residents within the Redlands Shire, east of Brisbane.
- ◆ In hosting a visiting artists program at the Pink Palace in Tennant Creek, Julalikari Council CDEP Arts & Crafts facilitates a cultural exchange which enriches the practice of local women artists.



THE PROJECT

Speedway Ballet is a production of Southern Edge Arts in collaboration with South African dancer and choreographer Alfred Hinkel. Southern Edge Arts, based in Albany in Western Australia's south west, is the region's youth theatre company. *Speedway Ballet* fuses dance, rock music and car culture, combining the talents of a thrash band, roller bladers, skateboarders, dancing mothers, stiltwalkers and local police. The production promotes the message of road safety and is a direct response to the high rate of youth road fatalities in the Albany region.

The production was performed in Albany during May 1998 and will tour to other regions throughout 1999.

THE PROCESS

Spurred on by his own experience of a tragic car accident, Lockie McDonald began to develop *Speedway Ballet* through improvisation workshops with local teenagers. McDonald later persuaded visiting South African dancer and choreographer, Alfred Hinkel, to assist in developing the production. Hinkel's mission became to create a community dance involving as many local young people as possible.

The diverse elements of the performance- dance, voice, music - were developed separately and then brought together in the final stages of rehearsal. Southern Edge Arts used in-house expertise to develop the movement and music elements of the production. An outside vocalist was employed to run a series of a capella workshops with young people and develop original material to be used in the production. Similarly, visual artists were employed to design and develop the sets.

Community based performance relates strongly to the origins of theatre, allowing the performers to empower themselves in the process of creating the performance.

ALFRED HINKEL

SPEEDWAY BALLET, PHOTOS KEVIN O'BRIEN @ CALIX

CLEAR BENEFITS

Speedway Ballet provided the opportunity for local teenagers to develop performance skills and raise their self esteem. The production promoted road safety awareness to teenage audiences in a form that was entertaining and relevant. In addition, the production inspired an artistic exchange between Hinkel and Southern Edge Arts which was mutually beneficial and which promises to be ongoing.

CREATIVE PERSONNEL INVOLVED

Speedway Ballet was developed by Lockie McDonald and choreographed by Alfred Hinkel. Eddie Tutuki, musical director, Teresa Hughes, vocals specialist and visual artists, Sue Codee and Sam Sutcliffe, provided artistic support. More than 100 young performers from Denmark, Mount Barker and Albany were involved in the production, including the rock band Fuzztruncheon.

SOURCES OF FUNDING AND SUPPORT

The show was funded by the Western Australian Lotteries Commission (\$20,000), Arts WA (\$4,750), Healthway (\$3,700), the Theatre Fund and Community Cultural Development Fund of the Australia Council (\$4,700 & \$8,000 respectively) and the Albany Community Policing Committee, who donated \$4,900 for the project.

JUMPING THE HURDLES

The initial challenge faced by Southern Edge Arts was to find teenagers interested in participating in a theatre production. Once this was achieved the problem became one of coordinating a diverse and large cast of over 100 teenagers who had only limited or no performance experience.

We wanted to do a show with community benefit. There has been a problem with teenagers killing themselves on local roads through speed or alcohol.

LOCKIE McDONALD



SHOWING THE WAY

MOST SIGNIFICANT OR INNOVATIVE ASPECT OF PROJECT

Speedway Ballet has brought the local arts community together with police and teenagers to convey the message of road safety to a teenage audience. It has also involved unique collaboration between a South African Dance Company and a West Australian youth theatre company.

TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

Speedway Ballet performed to packed houses, provoking particularly emotional responses from young audiences. The performers are keen to develop the piece further and Southern Edge Arts is looking to tour the production to five regional communities in 1999. The project also attracted a high profile in local, state and national media.

It is anticipated the collaboration established during the production will continue. Hinkel and McDonald have already mapped out a future exchange program and are planning a collaborative work for the 2000 Perth Festival.



MORE INFORMATION?

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THE PROJECT

The Rural Women's Cultural and Community Leadership project was conceived in 1997 as a national pilot initiative, utilising the arts as a vehicle for increasing the leadership skills of 200 women in rural and remote communities. The pilot involved projects in two regions and included activity in the Atherton Tablelands in Far North Queensland, in addition to the Gippsland project described below.

Across the East Gippsland region a variety of artforms were used to encourage the women to work collaboratively and to articulate their concerns. These media included film making, roadshow performance and visual artworks. Four towns were selected as sites for project activity, and over 120 women participated in workshops and hands-on art activities.

The culmination of the project brought together participants from the four towns for a two day workshop and presentation. Issues to emerge from the presentations included dissatisfaction with the level and quality of government services, relative lack of ongoing training and professional development opportunities and the need for improved communication services. The workshop was attended by representatives from a number of relevant government agencies, including advisers to the Federal Minister for Agriculture.

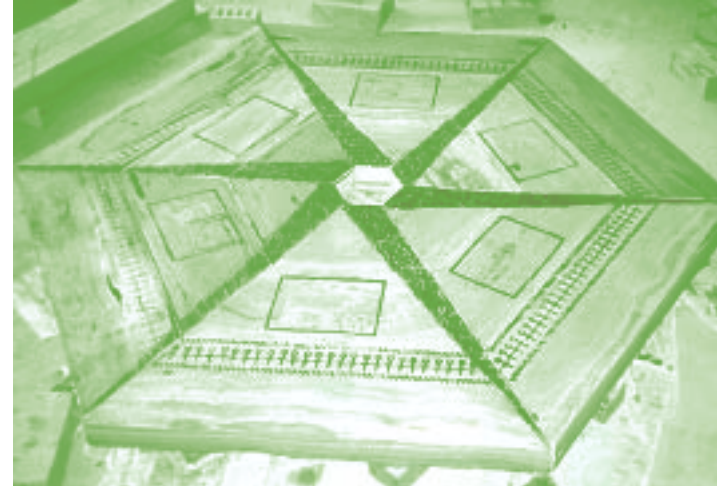
THE PROCESS

Following the establishment of a representative steering committee and the appointment of a coordinator, the Rural Women's Leadership project was promoted widely in and around the selected towns. Initial workshops and planning sessions were conducted and the directions for respective arts projects were identified. Suitably skilled professional artists were then conscripted from within the region.

Projects developed over a nine month period, during which time communications were maintained across the region and a number of joint showcase events were convened so that experiences could be shared and progress reported. At the end of the nine months the projects were presented publicly.

Some activity is still continuing at a local level across the region and many participants have gone on to further utilise skills acquired through the project.

LEFT: SNAKES AND LADDERS PRODUCED BY THE BAIRNSDALE GROUP OF THE RURAL WOMEN'S PROJECT
RIGHT: MAFFRA RURAL WOMEN'S GROUP, CARVED WOODEN OUTDOOR TABLE INLAID WITH COLOURED RESINS



CLEAR BENEFITS

The women involved in the project have acquired valuable leadership and business skills which have opened up new work and creative possibilities for many of them and which are of benefit to their communities.

CREATIVE PERSONNEL INVOLVED

Artists employed to work with local women on the various arts projects throughout the Gippsland region included film-maker Lisa Roberts, visual artists Jenny Toye and Catherine Larkins, performance director Clifton Kline and sculptor Clive Murray-White.

SOURCES OF FUNDING AND SUPPORT

The project received funding and in-kind support totalling \$107,000, including \$72,500 from the Australia Council and smaller amounts from the East Gippsland Shire (\$1000 plus in-kind support), Rural Finance Corporation, Westpac Banking Corporation, the Lance Reichstein Foundation and the Department of Natural Resources & Environment. Valuable in-kind support was received from a range of agencies, including ABC Regional Radio, Arts Network East Gippsland, the Victorian Farmers Federation, East Gippsland Institute of TAFE and the Orbost Rotary Club.

JUMPING THE HURDLES

There were some misunderstandings about the project which led to the withdrawal of a small number of women while it was still evolving. Some of these women had expectations of being paid while others found the group dynamic difficult. Additionally, the demographic character of some parts of the region caused predictable communications and travel difficulties for some participants.

One of the major benefits of the project is that 70 per cent of the women became involved in activities which had previously either been inaccessible to them or were something they had never considered possible for themselves.

DI DEPPLER, PROJECT COORDINATOR

SHOWING THE WAY

MOST SIGNIFICANT OR INNOVATIVE ASPECT OF PROJECT

The project produced immediate and significant artistic outcomes, but also produced longer term benefits, such as the increased skills, confidence and leadership abilities of participants and an enhanced recognition of key issues affecting women in rural and remote communities.

TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

The success of the project has been evidenced by the positive community response to artworks produced through the project. Some of these have since been further developed and presented publicly. A report on the project was presented to the 2nd International Women in Agriculture Conference held in Washington DC in June 1998, and was very well received.

Other indicators of the project's success include subsequent opportunities for employment and enterprise development for several participants, ongoing training and professional development activities, and the consolidation of friendships and local networks.



We are all getting along, cooperating, making new friends and working on something, achieving something for the community.

LORRAINE CRAIGIE, MARLO, PARTICIPANT

I've discovered I'm not alone. I've found we can work together.

DEBBIE CHISOLM, ORBOST, PARTICIPANT

We always knew we had something to say. Through the projects we have found our voice and it is growing. People are listening.

MARGARETA OSBORN, TINAMBA, PARTICIPANT

MORE INFORMATION?

Contact: Di Deppler, Coordinator, 305 Bellbird Road, Bairnsdale VIC 3875 Tel. 03 5157 9333

THE PROJECT

Desert Acrobats is an innovative program operated through the HEATworks (Health, Education and Theatre Works), the health promotions unit of the Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service's Council. As with all of KAMSC programs, the *Desert Acrobats* initiative adopts a holistic approach to promoting the health of young people in remote Aboriginal communities throughout the huge Kimberley region. The program seeks to promote improved confidence and self-esteem among young participants and to provide an attractive avenue for physical and social development in communities where opportunities are limited.

The program is facilitated by a trained gymnast, working in partnership with an Aboriginal trainee. The *Desert Acrobats* team travels out to remote communities, taking with them all of the necessary equipment to run workshops in gymnastics, dance, music and performance. To date, the program has involved about 500 Aboriginal youth aged between six and 17 years, and has targeted five remote communities in both desert and coastal regions. Within the communities, the team generally works in partnership with local schools and community organisations. There is ongoing follow-up of projects to promote their continued development.

A pilot stage of the project culminated in an acclaimed public performance as part of the national NAIDOC celebrations held in Broome in July 1998. While *Desert Acrobats* has already been successful in developing performance skills among participants, in the longer term the program seeks to provide positive experiences and learning opportunities and to enrich existing education and health programs at the community level.

THE PROCESS

HEATworks consults with local communities to determine particular needs and interests. The *Desert Acrobats* program has targeted communities where the health and behaviour of young people is a major issue and has developed working partnerships with local Aboriginal organisations.

Desert Acrobats involves a rigorous evaluation process. Feedback from teachers, Aboriginal aides and the youth themselves informs the development of local follow-up strategies in particular communities and the ongoing refinement of the overall program.

LEFT: KIDS FROM DESERT ACROBATS CUT LOOSE BY THE OCEAN

RIGHT: DESERT ACROBATS AT SUNSET IN GREAT KIMBERLEY

KIMBERLEY ABORIGINAL SERVICES COUNCIL

CLEAR BENEFITS

Participating youth derive improved health, confidence and self esteem, as well as learning valuable performance skills. Communities also benefit from having youth who are learning to be more aware of their social responsibilities, and whose energies are being channelled in a constructive way.

CREATIVE PERSONNEL INVOLVED

Desert Acrobats was developed and is managed by Sita Fitzgerald, and also involves Aboriginal dancer Simon Stewart as trainee artist and administrator.

SOURCES OF FUNDING AND SUPPORT

The program has received funding support from the Western Australian Lotteries Commission (\$13,250 for the initial pilot project) and the State Office of Youth Affairs (\$11,500) and smaller grants from Country Arts WA, Community Arts Network WA and other health agencies. The Medical Services Council contributes significantly to the project from its own resources, providing a vehicle, accommodation and administrative support.

JUMPING THE HURDLES

The major difficulty in delivering any program to remote communities throughout the Kimberley is that of distance, and the related factors of poor roads and lack of access during some seasons of the year. Development and implementation of *Desert Acrobats* has needed to accommodate these factors.

The Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service's Council (KAMSC) has a unique acrobatic theatre health promotion program called *Desert Acrobats*. The KAMSC Council is committed to the principle of Aboriginal youth empowerment by focusing on inherent natural abilities. This is achieved by providing access for young people to gymnastics, theatre and dance in remote communities in the Kimberley region.

SHOWING THE WAY

MOST SIGNIFICANT OR INNOVATIVE ASPECT OF PROJECT

Desert Acrobats is significant as an arts program which is an effectively integrated component of a regional health program. Additionally, the project illustrates the potential for a touring workshop program to inspire ongoing performance work in the communities visited.

TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

Program evaluation has noted that acrobatic and performance activity is ongoing within most of the participating communities. In many cases, approaches demonstrated through workshops have been integrated within school curricula. Most significantly, many of the young people who have participated in initial activities are continuing to work and develop skills in acrobatics and performance.

The project develops important life skills such as learning how to work in group situations, how to communicate, how to perform in public, thereby raising self-esteem, confidence, and sense of responsibility. These skills relate directly to how a child performs in school and their relationship to the wider community.



MORE INFORMATION?

Contact: Sita Fitzgerald, HEATworks Unit, Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Services Council, PO Box 1377, Broome WA 6725 Tel. 08 9192 1884 Fax. 08 9192 1937

THE PROJECT

The Multicultural Arts Program supports the development of arts projects by ethnic communities and artists from the Riverland and Mallee regions in South Australia. Constituted as a part of the South Australian Country Arts Trust (SACAT), the program has been operating since 1996, under the direction of a community based steering committee. The program aims to promote the region's cultural diversity through arts activity. This is evident in the projects already supported which include rugmaking by Turkish women in Renmark, traditional music and dance involving the Riverland Sikh community, an oral history and storytelling project involving members of the region's Greek and Italian communities and various additional cross-cultural initiatives.

The program has also supported the development and promotion of projects by individual artists in the region, including the recording and performance of music by Pinnaroo based Greek Australian artist Kosta Arvanitis.

THE PROCESS

The Steering Committee of the Multicultural Arts Program includes members of Aboriginal, Lebanese, Greek, Turkish, Italian, Sikh, Scottish and Croatian background. This gives the committee direct links to these communities and makes it well placed to identify their needs. The Multicultural Arts Officer works closely with the committee and with other staff of the South Australian Country Arts Trust, and liaises with a diverse range of non-arts agencies across the region.

CLEAR BENEFITS

The program provides opportunities for self discovery and cultural expression to a broad range of community members and artists in the Riverland and Mallee region. The projects help to strengthen cultural identity within individual communities while at the same time increasing awareness of the cultural diversity of the region among the wider community.

CREATIVE PERSONNEL INVOLVED

The Multicultural Arts Officer can provide information on professional artists involved in the various projects initiated through the program.

SOURCES OF FUNDING AND SUPPORT

The Multicultural Arts Officer position is funded by the Australia Council and by the South Australian Country Arts Trust (SACAT). The program has attracted project funding for a diverse range of projects, including small grants ranging from \$400 up to \$2,400 from SACAT for skills workshops and project development and larger grants up to \$5,000 from the Commonwealth Government's Regional Arts Fund for larger events. Project funding has also been received from Living Health, South Australia's health sponsorship and promotions agency.

JUMPING THE HURDLES

The program has had to overcome a slow gestation period during which protracted delays were experienced in the confirmation of funding and the recruitment of a suitable Multicultural Arts Officer. The local steering committee did well to maintain community interest and momentum throughout this period. Additionally, the program has had to work hard to counter the social divisions which can exist within a culturally diverse region. In the Riverland, these social tensions have been exacerbated by a protracted period of economic difficulty afflicting the region's primary horticultural industries.

Both young and older women were involved in a positive exchange with everyone finding ground to enjoy each other's company and inspire the design outcomes. Now the community is discussing the viability of a Turkish rug making cottage industry in a north eastern South Australian landscape.

REPORT FROM RUG MAKING PROJECT INVOLVING TURKISH MUSLIM COMMUNITY

SHOWING THE WAY

MOST SIGNIFICANT OR INNOVATIVE ASPECT OF THE PROJECT

The establishment of a Multicultural Arts Program in the Riverland is viewed nationally as the prototype for such an initiative in a rural area. The Multicultural Arts Officer position is the only one of its kind funded outside of a capital city. The program promotes an appreciation of cultural diversity as an important defining element of some rural areas.

TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

The program has been successful in engaging major ethnic communities in its management and in supporting a diversity of projects spanning a broad range of cultures within the region.



LEFT: MUSLIM WOMEN IN A FABRIC WORKSHOP, RIGHT: TURKISH WOMEN'S RUGMAKING PROJECT

MORE INFORMATION?

Contact: Danyon De Buell Innes, Multicultural Arts Officer, SA Country Arts Trust, PO Box 228, Berri SA 5431 Tel: 08 8582 2288 Fax: 08 8582 3237 Email: danyon@peg.apc.org



THE PROJECT

Bold Bags & Old Baggage is a community based art and health project which has utilised a range of visual media including textiles, painting, printmaking and jewellery as well as prose writing and poetry. Fifty five artists and 50 women from four communities in Tasmania participated in the project which was initiated by the Women's Midlife Information Service, a branch of the Tasmanian Department of Community & Health Services.

Using the theme of 'bags and baggage', participants reflected on major transitional periods in their lives, particularly puberty, motherhood and menopause. The project's underlying concept was to utilise bags as a metaphor for women's life stories. Some women addressed the theme through collaborative works, while others chose to work on individual projects.

An exhibition combining work from the community workshops and work created independently by professional artists was held in March 1998. This exhibition is touring around Tasmania in the second half of 1998 and is likely to tour in some mainland states in 1999.

THE PROCESS

The project developed out of collaborative planning involving the Women's Midlife Information Service, Clarence City Council and the Tasmanian Arts Council. Sufficient funding was obtained to employ a community artist and invitations for women to participate in the project were issued through community houses, arts networks and health programs. Groups were established in four centres - Risdon Vale, Rokeby, Bellerive and the Derwent Valley. In many cases, these groups comprised women who had already worked together on various social and creative projects.

As the theme and scope of the project developed, invitations were extended to a range of external artists to develop work for inclusion in an exhibition which would also include material produced by women in each of the four groups. Eleven artists accepted this invitation, and produced an impressive range of work encompassing themes both personal and political.

The *Bold Bags & Old Baggage* exhibition was initially presented at the Schoolhouse Gallery in Rosny, and then at another venue in Launceston. The Tasmanian Arts Council then toured a smaller version of the exhibition to other centres in the state.

WOMEN'S MIDLIFE INFORMATION SERVICE

BOLD BAGS & OLD BAGGAGE

CLEAR BENEFITS

The project empowered the participating women by providing them with the opportunity to confront difficult personal issues in a safe, non-threatening and creative environment. The subsequent exhibition related ideas of broad social relevance to a wide audience.

CREATIVE PERSONNEL INVOLVED

Caz Rodwell was the visual artist employed to work with groups of women participants and to curate the resulting exhibition. Other artists who made work for the project include Barbie Kjar, Elizabeth Glover, Gwen Egg and Elena Gallegos. Elizabeth Dean was commissioned to produce a catalogue essay for the exhibition.

SOURCES OF FUNDING AND SUPPORT

The project was supported with grants from the Department of Community & Health Services (\$3,500), the Tasmanian Arts Council (\$1,500), Clarence City Council (\$4,000) and Contemporary Arts Services Tasmania (\$1,000). The Aberfoyle Resources Inc. also contributed \$1,100 to the project through their sponsorship of the Tasmanian Arts Council's 1998 Visual Arts Touring Program.

JUMPING THE HURDLES

The project provoked many participants to confront difficult and painful episodes from their lives. While this experience was ultimately fruitful both in terms of work produced and issues articulated, it did create significant emotional tensions at various stages throughout the project's development.

The Derwent Valley women decided to work collectively on one item as they wanted to show the reliance of country women upon each other. The Bellerive Community Arts Centre women spent time in discussion and writing, reflecting on their lives and the gap between the reality of loss and the cultural rhetoric of their early lives.

ELIZABETH DEAN, CATALOGUE ESSAYIST

SHOWING THE WAY

MOST SIGNIFICANT OR INNOVATIVE ASPECT OF PROJECT

Bold Bags & Old Baggage encouraged a diverse group of women to utilise creative media to explore their life journeys. In doing so, the project produced an exhibition which is simultaneously inventive, moving and humorous. Most significantly, the project has been able to translate a range of sensitive emotional and mental health issues and experiences into an accessible and powerful collection of artworks.

TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

Women involved in the project have continued working together and have been inspired to further their art-making endeavours. The *Bold Bags & Old Baggage* exhibition has received a favourable response from a broad audience as it has toured throughout Tasmania, and the show seems likely to have a continuing life as it tours to Victorian and South Australian venues in 1999.

One of the most rewarding elements to come from the Bags [project] is the amount of fun, camaraderie and opening up of long held grief issues.



TOP: BEVERLEY PARSANEN, *THE FISHING BAG*
RISDON VALE, PHOTO: PETER WHYTE
BOTTOM: RUTH HADLOW, *BLOODY MARY*
BOLD BAGS INVITED ARTIST, PHOTO: PETER WHYTE
LEFT: DERWENT VALLEY ARTS COUNCIL WORK IN
PROGRESS, PHOTO: KIMBRA BESTER



MORE INFORMATION?

Contact: Marjorie Luck, Community Arts Officer, Clarence City Council Tel. 03 6245 8742 Fax. 03 6245 8738



THE PROJECT

Graft 'N' Arts is a community arts organisation operating out of a 'tin shed' in Cairns, focussing on the development of the arts for young people (aged 11-25 years) in the communities of far north Queensland. The centre acts as a rehearsal, workshop production and exhibition space for local youth and community arts initiatives. Projects such as XPRESSION, for example, have helped to expand the local music industry and given young bands an opportunity to develop their performance skills. Other activities include youth theatre, educational videos relating to youth issues and media projects in collaboration with the local radio station 4CCR FM. In addition to these city based activities, Graft 'N' Arts operates a youth outreach program in the greater Cairns district covering 2,000 square kilometres.

Such a broad commitment to community arts has earned the organisation a growing reputation both as a creative hub and an effective advocate for young people. In 1996 Graft 'N' Arts received the Local Government Associations of Queensland Excellence Award for innovative cultural development. The organisation was also supported by the Australia Council and by Arts Queensland to research and produce an information kit titled *Inside Graft 'N' Arts*. The organisation is currently looking to expand its role by becoming fully accredited as a training provider in media and the arts so the centre can function as a community resource for programs in alternative education and juvenile justice, acting as a stepping stone to tertiary education and to employment in the arts and tourism industries.

Graft 'N' Arts is currently undertaking two new initiatives which celebrate the cultural diversity of Far North Queensland. These projects are *Significant Rites*, targeting artists from across the broader region who are adept in various traditional ethnic artforms, and *Pacific Exchange*, a collaboration with the North Queensland Indigenous and South Pacific Island Association. Both of these initiatives are being supported through special project grants from the Australia Council.

Above all, youth arts is about having lots of fun. And whether that's moshing, stilt walking, radio presenting, rapping, filming, painting, scanning, acting, skating, playing music, reciting poetry, break dancing, animating, shootin' hoops, D.J.'in, potting, screen printing, graffin', curating, dooffin', sound engineering, props making, editing, coordinating or web/crowd surfing, Graft 'N' Arts wants to know about it.

GRAFT 'N' ARTS

MOSHING, SCANNING, DOFFIN', PLAYING...

THE PROCESS

Graft 'N' Arts conducts weekly creative youth arts workshops and ongoing programs in the various visual and performing arts. These take place after school, on weekends and during school holidays and are run by practising professional artists. Workshops are designed to meet specific community needs and are conducted at the centre and in outreach locations on demand. Cairns City Council employs a full time Youth Arts Officer through Graft 'N' Arts, to plan and implement all youth related projects and events. Through the Department of Health & Family Services, a part-time Community Arts Liaison Officer has also been funded. This program, designed to work primarily with indigenous and Islander communities, will compliment Graft 'N' Arts' other services. The organisation is also establishing links with a variety of other agencies, programs and communities.

Distinct youth cultures are well catered for at the centre. XPRESSION gigs, which appeal to young people who associate with grunge/indie music culture, are held on the last Saturday night of each month. These events give aspiring bands an opportunity to perform and learn all facets of gig management. On a separate Saturday night in each month Black Knights caters to young people who appreciate reggae/hip hop culture, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth. Both events encourage young people to get involved in the centre, and create a sense of belonging. They are also a valuable source of entertainment for young people in a town which mainly caters to the over 18s.

CLEAR BENEFITS

Graft 'N' Arts gives young people in Far North Queensland the opportunity to pursue their interests and address issues of access and equity within a creative and supportive environment. The organisation's youth arts programs provide valuable skills and training for young people and enhance their opportunities for finding employment in the arts and cultural industries. In promoting the holistic development of youth, Graft 'N' Arts is contributing to the well-being and development of the broader community.

CREATIVE PERSONNEL INVOLVED

Graft 'N' Arts is managed by Marie Peart and employs four additional arts development staff with specific program responsibilities. The organisation also employs a diverse range of local professional artists to conduct workshops encompassing all aspects of visual, performance and multi-media creative practice.

SOURCES OF FUNDING AND SUPPORT

Graft 'N' Arts is funded through Arts Queensland and Cairns City Council, with recurrent funding from Federal Department of Health & Family Services. Project funding has been obtained through grants from the Australia Council's Community Cultural Development Fund and Audience Development Division, and from the State Department of Youth & Community Care.

JUMPING THE HURDLES

As an increasingly marginalised group in our society, youth face constant negative stereotyping from the wider community. Graft 'N' Arts, in its role as an advocate for youth culture, continues to be challenged by these attitudes.

SHOWING THE WAY

MOST SIGNIFICANT OR INNOVATIVE ASPECT OF THE PROJECT

Graft 'N' Arts adopts a holistic approach to the development of young people. Through the broad scope of its work the organisation simultaneously addresses youth issues relating to health, education, employment and social justice, while providing a supportive and stimulating environment where youth culture is celebrated.

TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

Graft 'N' Arts programs have produced tangible benefits in a range of areas. Sixty bands have passed through XPRESSION, and these gigs have been instrumental in creating a thriving youth music scene in North Queensland. In 1994 XPRESSION released its first compilation CD of some 14 young bands. Through joint media projects with 4CCR FM many young people have learned radio presentation and production skills. Outreach projects have stimulated youth arts activities beyond the Cairns region. A street theatre ensemble developed through Graft 'n' Arts now operates independently and members are gaining paid employment. Graft 'N' Arts multi-media lab (G&A Media) is extremely well-utilised and provides access and training for people from across the broader community.

In 1996 Graft 'N' Arts had over 14,000 youth and 6,000 adult attendances at its various workshops and these numbers continue to grow, particularly as a result of expanded indigenous and multicultural arts programs.



Graft 'N' Arts is committed to providing real training and employment opportunities in the arts and cultural industries for young people and the community.



LEFT: FESTIVAL STEP GROUP,
PHOTO: CAIRNS POST,
RIGHT: UNIT 2 + 1 PERFORMANCE

MORE INFORMATION?

Contact: Marie Peart, Manager, Graft 'N' Arts, PO Box 359, Cairns Qld 4870 Tel. 07 7051 4023 Fax. 07 7031 7053 E-mail: graftart@tpgi.com.au



THE PROJECT

Individually Beautiful is an ambitious dance project, stimulating interaction between people with a disability and members of the wider community. The primary aim of the project has been to utilise contemporary dance as a vehicle for the expression of both individual spirit and social unity.

Throughout the various stages of the project, a professional dancer has workshopped and presented performances with groups of up to 24 participants, most of whom have physical, intellectual or emotional disabilities. Performances have gradually increased in scope and complexity, and opportunities have been provided for ensemble and solo performance, depending upon the capabilities and ambitions of individual dancers.

Originally performing for an invited audience, largely comprising family and friends, project participants have since performed in outdoor public forums including Festivale (Launceston's annual food and performance festival) and International Women's Day. Currently, workshops are being undertaken to prepare 20 disabled performers for a presentation at the opening of the Special Olympics in Hobart in November 1998. The Cornwall Arts Council is also preparing for a series of visual arts workshops for disabled people to be conducted in 1999, with a resulting exhibition of work to tour throughout Tasmania and to the mainland.

Stephen was preparing for the big night and a helper was dabbing his face with green glitter. Suddenly he punched the air with his arm and cried, "We've got the power!".

STEPHEN FAHEY, ONE OF THE PERFORMERS

THE PROCESS

Individually Beautiful was initiated in September 1997 when the Cornwall Arts Council received a small project grant to conduct a series of dance workshops, leading to a performance coinciding with the Day of the Disabled in December of that year.

Jason Watson, a dancer employed by TasDance, the state's contemporary dance company, was contracted to direct the project. Despite having never before worked with disabled people, Jason embraced the challenges presented by the project and successfully developed workshop routines appropriate to the capabilities of a diverse and large group. The initial workshops involved 24 participants ranging in age from 19 - 50 years, with 20 of these people having a disability. As the workshops progressed, Jason was able to identify participants who could take on the challenge of a small solo piece and incorporate this into the group performance.

Subsequent funding was obtained to conduct a series of workshops with eight women for a performance on International Women's Day. Participants built upon the skills and experience acquired through the initial project, and developed a more sophisticated performance under the title of *Portrait*. This work was performed to large audiences in Launceston's Civic Square.

CLEAR BENEFITS

Disabled participants in the project have had the opportunity for personal development through creative expression and through experiencing the exhilaration of public performance. Equally, the project has helped to increase awareness of the capabilities of disabled people among the wider community.

CREATIVE PERSONNEL INVOLVED

Individually Beautiful and *Portrait* were developed with dancer Jason Watson from TasDance.

SOURCES OF FUNDING AND SUPPORT

Seed funding for the *Individually Beautiful* project was provided in the form of a small project grant of \$430 from the Tasmanian Arts Council. Subsequent project funding has been provided by Tasmanian Disability Services and the Tasmanian Arts Council. Cornwall Arts Council has also sought funding from the Community Cultural Development Fund of the Australia Council.

JUMPING THE HURDLES

The disabilities of many project participants have dictated the need for a slow and patient approach to the development of performance works. The directing artist and project assistants have had to develop an approach which allows for the limitations of performers with a range of disabilities, while at the same time inspiring participants to extend themselves in learning new skills and working as part of a creative team.

SHOWING THE WAY

MOST SIGNIFICANT OR INNOVATIVE ASPECT OF PROJECT

Individually Beautiful and subsequent spin-off projects have been notable for their capacity to develop and showcase the creative abilities and visions of performers with disabilities. The project has worked to genuinely break down barriers and to achieve effective communication between disabled performers and the broader community. The project is also notable as an effective collaboration between a professional dancer and a group of amateur performers, resulting in the development of an original joint creative work.

TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

The appreciation of audiences and the excitement and increased confidence of performers have been immediate tangible outcomes from the project. The success of initial performances has also attracted additional funding and generated a momentum which is sustaining ongoing further development.

The success of *Individually Beautiful* and subsequent related initiatives has also stimulated work to form an *Arts Access* (arts & disability) organisation in Tasmania, and a steering committee is currently working to achieve this objective.

During the workshops, I encouraged each participant to work to their capabilities, while offering individual and group challenges. An example of a particular challenge was for the group to move in unison while retaining a series of choreographed steps. We always knew when this challenge had been achieved because the group would respond with an outbreak of cheering, clapping and lots of laughter filled with a sense of pride.

JASON WATSON - ARTIST



LEFT: *Portrait* PERFORMED IN CIVIC SQUARE LAUNCESTON FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

MORE INFORMATION?

Contact: Julie Porteus, Cornwall Arts Council, 2A Phillips Street, East Launceston TAS 7250 Tel. 03 6334 3048 (a/h) Fax. 03 6392 2221



THE PROJECT

Tribute to Our Seniors is an annual photographic exhibition which records the lives and achievements of selected groups of elderly residents within the Redlands Shire, a coastal district east of Brisbane. Different photographers are commissioned each year to produce the work, which is exhibited to honour the lifetime contributions of senior citizens to the Redlands community. Each photograph has accompanying text about the individual. The exhibition takes place at selected venues in the area during Senior Citizens week in September each year. The photographs are subsequently donated to the Shire Library as visual support for its oral history program. The project has been running since 1993.

THE PROCESS

The project is managed by Redlands Arts Council Branch which selects seniors for inclusion in the exhibition on the basis of age and length of residency in the district. The limited size of the exhibition venues and the scale of the project budget mean that only 16 frames can be produced each year. However, the actual number of seniors photographed has varied from 16 to 28, ranging from single subject images to multiple portraits of husband and wife, groups of siblings and cousins etc.

The exhibition opening is now an important focal point in Redlands for Senior Citizens Week and is well attended by local, State and Federal politicians and senior citizens from the community, although it is the subjects of the exhibition who are the VIPs for the occasion. Every effort is made to ensure a full attendance by the seniors, who are also encouraged to bring as their guests as many family and friends as they wish. Where required, transport and a carer is provided for those seniors attending alone.

CLEAR BENEFITS

The exhibition is a source of great pride for the senior citizens of the Redlands community, in particular for the individuals who have the satisfaction of seeing their lifetime contributions to the community publicly acknowledged. By involving local businesses, the project also strengthens a broader sense of community amongst residents throughout the shire.

CREATIVE PERSONNEL INVOLVED

Photographers involved have included Rod Bucholz, Len Davenport, Narelle Renn and Hugh Esmond. The interviews and writing of texts have been undertaken by members of the Redlands Branch of the Queensland Arts Council.

SOURCES OF FUNDING AND SUPPORT

Approximate project costs total \$4,000 each year, with these expenses being covered by local business (\$2,200), Redland Shire Council (\$1,000) and by the Arts Council Branch through the proceeds of its annual raffle of a quality craft item. This does not take into account the costs of frames, which are reused from year to year, or in-kind support from the community.

JUMPING THE HURDLES

Working with older people whose health is not always robust, especially during the cooler months when the exhibition is launched, presents some difficulties. Photographers, interviewers and organisers must take care not to impose unreasonably upon the energies of these residents. Also, many of the subjects of past exhibitions have died, which places an emotional strain upon all of the people involved with the project.

SHOWING THE WAY

MOST SIGNIFICANT OR INNOVATIVE ASPECT OF PROJECT

Tribute to Our Seniors is significant as an ongoing art project with both immediate and long term outcomes. The annual exhibition of work each year is a popular event and a powerful tribute to a group of local residents, celebrating lives and stories which may otherwise be unrecognised. In the longer term, the growing collection of work constitutes a valuable record of local heritage and an important cultural artefact.

TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

The project succeeds in focusing public attention on a group of people in the community who are often marginalised and undervalued. As well, the commissioning of different photographers each year promotes ongoing creative development within the set parameters of the project.



As Redlands is an old established district and retirees generally retire within the district, the list of subjects for the portrait exhibition gives ample scope, even after six years. Additionally, relatives now come forward during the year saying things like: 'Did you know my parents are.....years old and have lived in the district since.....? Could they be photographed for the exhibition?'

REDLANDS ARTS COUNCIL BRANCH

LEFT: ROSE MILLER 1997, PHOTO: LEN DAVENPORT

RIGHT: SISTERS JEAN RHODES AND ALICE GARVEY 1995, PHOTO: ROD BUCHHOLZ

MORE INFORMATION?

Contact: Mrs Len Davenport, Redlands Arts Council Branch, 3 Joseph Place, Ormiston QLD 4160 Tel. 07 3286 4297



THE PROJECT

Julalikari Council's (Community Development Employment Program) CDEP Arts & Crafts program is an ongoing initiative which provides employment and training for women from local Aboriginal communities. The program operates out of a building known as the Pink Palace in Tennant Creek.

The women produce work in a range of media and the program is particularly known for its silk scarves and screenprinted fabrics. The program also provides training to further develop the women's artistic and organisational skills. Work from the program is exhibited locally and, increasingly, in other centres throughout Australia.

Julalikari Council's CDEP's Arts & Craft program was initiated in early 1994 in response to the demands of local women. A Visiting Artists program was initiated in 1996 and, in 1998 and '99, the Arts & Craft Program is hosting three separate visits by artists from NSW and Darwin. Each artist resides at the centre for six weeks and works closely with local women, sharing skills and ideas useful in developing their artwork.

Give a break from home, listen to different stories from different camps, yarning and I like doing painting and driving. No grog. I never did bus driving before.

MARLENE NAKAMARRA JOHNSON

JULALIKARI COUNCIL CDEP ARTS & CRAFTS
VISITING ARTISTS AT THE PINK PALACE

THE PROCESS

Julalikari Council has an impressive history of employing artists to work on a range of projects. These have included mural commissions to enliven local infrastructure projects, and a 12 month residency by Alison Alder, a designer, printer and fabric artist who is now the coordinator for the Arts & Crafts program. The Council also provided financial support to a local writer to complete a controversial book about the use and control of alcohol in Tennant Creek.

The current Visiting Artist projects are intended to build on previous achievements, and as a strategy to enrich the experience and practice of local artists through exposure to other methods and styles of working. Visiting artists were carefully chosen on the basis of their willingness to collaborate with local artists on a daily basis and the relevance of their previous work to the social, cultural and environmental concerns of local people.

CLEAR BENEFITS

The project enables local artists to develop their artistic practice and increase opportunities to exhibit and sell their work locally and throughout Australia. The project is also a valuable cultural exchange for the three visiting artists.

CREATIVE PERSONNEL INVOLVED

The Julalikari Arts & Crafts program is managed by Alison Alder, Nikkie Morrison and Jessica Jones and involves a number of local artists with growing reputations, including Peggy Ngapanardi Jones, Nikkie Morrison and Leanne Chungaloo. The visiting artist initiative has involved NSW-based artists Madeleine Meyer (June - August 1998) and Alison Clouston (August - October 1998). Darwin-based artist Judy Watson will be resident at Julalikari in April - May 1999.

SOURCES OF FUNDING AND SUPPORT

The ongoing operation of the Arts & Crafts program is funded through CDEP, a Commonwealth Government work-for-the-dole program administered through ATSIC. The program also generates an increasing proportion of its operational budget through commission on the sale of artworks.

The Visiting Artists initiative was supported by a grant of \$23,000 from the Community Cultural Development Fund of the Australia Council and with money from Julalikari's general operations budget.

JUMPING THE HURDLES

A constant difficulty in implementing any ambitious project in Tennant Creek is overcoming the town's relative geographic remoteness and accommodating the resulting high costs of goods and transport.

SHOWING THE WAY

MOST SIGNIFICANT OR INNOVATIVE ASPECT OF PROJECT

The main strength of Julalikari Arts & Crafts is its integration within an overall program of services which promotes the survival and health of local communities. The program operates as an employment and training program that generates income for local artists and promotes the strong cultural identity of indigenous peoples in the region. The Visiting Artists project is a genuine cultural exchange which has enriched the work of local artists. Strong management and the establishment of clear expectations for the residencies has been a crucial factor in the success of the project.

TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

The most significant success of the project is that local artists have acquired a broader perspective on their art making practice. They have learnt new skills and established ongoing contacts with creative worlds beyond their own region. The ultimate value of the project for local artists will become evident over time as their work continues to develop and find new audiences. Already their work has been selected for inclusion in exhibitions in Melbourne, Canberra, Alice Springs and Darwin.



It's a good job - nice workshop, nice people, things to do, we go on bush trips. Some of the girls want to do these things, go out on bush trips with the old ladies, back to country.

NIKKIE NANGALA MORRISON,
JULALIKARI COUNCIL CDEP WOMEN'S
ART AND CRAFT PROGRAM



LEFT: PEGGY JONES *BUSH TUCKER* HAND PAINTED SILK SCARF 90 x 90 CM
RIGHT: ALISON ALDER AND PEGGY JONES

MORE INFORMATION?

Contact: Alison Alder, Coordinator, Julalikari Council CDEP Arts & Crafts, PO Box 158, Tennant Creek NT 0861 Tel. 08 8962 2163 Fax 08 8962 3236