

## **Report on forum: ‘Community dance: working with young people in a community context’, held in Horsham, Friday 21 April, 2006**

**Partners: Cultural Development Network, Ausdance Victoria, Regional Arts Victoria, Art Is Festival**

This event, held in conjunction with the Australian Youth Dance Festival and the ‘Art Is’ Festival in Horsham, was attended by 16 participants from a diverse range of health, welfare, community and arts agencies, including school nurses, drug and alcohol workers, youth workers, local government arts and culture officers and two artists doing post-graduate studies in community based dance. All evaluations were very positive, with attendees valuing opportunities for networking, theoretical and practical information and the likelihood of collaborating on a future event.

### **Comments about the forum included:**

- *very informative and inspirational. Insight into alternative activities for youth who want to do something other than sport*
- *educational, enlightening*
- *Interesting activity raises questions about participation and, cross-cultural identity*
- *knowledge imparted today has given me a different angle on community arts and ideas for new projects*
- *can’t wait to put into action*

**Speakers: Kim Dunphy, Manager, Cultural Development Network,  
‘Community cultural development: and engaging young people through dance’**

Kim introduced her organization, the Cultural Development Network, and the Network’s role to promote cultural vitality in communities throughout Victoria. She then introduced the concept of community cultural development, using the Australia Council’s definition and then described some qualities of best practice. She described some examples of the ways young people in community contexts are engaged in dance and showed photographic examples of some companies and organizations who do this. Kim also gave a brief outline of evidence for the health, educational and social benefits of young people’s involvement in community based arts activities.

**Kath Papas, Executive Officer, Ausdance Victoria  
‘Ausdance’s activities in community based dance programs’**

Kath described recent initiatives that Ausdance Victoria has been involved in including the current Australian Youth Dance Festival, a national festival involved 150 young people from across Australia who were attending the week long event in Horsham. Kath also discussed ‘Increasing Access to Dance’, a regional project designed to increase opportunities for people with disabilities to be involved in dance, that Ausdance ran in several locations across Victoria in 2005.

**Bec Reid from ‘Stompin Youth Dance Company’ of Launceston, Tasmania and David McMicken from ‘Tracks Dance Company’ of Darwin**

These two company directors gave brief overviews of their companies’ work with communities, showed short DVDs of their work in action and discussed some of the achievements and challenges they face with their specific communities. David and Bec then led an enjoyable movement activity in which participants created signature movements, partnered, then formed a group before ‘marrying’ and ‘separating’ through movement.

### **Where to from here?**

The forum closed with a question and answer session and a brief brainstorm about ‘where to from here?’ Participants agreed that they were keen to work together to create a community based dance activity. Marion Mathews from Regional Arts Victoria suggested her idea, inspired by watching **Stompin** perform in pools, to create a dance in water event for the opening of the new local pool in June. Participants agreed that this was a good idea and were keen for Marion to set up a meeting to plan for this.