



# Expanding Cultures

Arts and Local Government Conference

July 24-27 2007

Chapel off Chapel, Prahran, Victoria, Australia

## COMMUNITY WELLBEING, ART AND CULTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

**Professor John Wiseman and Dr. Kathleen Brasher**

The McCaughey Centre,

VicHealth Centre For The Promotion Of Mental Health And Community Wellbeing

### Abstract

*This presentation will provide an overview of emerging evidence and ideas about the contribution of cultural development and creativity to community wellbeing. This will include:*

- *A critical overview of recent Australian policy and research literature on the contribution of cultural development and creativity to community wellbeing*
- *Evidence about key trends in relation to Victorian participation in arts and cultural development including data drawn from the initial Victorian Community Survey recently conducted by the McCaughey Centre.*
- *Reflections on policy, practice and research implications*

---

*The following article comprises notes derived from the Powerpoint presentation made by Professor Wiseman at the conference. The full presentation is available from [www.mccaugheycentre.unimelb.edu.au/index.php](http://www.mccaugheycentre.unimelb.edu.au/index.php)*

### Building knowledge about the social, economic and environmental determinants of mental health and community wellbeing

#### Priorities

- Community wellbeing frameworks and policies
- Community wellbeing indicators and trends: *Community Indicators Victoria*
- Key determinants of mental health and community wellbeing
  - Freedom from violence
  - Freedom from discrimination
  - Social inclusion
  - Economic participation and security
  - Healthy and sustainable environments

# COMMUNITY WELLBEING, ART AND CULTURE; CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Professor John Wiseman and Dr. Kathleen Brasher

## Community wellbeing, art and culture

- Relationship between community health and wellbeing, arts and cultural development
- Community wellbeing and cultural indicators
- Community Indicators Victoria: Towards an understanding of community wellbeing, arts and culture in Victoria

Health is ...a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'

*World Health Organisation*

'Mental health is... not merely the absence of mental illness. Mental health is the embodiment of social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Mental health provides individuals with the vitality necessary for active living, to achieve goals and to interact with one another in ways that are respectful and just.'

*VicHealth Mental Health Promotion Plan*

Community wellbeing is... the social, economic, environmental, cultural and political conditions which maximise the potential for individuals, communities and societies to flourish and fulfil their potential.

## Community wellbeing; Buddhist perspective

'Wellbeing is not simply stimulus driven pleasure emerging occasionally on the hedonic treadmill of life. Buddhism promotes an ideal state of well-being that results from realising ones fullest potential in terms of wholistic compassion and creativity.'

*Wallace, A. and Shapiro, S. 'Mental Balance and Wellbeing, Building Bridges Between Buddhism and Western Psychology', American Psychologist, Oct. 2006*

## Community wellbeing; Islamic perspectives

'The Islamic view of health and cure is based on the notion of balance. Well-being is a state of integration and balance of all the different components of the human being: body, mind and soul. Only when these components are balanced and harmonized is it possible to be transformed in a full human being able to realize one's own potentialities.'

*Uzma Mahir, Islamic Reflections, March 2002*

## Community wellbeing; Indigenous perspectives

'The word *punyu*, from the language of the Ngarinman of the Northern Territory explains that concepts and functions of health and wellbeing must be considered from an interdisciplinary approach. *Punyu* encompasses person and country, and is associated with being strong, happy, knowledgeable, socially responsible (to take care) beautiful, clean and safe – both in the sense of being within the law and in the sense of being cared for.' *Atkinson, J. Graham, J., Pettit, G. and Lewis, L. 'Broadening the focus of research into the health of Indigenous Australians', Medical Journal of Australia 177 (6) 2002*

Proceedings of the 'Expanding Cultures' conference, Melbourne, July 2007

Hosted by the City of Stonnington, supported by the Cities of Yarra, Melbourne, Moreland, Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley, Boroondara and Port Phillip and the Cultural Development Network

[www.culturaldevelopment.net.au/expandingcultures](http://www.culturaldevelopment.net.au/expandingcultures)

# COMMUNITY WELLBEING, ART AND CULTURE; CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Professor John Wiseman and Dr. Kathleen Brasher

## Community wellbeing

- Healthy, safe and inclusive communities
- Dynamic, resilient economies
- Sustainable built and natural environments
- Culturally rich and vibrant communities
- Democratic and engaged communities

*Community Indicators Victoria*

## Creativity, art and culture

Creativity: The universal human capacity to .... explore the non logical area of out existence and experience and to make intuitive, imaginative connections

Art : The process of transferring these 'illuminations' into tangible and intangible forms

Culture: The social production of meaning.

*Jon Hawkes, 2004*

## Learning about the relationship between community wellbeing, art and culture through publications such as

- Art and Wellbeing, Deborah Mills and Paul Brown, Australia Council, 2004
- Creative Connections, Celebrations, Arts and Well Being Within and Across Local Communities, Martin Mulligan, Kim Humphery, Paul James, Christopher Scanlon, Pia Smith and Nicky Welch, Globalism Institute, RMIT, VicHealth,2006
- Creative Connections, Promoting Health and Well being Through Community Arts Participation, VicHealth
- Strengthening Local Communities. Arts in Community Settings

## Learning about the relationship between community wellbeing, art and culture

- Art and culture as tools for strengthening community wellbeing
- Art and culture as pillars of community wellbeing

## Art and culture as tools for strengthening health and wellbeing

Art can not only make a valuable contribution to delivering key outcomes of lower long-term employment, less crime, better health and better qualifications, but can also help to develop the individual pride, community spirit and capacity for responsibility that enable communities to run regeneration programmes themselves.

*Report on Social Exclusion, UK Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2001*

## Art and culture as tools for strengthening health and wellbeing

- Communicating and advocating health promotion messages and ideas
- Providing opportunities for 'voice' and story telling
- Challenging discrimination and promoting cross cultural understanding
- Challenging social exclusion and building social inclusion

## **COMMUNITY WELLBEING, ART AND CULTURE; CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

**Professor John Wiseman and Dr. Kathleen Brasher**

### **Social inclusion, art and culture**

‘Ensuring effective access to and participation in cultural activities for all is an essential dimension of promoting an inclusive society. Furthermore, participation in cultural activities can also be instrumental in helping people and communities to overcome poverty and social exclusion.’

*European Commission Report on the Role of Culture in Reducing Social Exclusion*, 2005

### **Art and culture as pillars of community wellbeing**

Too often politicians have been forced to debate culture in terms only of its instrumental benefits to other agendas...in political and public discourse we have avoided the more difficult approach of investigating, questioning and celebrating what culture actually does in and of itself.’

*Tessa Jowell, Government and the Value of Culture*, 2004

‘A decent society is obligated to nurture the creative expression of all its members because to do so is to facilitate their fulfilment as human beings - they may not become rich or happy as a result but they will be alive in the fullest sense.’

*Jon Hawkes 2004*

### **Community wellbeing, art and culture: Success factors**

- Clear goals and purpose
- Local ownership
- Respectful, effective partnerships between arts and community sector organisations
- Committed, skilled artists with good understanding of community processes
- Support for participants built in
- Long term strategy
- Capacity building

### **Community wellbeing, art and culture: Questions of evidence and audience**

‘I know that arts and culture make a contribution to health, to education, to crime reduction, to strong communities, to the nation’s well being but I don’t know how to evaluate it or describe it. We have to find a language and way of describing its worth’.

*Estelle Morris, UK Minister for the Arts*, 2003

### **Wellbeing indicators as tools for democratic policy making**

are described in publications including

- Sustainable Development Indicators in your Pocket
- The Well Being of Nations
- The Power and Potential of Well Being indicators
- Millenium Development Goals Indicators

# COMMUNITY WELLBEING, ART AND CULTURE; CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Professor John Wiseman and Dr. Kathleen Brasher

## Wellbeing indicators - opening up a new debate about progress

Gross National Happiness and Development  
Measuring and Fostering the Progress of Societies  
Measures of Australia's progress 2006  
Genuine Progress indicators: measuring society's wellbeing

### An important caveat

'Not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted.'  
*Albert Einstein*

### Purpose of cultural indicators?

- Engage citizens in discussion of policy priorities
- Inform policy development
- Basis for advocacy
- Track and measure trends
- Support funding applications
- Prioritise and acquit funding programs
- Evaluation: demonstrate policy and program impact

### Challenges in developing and using cultural and arts indicators

- Being clear about purpose and audience
- Defining and scoping 'culture' and 'arts'
- Danger of 'what gets measured matters'
- Problems of causation and responsibility
- Benchmarking and league tables
- Obtaining useful local cultural indicator data
- Using data to inform policy choices

### Local cultural indicators – options?

NB. Matarasso, F. *Defining Values: Evaluating Arts Programmes*, 1996

- Inputs
  - Local, State and Commonwealth government spending on arts
  - Philanthropic spending on arts
  - Private sector spending on arts
  - Government cultural policies and programs
  - Arts organisations and services
- Facilities and events
  - Number and diversity of arts facilities and events
  - Satisfaction with variety of arts and cultural events and facilities
  - Number of arts and cultural facilities within 30 minutes journey time
  - Accessibility and affordability of arts and cultural facilities
  - Maintenance or protection of heritage buildings
  - Proportion of collections open for public access

**COMMUNITY WELLBEING, ART AND CULTURE; CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**  
Professor John Wiseman and Dr. Kathleen Brasher

**Local cultural indicators – options?**

- **Artists and arts industry**
  - Number of practicing artists
  - Employment numbers, turnover and income in arts and cultural sector
  - Number and type of local creative industries
  - Number of commercial arts venues
  - Financial stability and viability of creative industries
  
- **Arts and culture ‘products’**
  - Number of new works created by arts companies and cultural institutions
  - Number of new commissions, productions and public art works
  - Recognition for excellence and innovation received by local artists and arts companies
  - Views on quality of arts activities Peers? Critics? Audiences? General community?
  
- **Arts and culture participation**
  - Audience attendance at arts and cultural facilities and events (size and diversity)
  - Participation in arts and cultural activities (size and diversity)
  - Membership of arts organisations
  - Percentage of people who feel they have opportunities to participate in affordable local arts and cultural activities
  
- **Arts and education**
  - Number of art teachers per student
  - Arts activities supported in schools as per cent of contact hours
  - School students involved in life long learning using arts and culture
  - Number of people studying for arts qualifications at tertiary level
  
- **Economic outcomes**
  - Income generated by arts activities – direct and indirect
  - Employment created by arts activities – direct and indirect
  
- **Social outcomes**
  - Community participation and engagement
  - Social connectedness; Intergenerational contact
  - Crime; fear of crime
  - Sense of local pride

## **COMMUNITY WELLBEING, ART AND CULTURE; CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

**Professor John Wiseman and Dr. Kathleen Brasher**

- Health, self assessed health
- Tolerance/welcoming of cultural diversity
  
- **Environmental outcomes**
  - Improvements in built and natural environment

### **Arts Victoria: Creative Capacity+ Indicators**

- Number of Victorians from varied backgrounds engaged with cultural activities
- Access to arts
- Participation in arts and culture as volunteers
- Number of jobs in arts
- School students involved in life long learning using arts and culture
- Funds leveraged from non government sources by creative industries
- Proportion of collections available for public access
- Financial stability of creative industries
- Number of new works created by Victorian arts companies and cultural institutions
- National and international recognition for excellent and innovation received by Victoria artists and arts companies

### **Local community wellbeing indicators**

- Headline issues and trends important to local communities
- Tools for democratic planning and evidence based policy
- Social, economic, environmental, cultural and governance trends and outcomes

### **Importance of community wellbeing indicators as...**

- A democratic tool, for engaging citizens and communities in informed discussions about shared goals and priorities
- A policy tool, guiding evidence based planning and action to address the issues identified as important by communities
- A reporting tool, tracking and communicating progress towards agreed goals and outcomes

## **Community Indicators Victoria**

### **Goal**

To support the development and use of local community wellbeing indicators as a tool for informed, engaged and integrated community planning and policy making.

### **Governance**

Host: McCaughey Centre, VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Community Wellbeing, University of Melbourne

Partners: VicHealth, ABS, MAV, VLGA, Victorian Government, VCOSS, RMIT, Swinburne

## COMMUNITY WELLBEING, ART AND CULTURE; CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Professor John Wiseman and Dr. Kathleen Brasher

### Community Indicators Victoria Framework

- Healthy, safe and inclusive communities
- Dynamic, resilient economies
- Sustainable built and natural environments
- Culturally rich and vibrant communities

### Community Indicators Victoria: Data sources

- Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Victorian government administrative data  
eg. Library usage, Crime, Water quality
- Victorian government surveys  
eg. DVC Community Strengthening Survey, Victorian Population Health Survey
- Community Indicators Victoria Survey 2007

### Specified Local Government Area Wellbeing Report

Live Report Created on Specified Indicators, including

- Self Reported Health
- Feeling Part of the Community
- Home Internet access - Metropolitan
- Food stress

### CIV Arts Participation questions

- In the last month have you done any of the following activities?
  - Painting or drawing
  - Playing a musical instrument
  - Singing
  - Performing eg acting or dancing
  - Creative writing
  - Other art or craft activities
- Did you do this activity mainly by yourself, mainly with others or both equally
- Do you agree or disagree that there are enough opportunities in your local area for you to participate in arts and related activities?

### Proportion of adult population who have participated in selected artistic and cultural activities in the last month

Victoria: 46.6    Male: 44.6    Female: 55.4

Age; 18-34: 36.1    35-44: 16.7    45-54: 18.5    55-64: 16.0    65+: 12.7

### Participation in Arts and Cultural Activities in Victoria

Proportion of adult population who have participated in selected artistic and cultural activities in the last month

- Music: 14.8 (7.9-20.5)
- Singing: 16.9 (11.3-24.0)
- Performance: 9.7 (2.9-17.2)
- Writing: 11.8 (7.0-20.2)
- Craft: 20.5 (13.4-32.5)

## COMMUNITY WELLBEING, ART AND CULTURE; CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Professor John Wiseman and Dr. Kathleen Brasher

- Painting and drawing: 16.7 (10.5-22.2)

Proportion of adult population who have participated in singing in the last month

Individual and group arts participation

- Mainly individually: 42.6
- Mainly with others: 29.1
- Both equally: 28.3

Proportion of adult population who strongly agree or agree that they have enough opportunities in local area to participate in arts and cultural activities

Victoria: 73      Metro: 72.8      Country: 73.0

### Community wellbeing, art and culture: Challenges and opportunities for local communities and local governments

- What actions should local government take to support the development of culturally rich and vibrant communities?
- What would success look like?

*Professor John Wiseman has worked in a wide variety of academic, community and public sector settings and published numerous books and articles on public policy, with particular focus on alternative local, national and international responses to globalisation. Between 2003 and 2006 he was Professor of Public Policy at Victoria University. Between 2000 and 2003 he was Assistant Director, Policy Development and Research in the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet. Prior to that he held the position of Associate Professor of Social Policy in the School of Social Science and Planning at RMIT University.*

*Dr Kathleen Brasher has extensive experience in the health sector, in both research and clinical settings. Her qualifications include a PhD in the sociology of health and illness, a Bachelor of Applied Science (Nursing) and Certificates of Midwifery and Nursing. Kathleen is also involved in many professional and community organisations.*

*jwiseman@unimelb.edu.au    brasher@unimelb.edu.au    [www.mccaughycentre.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.mccaughycentre.unimelb.edu.au)*

*Copyright: All text, except where otherwise attributed, is copyright of the authors and may not be reproduced without written permission.*