

media release

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Registrations now open for art at the heart

Early birds can now sign up for **art at the heart** in Alice Springs in October and get a cheaper deal on registration. The sixth Regional Arts Australia national conference is less than six months away and is expected to be the largest gathering of arts professionals in Australia this year.

Artistic director and conference coordinator, Kieren Sanderson urges people to book their spot early. "We are expecting a big response from those keen to participate and we may have to limit numbers. I strongly urge those who know they will be attending to sign up now to make sure they don't miss out. And, of course there's a saving if you get in early."

"Delegates will participate in an exceptional program that reflects regional Australia but is shaped by the art and culture of the Northern Territory. It will be a great gathering place for exchanging ideas and experiences with other artists and arts workers. Conference sessions will extend beyond the traditional show and tell format with plenty of forums and other opportunities for interaction. And woven throughout the three days will be a first-class artistic program," says Sanderson.

Details of the conference program will be announced in June and will include the opening ceremony on Thursday 2 October, a gala dinner on Saturday 4 October and the evening hot spot, the Heart Club, on the Thursday and Friday nights.

"**art at the heart** will take place at venues across Alice Springs giving delegates the opportunity to meet the local community. It will be a memorable experience for everyone," says Ms Sanderson.

The secretary of Regional Arts Australia, Ken Lloyd, says **art at the heart** follows Regional Arts Australia's outstanding 2006 national conference in Mackay Queensland, which attracted a record number of delegates.

"Through **art at the heart**, Regional Arts Australia continues its leadership role representing, promoting and supporting the artists and audiences that live outside the metropolitan centres," Mr Lloyd said.

The conference, which runs from 2 until 5 October, follows the Desert Mob celebrations so delegates are invited to come early to enjoy one of the most popular cultural events in the Northern Territory.

The Australian Government supports Regional Arts Australia's national conferences through the Regional Arts Fund. The Australia Council for the Arts supports the artistic program for the conference. The Northern Territory Government is hosting the conference through Arts NT in collaboration with the Alice Springs Town Council.

Registration forms are available at www.artattheheart.com.au. Early bird rates are available until 15 July.

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