



CREATIVE COMMUNITIES SYNERGIES

Jeanine Gribbin

Greetings – I would like to start by thanking the members of the 4th Pillar Conference for giving me the opportunity to present to you today about arts in the community in New Zealand – and give you some examples of our creative communities synergies.

I want to look at local government's response in New Zealand – Manukau City specifically. Our Creative Diversity, 1996 (the report designed to develop a new policy paradigm for culture) suggests that of all the layers of government, local is best placed to foster grass roots cultural needs.

When it comes to culture and arts, Aristophanes said it thousands of years ago:

Let each man exercise the art he knows
Aristophanes (450 BC - 388 BC)

Using systems theory, it can be seen that in the Anthroposphere: i.e. the sphere that is affected by and affects human society, local government is the linking point in sustainable development.

Those of you who heard Penny talk yesterday will know that the Local Government Act 2002, charges local councils in NZ to be responsible for social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing.

Manukau

- Third biggest city in NZ
- Named by the Tainui settlers who heard the cries of the many birds as they paddled their waka down the harbour.
- Manukau continues to attract migrants today.
- Manukau is NZ's most ethnically diverse city.
- A city of contrast, geographically, economically, socially and culturally.
- Part of the region of Auckland it is often referred to in a less than gracious way as 'South Auckland'.

In Manukau we have a saying for cultural development 'te pua waitanga o te tangata' – the blossoming of the people

Three examples – three different approaches visual arts, musical and literary

To see people's participation in arts as a continuum of mode, time and place - the blossoming of the people

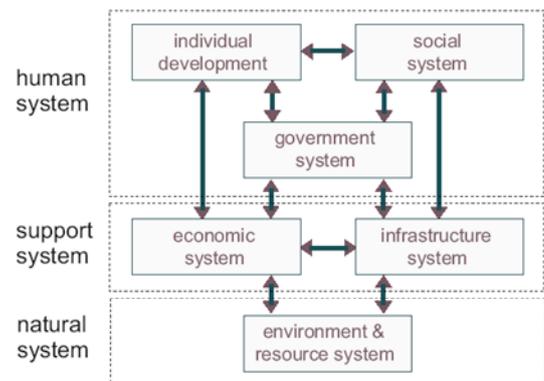
Manukau has a long history of supporting cultural needs in the community. Rather than a council run facility, *Te Tuhi* is a working model of a partnership between a well organised community organisation and council. The gallery which is rated in the top three in the region, provides magnificent facilities developed at less cost to the rate payers than if it were funded totally from the public purse.

Te Tuhi's mission is to

- create avenues for access and participation in arts, cultural and community activities.
- develop dynamic, innovative and challenging programmes to engage and delight participants.
- foster partnerships with our communities by encouraging dialogue and collaborative projects.
- celebrate the diversity of Manukau City and enrich the cultural life of its residents and visitors.
- contribute to the arts and cultural scene on a regional and national basis.
- cultivate life-long learning.

CCS is a partnership between Arts Council (CNZ) and Local Government. CNZ provide the funds, local government administer the scheme in a way that is appropriate to their area. The purpose of CCS is to support arts participation, increase the range of arts activities available and strengthen local arts organisations.

The CCS framework is in some ways deeply democratic (Matarasso 1997) in that it is funding that is distributed at a local level



by an assessment committee of local people, representative of the community. However, I guess the one of the major difficulties with the fund is that at 10% of the budget of CNZ – many people miss out or do not get funding that is required for projects. The principles of cultural democracy require the exercising of rights, not just an available opportunity. (Hawkes)

The 2 projects that I am delighted to be involved with that I will look at today show that a little funding goes a long way ... less than \$10,000 each.

To mark the opening of a new venue for the city of Manukau – Telstra Pacific Events Centre, a choral and orchestral piece called *The Journey* was written especially for the building. A partnership has been developed between the venue, the sponsors and the orchestra. The opening performance will feature *The Journey* – written by Manukau-born composer and with words by a local poet – and a massed choir featuring the South Auckland choral society, a Tongan youth choir, the Auckland Maori Choir and the



MAA Chinese Choir. They share the stage with world-renowned pianist Michael Houston and local up-and-coming violinist Loata Mahi, (who has played with the orchestra since she was ten), under the baton of international recording star Uwe Grodd – the MCSO musical director.

‘Writers in Manukau Libraries’ or WIML is a New Zealand first. Unlike other residency-type programmes, it is the budding and emerging writers of Manukau and Counties who benefit directly from the pilot programme.

The money received from Creative Communities goes towards mentoring of locals by top New Zealand author Graeme Lay in four of the libraries in Manukau. The community group who received the grant forming a close working relationship with the libraries and the New Zealand Society of Authors has been key. The launch of the programme will be part of the AK05 Arts Festival and plans are being made to have an anthology of writing published.

What these groups represent are Hope Based Networks

HBN are essential to local government, to meet the aims of wellbeing, and to foster strong community ties. Local government needs to develop skills especially in transformative leadership to assist the community to develop their own responses to culture and provide funding to support people.

I would like to leave you with you with one final thought about the role of local government and cultural policy politics – participation policy is well recognised, but perhaps the concept that these changes means seems to be slower to be realised – that participation by people means non-ownership by governments, empowerment means disempowerment for the governments.

- Multiple organizational partnerships
 - HBN bound by passion and advancement of common goals
 - Alertness to entrepreneurial opportunities
 - Have the “will and way power” to go for a goal
 - Fusion of striving and attaining
- (Wallace and Dollery, 2001)

So what is the important thing for local governments to remember?

He tangata, he tangata, he tangata

It is the people, the people, the people

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