



ABOUT THE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

The Cultural Development Network Inc. is a small independent association in Victoria generating new ideas and new connections for councils, communities and cultural vitality. We work towards a society in which local communities in all their diversity have the support they need to make and express their own culture. We advocate a stronger role in cultural vitality for government; and regard the arts (at the heart of culture) as central to this vision. We are best known for our work promoting culture as the 'fourth pillar of sustainability'.

Through our forums program we nurture connections between professionals, artists, and communities engaged in community cultural development locally. The aim is to support more collaborative practice and stimulate robust debate about the links between culture, arts and healthy sustainable communities.

We advocate the centrality of cultural development (and the value of arts-in-community initiatives) in government policies and programs that extend beyond the arts sector through research and representation. Underpinning this work are our efforts (with partner agencies) to demonstrate the benefits of community cultural development in: community planning; civic engagement; building democracy; environment protection, and social health & wellbeing development programs.

Community Sustainability and Cultural Vitality: a national local government pilot program

Engaging Councils, Communities and Artists in Extending Lead Practice Towards Health and Wellbeing: a pilot program to be undertaken in six communities from 2005 through 2007/8

Our major project for 2005 is being led by Anne Dunn (senior project consultant and facilitator) and Judy Spokes (project manager) during the initial feasibility phase between October 2004 and July 2005. Supported by the Australia Council and VicHealth and working in partnership with the Local Government Community Services Association (link) and RMIT's Globalism Institute (link), the Cultural Development Network is the initiator, broker and administrator of the program.

From 2005 to 2008 six local councils will invest in arts-based community development strategies to tackle complex local problems. The goal is to build healthy, active communities through projects designed to generate community discussion and action in response to entrenched or difficult local problems. Though not new, this 'community cultural development' approach is all too rarely applied in medium or long term contexts, or with sufficient senior leadership and support, or indeed with effective inter-government partnerships. This program is being developed to avoid these common conceptual and project management traps.

It will be applied over three years (at least). It will integrate (not marginalise) participatory arts as part of Council's overall local development efforts and will involve programs across the full range of Council functions. It will rely on investment of state, commonwealth and local government resources (both human and financial). It will be evaluated by RMIT's Globalism Institute (subject to success of an Industry Linkage Grant application to the Australian Research Council).

The first planning day of all stakeholders in the project was held on 11 February 2005, and included a creative workshop in which a number of artists with community cultural development experience helped to scope creative solutions to community issues presented by councils. Stimulated by this injection of creative thinking, specific project proposals will be then be developed and funding sought from various sources.

CEOs and Key Executive level managers in the following councils are committed to the program and are scoping local projects during the early months of 2005:

- Maribyrnong City Council
- Latrobe City
- City of Greater Geelong
- Rural City of Wangaratta
- Dalrymple Shire (QLD)
- Western Sydney Council in partnership with WESROC(TBC)(NSW)

Further information, please contact Judy Spokes on 03 9658 8850 or: judspo@melbourne.vic.gov.au

For details of our work in the last couple of years (we're a relatively new organisation) see our website: www.culturaldevelopment.net You can join us or download a membership form from this site also.

