

# **A Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney — An Evaluation**

## **Report**

Consultant's Report — December 2004

Presented to the NSW Ministry for the Arts



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## **Executive Summary**

The New South Wales Government launched its *Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney* in November 1999. In 2004 the Ministry for the Arts commissioned an evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the *Strategy* that would:

1. Identify the impact of the *Strategy* on cultural development in western Sydney, report on areas of ongoing need, and make recommendations on the future implementation of the *Western Sydney Arts Strategy*
2. Examine the current and potential roles of existing organisations with a western Sydney regional cultural development brief in the context of the *Strategy* and make recommendations that will enhance regional co-ordination and co-operation

The *Strategy's* Goals are, briefly, to encourage local arts and cultural activity, increase participation in arts activity by the community, develop the potential of artists, nurture the arts industry, and encourage cultural development at a regional level.

As part of broader State Government strategic initiatives for the Western Sydney region since 1999, the *Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney* has demonstrated government's commitment to equity for the region, resulting in an increasing regional sense of identity, and greater civic pride and participation.

The Western Sydney Program balances affirmative action to address access and equity issues that are a legacy of under-resourcing and under-development, against a recognition that there is art activity in the region that is among the best in the State.

The rich diversity of life experience in Western Sydney generates a profound well-spring of distinctive artistic expression and innovation. Work produced in the region breaks new ground, sets new standards, and rivals in excellence that created anywhere else in Australia. Western Sydney has become an incubator for cutting edge cultural development practices, reinventing 'community cultural development' in twenty-first century terms, and contributing to innovative hybrid artistic and cultural practices.

The development of cultural infrastructure and services needs to be responsive to the region's unique cultural landscape, and to keep pace with its growth and change. Western Sydney has the fastest growing population in the state: by 2019, the region will be home to an additional half a million people, an increase of around 30%. Continuing attention is needed to ensure that services are equitably distributed and that access to arts and cultural activity for Western Sydney's citizens continues to improve and is not falling behind.

By directing increased resources to the region, and supporting enhanced cooperation and collaboration between stakeholders, the *Strategy* has achieved significant progress in capacity building for cultural development, including:

- Major progress in the capital development of cultural infrastructure;
- Growth of regional and sub-regional organisations supporting cultural development;
- Increased investment in arts and cultural activity by local government;
- Increasing success for the region's artists and organisations in funding from the Ministry's non-Western Sydney Programs and other funding agencies;
- Establishment of a leadership role for the region in cultural planning;

- An increasing level of arts activity, resulting in enhanced opportunities for artists and audiences;
- Improving numbers of Western Sydney residents employed in cultural occupations and participating as audiences;
- The establishment within the Ministry for the Arts of significant leadership, regional overview and co-ordination; and
- Increased recognition of the region and its unique cultural values and expression.

The *Strategy* should now become more strategically focussed, with greater emphasis on capacity building for cultural development, actualising the potential for the arts to contribute broadly to sustainable development for the region, and targeting resources to address still the still unmet need for:

- A strategy to support Indigenous arts development
- Achieving sustainable growth for regional and sub-regional arts organisations;
- Professional and artistic development for artists, especially emerging and disadvantaged artists;
- Arts promotion, communication and critical debate;
- Creative industries development that draws on the region's rich resources of cultural diversity;
- Productive engagement between the arts and corporate sectors;
- Art in the development and redevelopment of public space;
- Addressing inconsistent rates of development in particular artform areas (especially music, literature)
- Promoting resource sharing and collaboration, particularly sub-regionally;
- A more coherent (cross-program) and sustainable approach to support for local government, in particular to those local government facilities providing programs which impact across and beyond greater Western Sydney

The major regional and sub-regional cultural infrastructure, its flagship cultural institutions, were originally set up through local government but now operate and have impact beyond the boundaries of their LGA, and beyond Western Sydney. State Government investment has enabled them to develop innovative cross-disciplinary programming models, but the transition to adequate and sustainable levels of operational funding is an increasingly crucial issue.

The Ministry for the Arts has an important role to play in linking arts and cultural development to broader development agendas within the State public sector. The focus on Centres Policy in the Metropolitan Strategy Discussion Paper, released in September 2004, has particular significance for Western Sydney. The Ministry for the Arts should urgently address its participation in DIPNR's planning processes, to inform planning for the Government's arts investment in Western Sydney.

The *Strategy*, as a multi-disciplinary, place-based approach to capacity building, continues to be central to addressing the legacy of under-development and managing the rapidity of new urban development in Western Sydney, while continuing to nurture and celebrate Western Sydney's distinctive arts and cultural activity.

## **Summary of Recommendations**

*Recommendation 1: That the Western Sydney Local Government Arts Incentive fund be continued, with the guidelines modified to prioritise applications which address identified areas of ongoing need (as identified in Recommendation 8)*

*It is further recommended that the Ministry for the Arts consider negotiating multi-year funding agreements with Councils that have a developed arts program or facility to which they are making a significant financial commitment. Such agreements should encompass funding available through the artform programs of the Ministry.*

*Recommendation 2: That the Ministry for the Arts split the Western Sydney Artists' Fellowship program into Senior and Emerging Fellowship categories, in view of the still significant barriers to access and participation experienced by emerging and disadvantaged artists within the region. The Ministry should also implement follow-up measures on completion of the fellowships, to tap the potential for the program to be a significant promotional tool for the region's arts activity.*

*Recommendation 3: That funding be made available for groups of artists and smaller arts organisations to undertake feasibility studies towards meeting the need for flexible, affordable, local and accessible multi-purpose studio and rehearsal space, and spaces for small-scale exhibitions, performances and workshops, both for establishing long-term facilities and temporary ('guerilla') establishments.*

*Recommendation 4: That the Arts Access program include Western Sydney schools in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage and Western Sydney artists and arts organisations in the program.*

*Recommendation 5: That all cultural institutions and appropriate major organisations funded through the Ministry for the Arts be requested to develop strategies to extend their reach to Western Sydney and develop partnerships with WS organisations.*

*Recommendation 6: That the Ministry for the Arts continues to appoint Western Sydney representatives to its artform committees. It is further recommended, to ensure that appropriately skilled and knowledgeable committee members are available to assess the very diverse range of applications submitted under the Western Sydney Program, that an eligibility list or register of peers be formed of people with diverse expertise from the region, to supplement the members of the artform committees.*

*Recommendation 7: That the Ministry for the Arts support and encourage artform development through the establishment of specialist animateurs, appropriately located and resourced. Initially, options for establishing animateurs for literature and music should be explored.*

*Recommendation 8: The following are recommended as themes for the future of the Strategy.*

- Developing a strategic approach to Indigenous arts development*
- Achieving sustainable growth for regional and sub-regional arts organisations;*

- *Professional and artistic development for artists, especially emerging and disadvantaged artists;*
- *Arts promotion, communication and critical debate;*
- *Creative industries development that draws on the region's rich resources of cultural diversity;*
- *Productive engagement between the arts and corporate sectors;*
- *Art in the development and redevelopment of public space;*
- *Addressing inconsistent rates of development in particular artform areas (especially music, literature)*
- *Promoting resource sharing and collaboration, particularly on a sub-regional basis;*
- *Achieving a coherent cross-program and sustainable approach to support for local government, in particular to those local government facilities that provide programs which impact across and beyond greater Western Sydney*

*Recommendation 9: That a one-day forum be held bringing together those State Government agencies with a presence in Western Sydney, to initiate productive dialogue into how the arts and cultural development can be integrated into their work.*

*Recommendation 10: That the Ministry work with the Australia Council to proactively identify opportunities for Western Sydney artists and organisations through its ongoing and special funding programs.*

*Recommendation 11: That the Ministry for the Arts identifies and commences dialogue with Federal Government agencies that could impact on arts development in the region.*

*Recommendation 12: That the Ministry for the Arts supports WSROC in its regional co-ordination role.*

*Recommendation 13: That the Ministry for the Arts extends its relationship with local government in Western Sydney through the increased and long terms support of major regional flagship organisations and developing tri-partite funding arrangements with the Federal Government.*

*Recommendation 14: Clearly defined pathways to triennial funding should be articulated for organisations currently on annual funding, in the form of clear objectives, targets and guidelines on what they would need to demonstrate in order to move to a triennial funding model. It is further suggested that the Ministry for the Arts develop a performance-based reward system for well-established organisations that are demonstrably successful in attracting resources for cultural development for Western Sydney from sources other than the Ministry.*

*Recommendation 15: That the Ministry for the Arts commission an Indigenous Arts Development Strategy for Western Sydney, including an audit of Indigenous arts activity, existing and potential organisational capacity and resources, with detailed recommendations for action to address the issues outlined in this evaluation.*

*Recommendation 16: That the Ministry for the Arts address the unmet developmental needs of emerging and disadvantaged artists, to provide them with developmental advice and services on a 'case work' basis. Options for this support include:*

- The provision of a position (or positions) within existing arts organisations, or a regional service providing such support, or*
- A major project which would focus on setting up such a service and building it towards sustainability.*

*Recommendation 17: A specific funding program for the Arts Officer positions, under the Western Sydney Arts Strategy, should be set up which includes a mechanism for coordinating support and supervision of the positions. This may be a role taken on by a regional arts organisation, or the Arts Officers may come together to take on this support role from within their network. Under this program the Ministry for the Arts should prioritise the development of appropriate models and positions in Indigenous communities.*

*Recommendation 18: That the Ministry for the Arts seeks to support the enhancement of communication and promotion of arts and cultural development activities within the Western Sydney region, through the establishment of an arts magazine (related to online resources).*

*Recommendation 19: That the Ministry for the Arts supports feasibility and research studies which have the potential to lead to broader based financial support, into creative industry development for Western Sydney.*

*Recommendation 20: That the Ministry for the Arts actively supports activities within the region towards engagement between the arts and commercial sectors.*

*Recommendation 21: That the Ministry for the Arts implement measures to support and coordinate of public art development in Western Sydney.*

*Recommendation 22: That the Ministry for the Arts considers the recommendations of the Audience Development Strategy in tandem with its consideration of this Evaluation and its recommendations.*

*Recommendation 23: That the regional bodies with a cultural development brief be brought together to discuss the identified areas of ongoing need, along with representatives from local government, cultural institutions and arts officers (to provide more localised input), to identify potential commitments to addressing these issues.*

# **1. The impact of the Strategy on cultural development in Western Sydney**

## **1.1. Evaluating A Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney**

The New South Wales Government launched its *Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney* in November 1999. The explicit goals of the *Strategy* are:

1. To encourage arts and cultural activity that is locally determined and helps communities to grow.
2. To assist artists in Western Sydney achieve their full potential.
3. To increase participation in the arts by the people of Western Sydney.
4. To support and nurture the arts industry in Western Sydney.
5. To encourage regional cultural development.

The *Strategy* addresses these goals through targeted funding mechanisms, and by facilitating partnerships between Western Sydney stakeholders.

In 2004, after the fourth full year of implementation, the Ministry for the Arts commissioned an evaluation of the impact and effectiveness of the *Strategy*, with a brief to:

- Identify the impact of the *Strategy* on cultural development in Western Sydney, report on areas of ongoing need, and make recommendations on the future implementation of the *Western Sydney Arts Strategy*;
- Examine the current and potential roles of existing organisations with a Western Sydney regional cultural development brief in the context of the *Strategy* and make recommendations that will enhance regional co-ordination and co-operation.

This evaluation was carried out by the Centre for Cultural Research at the University of Western Sydney, working closely with the Ministry for the Arts' Program Manager for Western Sydney. Broad consultation was conducted with key representatives of the arts industry/community, local government, non-government sector and other relevant stakeholders in western Sydney, with particular attention to organisations representing Indigenous and non-English Speaking Background migrant artists and communities. Analysis of data provided by the Ministry and the Australia Council for the Arts, the Australian Bureau of Statistics and other organisations is included in this document and its Appendices.



## **1.2. Overview of findings**

The *Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney*, as part of broader State Government strategic initiatives for the Western Sydney region since 1999, has demonstrated government's commitment to equity for the region, resulting in an increasing regional sense of identity, and greater civic pride and participation. Overall, the *Strategy* has not only directed increased resources to the region to redress historical imbalances, but has supported enhanced cooperation and collaboration between stakeholders. The *Strategy's* most significant achievements are:

- Major progress in the capital development of cultural infrastructure;
- Growth of regional and sub-regional organisations supporting cultural development;
- Increased investment in arts and cultural activity by local government;
- Increasing success for the region's artists and organisations in gaining funding from the Ministry's non-Western Sydney Programs and other funding agencies;
- Establishment of a leadership role for the region in cultural planning;
- An increasing level of arts activity, resulting in enhanced opportunities for artists and audiences;
- Improving numbers of Western Sydney residents employed in cultural occupations and participating as audiences;
- The establishment within the Ministry for the Arts of significant leadership, regional overview and co-ordination; and
- Increased recognition of the region and its unique cultural values and expression.

However, significant areas of ongoing need remain:

- A strategy to support Indigenous arts development;
- Achieving sustainable growth for regional and sub-regional arts organisations;
- Professional and artistic development for artists, especially emerging and disadvantaged artists;
- Arts promotion, communication and critical debate;
- Creative industries development that draws on the region's rich resources of cultural diversity;
- Productive engagement between the arts and corporate sectors;
- Art in the development and redevelopment of public space;
- Addressing inconsistent rates of development in particular artform areas (especially music and literature);
- Promoting resource sharing and collaboration, particularly on a sub-regional basis; and
- A more coherent (cross-program) and sustainable approach to the support of local government, in particular to those local government facilities that provide programs which impact across and beyond greater Western Sydney.

### **1.3. A progress report on the implementation of the Strategy**

*The rich diversity of life experience in Western Sydney generates a profound well-spring of artistic expression and innovation. Work produced in the region breaks new ground, sets new standards, and rivals in excellence that created anywhere else in Australia. It is often personally transformative for its audiences, and influences community attitudes to important issues facing us all. Western Sydney is a microcosm reflecting the diversity of the whole nation, and pointing to its future. The challenges of living and working together, managing growth and change, are being worked out on a daily basis in Western Sydney. The region's arts community has an important role to play in showing us all where we have come from, helping us to understand the contemporary world we live in, and imaginatively envisaging the way forward. Throughout this evaluation report, a number of case studies are included to illustrate the diversity, innovation and excellence of arts practice in Western Sydney.*

This section gives an overview of activity and achievement in implementing the *Strategy*.

#### **Resourcing the Strategy**

Western Sydney is a rapidly changing and developing region, and many factors intervened between the *Strategy* as articulated in 1999 and its implementation. Because of the changing landscape, the actions outlined in the *Strategy* have varied in their feasibility of implementation, in the activity that has taken place towards them, and in their potential or actual impact on the region. Implementation of the *Strategy* was not fully costed prior to implementation, and funding from Treasury has been increased incrementally (Table 1).

*Table 1: Treasury allocations for the Western Sydney Program*

<b>Program Year</b>	<b>Allocation</b>
2001-02	\$400,000
2002-03	\$900,000
2003-04	\$1,750,000
2004-05	\$1,750,000
2005-06	\$1,500,000
2006-07	\$1,500,000
2007-08	\$1,500,000

The following funds have been disbursed under the Western Sydney Program:

- \$1,784,611 under the Western Sydney Local Government Arts Incentive Fund (matched by local government)
- \$1,081,245 under the Western Sydney Capital Infrastructure Program
- 16 fellowships totalling \$334,613 under the Western Sydney Artists' Fellowships Program.
- \$14.9m under the Major Capital Infrastructure Package announced by the Premier in February 2002 (matched by local government)

The *Strategy* has also been delivered through an implementation budget supporting strategic initiatives that progress those goals that cannot be addressed through an application-based process. Funded initiatives have generally had region wide application or impact. A total of \$1,226,008 has been disbursed under this section of the Program.

A full list of funding under the Western Sydney Program is included in Appendix 3, and a full list of funding to Western Sydney applicants under the Ministry's non-Western Sydney Programs is included as Appendix 4.

Progress towards the Goals of the *Strategy* is outlined below. A full analysis of progress towards the *Strategy's* articulated sub-goals is included as Appendix 1.

### **Goal 1 — To encourage arts and cultural activity that is locally determined and helps communities to grow**

Actions under Goal 1 related to:

- Broadening the partnership with Local Government: the Western Sydney Local Government Arts Incentive Fund
- Strengthening a sense of place: preserving Western Sydney's cultural heritage. This sub-goal has been addressed through a heritage review process conducted by the NSW Heritage Office.

#### ***Broadening the partnership with Local Government: the Western Sydney Local Government Arts Incentive Fund***

Local government is the cornerstone to the *Strategy*. It is closest to communities and artists, and is in the best position to take a holistic approach to the integration of cultural development into local area planning and services. Recognising that local government is already a major investor in cultural development, best placed to effectively deliver cultural development outcomes at the local level, the Western Sydney Local Government Arts Incentive Fund, established from the 2001 funding year and providing dollar-for-dollar matching funding, has encouraged local Councils to invest in the development and promotion of the arts.

Up to and including the 2004 funding year, the Western Sydney Local Government Arts Incentive Fund has disbursed a total of \$1,784,611. With matching funding, this translates to approximately \$3.6m in local investment in arts activity since 2001. Most Councils have conducted a number of projects through this scheme, although some participate much more than others.

This investment is additional to the significant investment made by Councils in staffing for cultural services and facilities, and the matching funding provided through the Major Capital Infrastructure Package (\$14.9m in 2002) and other capital development. There are approximately 80 full-time and part-time dedicated cultural positions in GWS Councils (see Table A1.2 in Appendix 1).

The Western Sydney Local Government Arts Incentive Fund has also provided a strong impetus for cultural planning within the region. The guidelines for the Fund require applicant Councils to have a cultural plan in place, or planning in progress. Of the 14 Western Sydney Councils, over half already have a cultural plan, and the remainder intend to develop one. The Fund has acted as a catalyst, putting the region at the forefront of cultural planning within the State, and positioning a number of

Western Sydney individuals to take a leading role in the development of the Ministry's Cultural Planning Guidelines.

Although the guidelines for the Fund prioritise projects with reach beyond a single LGA, few applications have been received for collaborative projects. The impact of local government collaboration has been recently shown through the Battle of Vinegar Hill project, involving the cooperation of five Councils: Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Hawkesbury, Holroyd and Parramatta. Cooperation between Councils is needed to avoid duplication and encourage resource sharing, especially for the development of cultural infrastructure. In a region the size and diversity of Western Sydney it is crucial that Councils work where possible on a sub-regional basis.

*Recommendation 1: That the Western Sydney Local Government Arts Incentive fund be continued, with the guidelines modified to prioritise applications which address identified areas of ongoing need:*

- *Indigenous arts development;*
- *Professional and artistic development for artists, especially emerging and disadvantaged artists;*
- *Arts promotion, communication and critical debate;*
- *Creative industry development;*
- *Productive engagement between the arts and corporate sectors;*
- *Art in the development and redevelopment of public space;*
- *capacity building and sustainable growth for regional and sub-regional arts organisations;*
- *regional and sub-regional service sharing agreements between Councils, and collaborations between Councils and arts, community and private sector organisations.*

*It is further recommended that the Ministry for the Arts consider negotiating multi-year funding agreements with Councils that have a developed arts program or facility to which they are making a significant financial commitment. Such agreements should encompass funding available through the artform programs of the Ministry.*

## Goal 2 — To assist artists in Western Sydney to achieve their full potential

Actions under Goal 2 related to:

- Artist-driven initiatives (implemented as the Western Sydney Fellowships Program)
- Flexible venues
- Indigenous artists forum
- Indigenous artists training
- Corporate partners for change: an employment strategy
- Access to the Internet
- Assistance to attend ANAT Summer School

### *Western Sydney Artists' Fellowships*

This program makes grants to support the development of new work or projects by Western Sydney artists or groups of artists. Over the period 2001–4, \$334,613 has been disbursed through the Artists' Fellowship Program. 16 fellowships have been awarded to artists at various stages in their career development, at an average of around \$21,000 each. In 2004, a total of 6 grants totalling \$133,738 were made, in recognition of the diversity and quality of the applications.

This measure addresses the significant issue of artists leaving the region to pursue their professional practice in the inner city or elsewhere, by supporting them to live and practice within the region through a prestigious award. The fellowships are intended to facilitate visionary and ambitious artist-driven projects that 'kick start' cultural development within the region through innovation in professional practice, and create something that has a life beyond the project. Better 'follow through' of the artists supported is now needed, including promotion of the benefits to the artists and communities involved to the wider arts sector and the region in general.

While this program has supported artists at various stages of career development, there has been some debate within the selection process as to whether the fellowships should be available to artists who would be competitive in other funding avenues, or whether the funds should be directed towards emerging and disadvantaged artists.

*Recommendation 2: That the Ministry for the Arts split the Western Sydney Artists' Fellowship program into Senior and Emerging Fellowship categories, in view of the still significant barriers to access and participation experienced by emerging and disadvantaged artists within the region. The Ministry should also implement follow-up measures on completion of the fellowships, to tap the potential for the program to be a significant promotional tool for the region's arts activity.*

It is suggested that for the Emerging Fellowship stream:

- Promotion of the program should be broadly based and give particular emphasis to targeting Indigenous and newly arrived migrant artists, including Indigenous publications such as the Koori Mail, publications in community languages and community radio, and direct promotion through cultural development workers in Western Sydney.
- The funding guidelines should emphasise artistic excellence, but be sufficiently broad that they are not prescriptive in terms of kinds of

disadvantage (e.g. low literacy because of educational limitations or disability as well as low competence in English).

- The application process should be highly flexible, with a simplified application form, which might be supplemented by a supporting statement from a cultural development worker.

### *Flexible venues*

To reach their full potential, artists need flexible, affordable, local and accessible multi-purpose arts spaces for studio and rehearsal space, and space for small-scale exhibitions, performances and workshops. The *Strategy* envisaged establishing up to three such spaces in Western Sydney, however, it is clear that a region of this size, with its public transport difficulties, could support many more such spaces.

The 2002 Major Capital Infrastructure Package and other capital infrastructure projects funded under the Western Sydney Arts Strategy, including the Blacktown Arts Centre and the Casula Powerhouse Regional Arts Centre, have gone some way towards addressing this need. The Ministry's Program Manager for Western Sydney has pursued a number of options to improve the working conditions of artists and provide much-needed facilities for local communities, including the re-purposing of government surplus buildings. However this is an extremely time-consuming activity, and the Ministry has not had the resources to pursue this comprehensively.

The success of such spaces depends on establishing them in places that are easily accessible to a local group of artists to be involved in the facility. The Liverpool Artists' Co-operative Project is one attempt to address this issue of 'fit' between an emerging artistic community and the establishment of supporting infrastructure. The benefits of co-location of smaller arts organisations has also been demonstrated in Bankstown, where funding was allocated under the 2002 Major Capital Infrastructure Package for appropriate accommodation for a number of smaller arts organisations, including the Bankstown Youth Development Service (BYDS), City Moon theatre company and Urban Theatre Projects. These organisations are currently housed temporarily while a decision on their permanent home is awaited. Their co-location is proving to be an attractor for other community groups and individuals, forming an embryonic 'cultural hub' at the site.

*Recommendation 3: That funding be made available for groups of artists and smaller arts organisations to undertake feasibility studies towards meeting the need for flexible, affordable, local and accessible multi-purpose studio and rehearsal space, and spaces for small-scale exhibitions, performances and workshops, both for establishing long-term facilities and temporary ('guerrilla') establishments.*

### Goal 3 — To increase participation in the arts by the people of Western Sydney

Actions under Goal 3 related to:

- Arts and education
- Audience development

#### *Arts and Education*

Improving arts learning outcomes for young people, both as artists and audiences, requires long-term cooperation between the Ministry for the Arts and educational authorities such as the NSW Department of Education (DET), TAFE and Universities. Resources within the Ministry for the Arts have not allowed this goal to be pursued systematically to date.

The NSW Government has allocated \$1.9m for the period 2003–2007 to implement the *Arts Access* strategy across the State. Through *Arts Access*, the Ministry for the Arts and DET provide government school students in years 5 to 8, who are otherwise unable to access live performances in dance, drama and music and exhibitions in galleries and museums, with the opportunity to participate in these experiences. It also exposes isolated communities to professional artists as artists-in-residence, and includes a performing arts touring program.

*Recommendation 4: That the Arts Access program include Western Sydney schools in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage and Western Sydney artists and arts organisations in the program.*

#### *Audience development*

Over the period of the implementation of the *Strategy*, the major CBD-based organisations and festivals have increasingly undertaken activities within the region, generally in collaboration with Western Sydney cultural facilities and organisations. This welcome trend seems set to continue as cooperative relationships develop and mature. The Sydney Festival and the Sydney Writers' Festival, for example, have expanded to Western Sydney venues.

A requirement to report on the Western Sydney activities of their organisation is included in the performance agreements of the Chief Executive Officers of the State-owned cultural institutions. Some are more active within the region than others, particularly the Powerhouse Museum and the Film and Television Office.

In late 2003, an audience development strategy for Western Sydney was commissioned by the Ministry, with funding from the Australia Council. This project is reported on below in section 2.12.

*Recommendation 5: That all cultural institutions and appropriate major organisations funded through the Ministry for the Arts be requested to develop strategies to extend their reach to Western Sydney and develop partnerships with WS organisations.*

## Goal 4 — To support and nurture the arts industry in Western Sydney

Actions under this Goal related to:

- Promoting industry development
- Corporate support for the arts
- A relocation strategy for arts organisations
- Physical Infrastructure for the Arts

### *Promoting industry development*

In implementing this goal, the *Strategy* proposed establishing a number of arts incubators. Rather than attempting to establish such facilities from scratch, projects that might evolve into arts incubators have been pursued. These include the Liverpool Artists' Co-operative Project mentioned above and the SWITCH multi-media access centre, with potential to evolve into a new media arts incubator, although the focus as the centre becomes established is primarily on artistic development and training.

While the Ministry for the Arts clearly has a central interest in arts industry development, collaboration with other entities with an interest in employment, industry and regional development needs to be pursued, including the Department of State and Regional Development, the GROW Employment Councils, the Greater Western Sydney Economic Development Board and local councils. Creative enterprise and arts industry development is addressed further in section 2.9.

### *Infrastructure for the arts*

A major capital infrastructure package for the region totalling \$14.9 million was announced by the Premier in February 2002. Local government provides matching funding for these allocations. The package provides for operational funding over three years for some facilities. The unresolved issue of ongoing operational funding for the region's major cultural infrastructure is discussed below in section 2.4.

Much of the capital development work supported by the Major Capital Infrastructure Package is either underway or still to take place, and hence the capacity building impact of this measure on the region will only be delivered over the long term as facilities come to be fully operational. Facilities supported are:

- Accommodation for professional arts organisations in Bankstown
- Blacktown Arts Centre
- Campbelltown City Bicentennial Art Gallery
- Hawkesbury Regional Museum
- Casula Powerhouse Regional Arts Centre
- Parramatta Riverside Theatres
- Penrith Bicentennial Performing Arts Centre (the Joan Sutherland Centre)
- Penrith Regional Gallery & the Lewers Bequest

In addition, the Western Sydney Capital Infrastructure Program has provided funding of up to \$500,000 per annum for capital development, disbursing in total \$1,081,245. Demands on the annual capital infrastructure program have decreased significantly in the last two years.



## Goal 5 — To encourage regional cultural development

Actions under Goal 5 related to:

- Overseeing the Western Sydney Arts Strategy
- Co-ordination of the Western Sydney Local Government Arts Incentive Fund and the development of regional and sub-regional co-operation
- Multicultural arts co-ordination
- Cultural Accord
- Representation on boards and committees

### *Regional coordination of cultural development*

Oversight of the *Strategy* has been undertaken by the Ministry for the Arts through the appointment of a Program Manager for Western Sydney, who has liaised extensively with a broad range of agencies. The Western Sydney Program Manager has strong developmental relationships with the region's Councils and many opportunities to coordinate implementation of the *Strategy* and encourage regional and sub-regional cooperation have been pursued. She represents the Ministry on various committees and bodies, such as the Steering committee for the WSROC Regional Cultural Planning Coordination Project and the University of Western Sydney's Arts Advisory Panel.

Collaboration with State Government agencies with major presences in Western Sydney remains a major challenge however, given the complexity and diversity of State Government intervention in the region, and the time limitations of the single officer working on the implementation of the *Strategy*. An efficient way of achieving the required level of coordination needs to be found.

Applications for funding under the Western Sydney Program are assessed by a panel convened by the Western Sydney Program Manager, composed by drawing members from the committees for the Ministry's other artform programs, based on the expertise needed for each round depending on the mix of applications. This tends to result in a limited pool of Western Sydney people being considered for membership of the panel. Western Sydney representation on Ministry committees has averaged 17% between 2000 and 2004. Ongoing introduction of new membership from within Western Sydney to the Ministry's advisory and decision-making committees would broaden expertise and enhance skills within the region, and ensure that a well-qualified and experienced pool of individuals is always available.

*Recommendation 6: That the Ministry for the Arts continues to appoint Western Sydney representatives to its artform committees. It is further recommended, to ensure that appropriately skilled and knowledgeable committee members are available to assess the very diverse range of applications submitted under the Western Sydney Program, that an eligibility list or register of peers be formed of people with diverse expertise from the region, to supplement the members of the artform committees.*

## **1.4. Indicators of cultural development in Western Sydney**

### **NSW Ministry for the Arts funding**

Figure 1 (in Appendix 1) illustrates success in Ministry for the Arts funding in Western Sydney LGAs per head of population since the 2001 program year, across both Western Sydney and other Program areas but excluding capital infrastructure. There are significant differences between LGAs in per capita funding under the Ministry's various programs, with the average over the 2001–2004 period at just over \$4 per person. The range varies from nearly \$9 per person in Liverpool and Parramatta to under \$1 per person in Wollondilly.

- Baulkham Hills, Holroyd and Wollondilly have low levels of participation in Ministry programs. Total funding is lower than for other areas, and is also lower comparative to population. With a rapidly growing population and recently appointed cultural development staff, Baulkham Hills is expected to make greater demands on Ministry funding programs in the near future.
- Blacktown, Camden and Hawkesbury also have relatively lower levels than the average. These LGAs are expected to increase participation as their infrastructure and staffing becomes established. Campbelltown's participation in Ministry programs is also expected to increase as its infrastructure upgrade becomes established.
- The high participation rate of the Blue Mountains LGA reflects a relatively high level of arts activity, and its annual 'partnership' funding program.
- Liverpool, Parramatta and Penrith's high levels of funding participation per capita is likely to be a reflection of the scale of their infrastructure. Bankstown also attracts a high level of funding, reflecting the number of professional arts organisations based there, including a theatre company of national significance.

Figure A2.2 (in Appendix 2) illustrates in graphical form the breakdown of funding under the Ministry's artform Programs over the period 1995–2004 to Western Sydney. Table 2 below gives the percentage increases between the five-year periods 1995–99 and 2000–04.

*Table 2. Breakdown of funding under the Ministry's artform programs*

	<b>95-99</b>	<b>00-04</b>	<b>%increase</b>
<b>Dance</b>	\$15,000	\$91,186	508%
<b>Music</b>	\$45,200	\$91,050	101%
<b>Lit. &amp; History (inc Premier's Awards)</b>	\$323,090	\$348,100	8%
<b>Museums</b>	\$659,837	\$533,540	-19%
<b>Visual Arts &amp; Craft</b>	\$594,665	\$703,600	18%
<b>Theatre (inc Perf. Arts Touring)</b>	\$901,129	\$1,641,962	82%
<b>CCD</b>	\$1,860,171	\$2,307,988	24%
	\$4,399,092	\$5,717,426	30%

Between the two five-year periods, funding to Western Sydney under the Ministry's non-WS programs increased overall by 30%. CCD funding increased by 24%, while

the funding in the other Artform-based programs increased overall by 34%. This success in increasing funding to the region clearly demonstrates the impact of the Ministry's targeted funding to the region since the mid-1990s.

The strength of Theatre within the region is shown in the 82% increase in funding through the Theatre Program. Dance increased from a low base of just \$15,000 to over \$90,000, while Music also doubled, although still only to just over \$90,000. Literature and History appears to have only increased by 8% (although there appears to be information missing from the data extracted from the Ministry's database relating to funding for the Eleanor Dark Foundation for 2002 and 2004). Museums program funding fell by 19% between the two periods, however the earlier period includes funding for a number of capital developments.

Visual Arts and Crafts funding appears to be holding steady from year to year, however many Visual Arts projects have been funded through the Local Government Arts Incentive Scheme, since the major galleries are Council owned. In contrast, the major performing arts organisations are independent community organisations who cannot access the main Western Sydney funding programs.

Taken together with the Local Government Arts Incentive Scheme outcomes, then, this analysis indicates growing activity within the region across all artforms, although there is considerable scope for further specific artform development, especially in literature and music.

The Western Sydney Dance Action project provides a model for specialised artform development through appropriately locating and resourcing an animateur to:

- Develop new work and support artist development;
- Provide artform development advice and advocacy;
- Act as a point of contact and clearinghouse for information;
- Encourage ambitious and innovative concept development; and
- Develop networks within the region.

Animateurs would significantly enhance the expertise in the region, and may be located within a Western Sydney organisation, or may operate as a regional outpost of a CBD-based organisation. The work of existing organisations can be extended in this way to the benefit of the region, rather than setting up a new artform-based organisation. Benefits would include a reduced reliance on the Ministry's artform specialists and Western Sydney Program Manager to provide advice.

*Recommendation 7: That the Ministry for the Arts support and encourage artform development through the establishment of specialist animateurs, appropriately located and resourced. Initially, options for establishing animateurs for literature and music should be explored.*

### **Australia Council for the Arts funding to Western Sydney**

Since 2000 a total of \$4,116,794 in Australia Council grants have been awarded to individuals and organisations in the region. Table 3 below gives the breakdown of this funding by year and by Australia Council Board. As this Table indicates, 47% of Australia Council funding within the region is under the CCD Board, with a further 30% under Theatre.

**Table 3: Australia Council funding to GWS organisations and individuals**

Ozco Board	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004 (to June)	Total	Percent of total
AMD	\$80,000		\$10,000			\$90,000	2%
ATSIA	\$40,360	\$10,020	\$30,000		\$11,230	\$91,610	2%
CCD	\$156,504	\$640,989	\$594,764	\$338,297	\$217,660	\$1,948,214	47%
Dance		\$30,600		\$5,953	\$4,000	\$40,553	1%
Literature	\$108,000	\$111,500	\$231,500	\$26,500	\$29,000	\$506,500	12%
Music		\$28,128	\$6,179	\$18,158	\$27,000	\$79,465	2%
NMA			\$20,000	\$8,000		\$28,000	1%
PCR			\$25,000			\$25,000	1%
Theatre	\$471,000	\$50,000	\$45,000	\$653,312		\$1,219,312	30%
VAC	\$44,140	\$24,000	\$20,000			\$88,140	2%
	<b>\$900,004</b>	<b>\$895,237</b>	<b>\$982,443</b>	<b>\$1,050,220</b>	<b>\$288,890</b>	<b>\$4,116,794</b>	100%

A number of Western Sydney organisations are in receipt of operational funding from the Australia Council. In particular, Urban Theatre Projects, CCDNSW, Liverpool MRC (for the Multimedia Van) and the Eleanor Dark Foundation receive triennial funding from the Australia Council, while Powerhouse Youth Theatre receives an annual program grant. A number of other GWS organisations have received significant project-based grants. Table 4 below shows funding received by these organisations.

**Table 4: Western Sydney organisations in receipt of significant levels of Australia Council funding, 2000–2004**

Organisation	Funding
Auburn Community Development Network	\$77,615
Bankstown Youth Development Service	\$49,500
Casula Powerhouse Regional Arts Centre	\$28,850
Fairfield Community Resource Centre	\$45,000
Information and Cultural Exchange	\$165,134
Railway Street Theatre	\$53,312
Eleanor Dark Foundation	\$181,000
Powerhouse Youth Theatre	\$206,000
Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre	\$164,525
Community Cultural Development NSW	\$535,750
Urban Theatre Projects	\$1,144,969 <sup>1</sup>

Source: Australia Council for the Arts

<sup>1</sup> This funding figure for Urban Theatre Projects includes six years of triennial funding. The data for other organisations in receipt of triennial funding from the Australia Council includes three years of funding for each.

### Cultural participation — attendance at cultural venues and activities

In 1999 and 2002, as part of its regular General Social Survey, the Australian Bureau of Statistics collected information on attendance at selected cultural venues and activities in the previous 12 months. These studies are published by the ABS as *Attendance at Selected Cultural Venues and Events* (cat. 4114.0), and additional data relating to Western Sydney is published on the NSW Ministry for the Arts website.

Attendance rates in western Sydney were lower than for the rest of Sydney for all cultural venues and activities surveyed, but further analysis of the 1999 data broken down into 3 geographical subregions of Western Sydney with roughly equal population shows distinct differences between parts of the region (see Appendix 5):

- Outer western Sydney (Baulkham Hills, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Hawkesbury and Wollondilly) has the highest rate of attendance in GWS across *all* categories, and has a higher rate of attendance than non-GWS Sydney in library attendance and popular music venues;
- The mid west (Blacktown, Liverpool, Penrith) has higher attendance than the inner west at libraries, popular music events and cinema;
- The inner west (Auburn, Bankstown, Holroyd, Fairfield, Parramatta) has higher attendance than the mid west at art galleries, popular music, classical music, theatre, dance and opera/musical venues.

Comparison of the 1999 and 2002 data shows improvement between the two surveys in most categories of activity (Table 5). This comparison must be treated cautiously, however, since the 1999 respondents included people 15 years and older, while the 2002 survey included only those over 18 (see Figure A5.4 in Appendix 5 for an age breakdown of cultural participation). The apparent reduction in art gallery attendance, for example, contrasts with the further observation that the proportion of Western Sydney art gallery patrons who attended more than once during the year increased from 46% to 48% between the two periods.

*Table 5. Attendance at selected cultural venues and events, 1999 and 2002*

	<b>1999</b>	<b>2002</b>
Art galleries	14.1%	13.3%
Museums	17.1%	21.1%
Libraries	32.9%	37.0%
Popular Music	20.8%	21.9%
Classical Music	7.2%	7.8%
Theatre	12.7%	10.3%
Dance	8.4%	10.7%
Musicals & Opera	15.0%	16.4%
Other performing arts	18.7%	18.2%
Cinema	63.1%	67.2%

*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics*

These rates reflect Western Sydney residents' attendance at CBD-based venues and elsewhere, as well as within the region. The region's own cultural facilities are experiencing increasing audiences:

- Audience figures for Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre (including its touring program) have increased annually by an average of around 20% since the mid-1990s;
- Parramatta Riverside Theatres presents more than 60 performances or events, attracting a total of more than 10,000 people each month;
- General visits to the Penrith Regional Gallery and Lewers Bequest increased by more than four-fold between 2001 and 2003, to more than 50,000 visitors in 2003. Educational visits increased by more than 3-fold in the same period.

The region's cultural diversity impacts on its patterns of cultural activity. Appendix 5 describes the distinctive cultural participation of people from diverse countries of origin, based on analysis of the 2002 ABS data. For Art galleries, Museums and the traditional performing arts of Classical Music, Dance, Opera, Musicals and Theatre, attendance is highest for people from North-West Europe, Eastern Europe, Maritime South-East Asia, North-East Asia, the Americas and Sub-Saharan Africa. Attendance is lowest among people from Southern and South-Eastern Europe, North Africa and the Middle East, Mainland South-East Asia, South and Central Asia. For other cultural activities, attendance patterns vary markedly between cultural groups. Library attendance is extremely high among the Chinese-born, for example, whereas Cinema attendance is very high among people of Filipino, Indonesian and Malaysian origin.

#### Employment in cultural occupations, 1996 and 2001

Table 6 demonstrates significant increases in employment by Western Sydney residents in cultural occupations, based on the 1996 and 2001 Census returns. The table gives the raw numbers of respondents indicating their main employment in a cultural occupation at each of the Censuses, along with the proportion that these represent of the State's population, and the increase (or decrease in some cases) in cultural occupation employment in Western Sydney.

Overall, there are significant increases in residents employed in the majority of categories, and an improvement in the Western Sydney proportions relative to NSW as a whole. The exceptions are in the categories of Film/TV/Radio presenters (contrasting with the other occupations in this industry) and in Visual arts and crafts professionals and in Artists and related professionals nfd (not further defined). In the two latter categories there are overall falls in numbers employed across NSW as a whole, reflecting the difficulties of maintaining professional employment in this field.

Highly encouraging, however, are the increasing numbers of arts professionals in other categories: 23% more Musicians, 21% more Authors, and a near doubling of Actors, Dancers and related professionals (up by 93%). Western Sydney is now home to nearly 20% of the State's Actors and Dancers. This trend is also reflected in strengthening of employment in creative and cultural industries, as well as in professional arts categories, with 30% more Music and performing arts teachers, 30% more Journalists, 40% more Film/TV/Radio operators, 71% more Film/TV/Radio Directors/producers, and 50% more Designers and Illustrators.

**Table 6: Western Sydney residents employed in selected cultural occupations, 1996 and 2001**

	1996		2001		% change 96-01
	Number employed	WS as % of NSW employed	Number employed	WS as % of NSW employed	
Photographers	422	17.5%	459	17.6%	9%
Designers/illustrators	1,456	16.5%	2,184	17.4%	50%
Journalists/related professionals	584	9.6%	760	10.6%	30%
Musicians/related professionals	439	14.8%	538	16.1%	23%
Film/TV/Radio Directors/producers	277	6.6%	475	8.5%	71%
Film/TV/Radio Presenters	116	13.9%	122	13.4%	5%
Film/TV/Radio Technicians/operators	427	14.7%	596	16.2%	40%
Other Film/TV/Radio	170	12.3%	269	14.0%	58%
Authors/related professionals	136	10.0%	165	10.2%	21%
Actors/dancers/related professionals	234	15.6%	452	19.4%	93%
Visual arts and crafts professionals	505	17.2%	440	15.3%	-13%
Artists & related professionals nfd	202	13.4%	165	11.1%	-18%
Music/performing arts teachers	713	18.2%	924	19.1%	30%
Architects	829	14.0%	996	14.1%	20%
Library/museum workers	1,640	20.0%	1,738	20.8%	6%
Others	1,799	22.8%	1,972	22.5%	10%
<b>Total cultural occupations</b>	<b>9,949</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>12,255</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>23%</b>

*Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996 and 2001 Census*

### **1.5. Impact of the Strategy on cultural development in Western Sydney**

The *Strategy* has provided a highly effective framework for enhancing cooperation and collaboration within Western Sydney. Through increasing the overall level of resources and capital infrastructure development to redress historical imbalances between the West and 'the rest', it has provided the foundation for a significant amount of developmental activity, not only through the Western Sydney Program itself, but also through the confidence and encouragement given to other entities with a stake in the region.

The *Strategy*, as part of broader State Government strategic initiatives for the region since 1999, has given a sense of commitment by government. These measures have contributed significantly to an increasing regional sense of place, identity and greater civic pride and participation. It is crucial that the State Government as a whole continues to reinforce its commitment to building up of the region's infrastructure, ensuring that its population has access to a full range of services, and that quality of life in the region continues to improve. The *Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney* impacts not just on arts development, but also on broader capacities for local cultural development, infrastructure planning, community participation, integrated policy and planning, and partnerships for sustainable development.

The *Strategy* has led to an increase in the amount and overall quality of arts and cultural activity across GWS. Quality improvements are difficult to measure, but are indicated by flow-on funding successes and accolades. For example, Western Sydney local government authorities were markedly successful in the 2004 Local Government Association and Shires Association Cultural Awards: Parramatta and Holroyd Councils were winners in the Cultural Policy and Planning category, with Auburn and Blacktown winners in the Cultural Programs and Projects category. Organisations funded under the *Strategy* have also been recognised in the Western Sydney Industry Awards, with ICE being given awards in 2003 (for Most Innovative Business–Arts Partnership) and 2004 (for Most Sustainable and Successful Arts Enterprise).

As well as providing additional resources to the region, the *Strategy* has acted as a catalyst for cultural development by a range of agencies, but especially for local government. For cultural workers within Councils, the identification by the State Government of arts and cultural development as a priority for the region has been a potent bargaining point for arguing for greater investment at the local level. The Local Government Arts Incentive Fund, in particular, has encouraged local government to increase funding to arts and cultural development, giving artists and small arts organisations greater access to resources and support.

Stakeholders throughout the region regard the coordinating role of the Ministry's Western Sydney Program Manager as having had a significantly beneficial effect. This role is responsible not only for coordinating the Program's funding schemes, but has also been instrumental through developing for the Ministry for the Arts an understanding of the dynamics of the region from a multi-artform and broad cultural development perspective. It has been important in identifying opportunities for resource sharing and collaboration, and has allowed for the ongoing identification of gaps and needs with regard to cultural development within the region. The position has also been very effective in raising the profile of Western Sydney arts activity within the Ministry itself.



## **2. The Strategy going forward**

### **2.1. The continued importance of cultural development for the region**

As Sydney has developed, its western areas have been imagined in different and contradictory ways. The region has undergone rapid urbanisation, development and growth, which transformed conceptualisations of Sydney's 'west' in the post-war period. By the 1970s, as the 'western suburbs' were denigrated in the popular imagination, the formation of the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) saw the emergence of a strong point of advocacy for region-wide coordination, and of a regional 'identity' for Western Sydney. This reference point has been a critical tool at various levels of government for identifying appropriate responses to social polarisation, and planning and infrastructure needs.

Over the last seven years, the impact has been felt of more integrated responses, greater co-operation, the development of partnerships, and the emergence of a regional identity enhanced by heightened co-ordination through a NSW Government Ministry for Western Sydney and strategic regional programs across a range of fields – including the arts and culture. Western Sydney has become an incubator for innovative strategies – not only in terms of policy initiatives that have piloted 'whole-of-government' and partnership strategies, but also in the field. Cutting edge cultural development practices have contributed to the development of hybrid and innovative artistic and cultural practice across a range of artforms, and reinvented 'community cultural development' in twenty-first century terms.

Although still fragile, a new sense of regional cultural identity is emerging. Western Sydney's assets of cultural, ecological and spatial diversity are key to what can be perceived as an increasing civic pride. The role of cultural development in general — and of the *Strategy* in particular — needs to be placed in this context. As NSW Premier Bob Carr stated earlier this year in his speech to the Sydney Futures Forum, key to Western Sydney's continued development is the growth and consolidation of effectively serviced sub-regional centres, with a shift of employment to Sydney's greater west, and continuing to 'dump the old stereotype that Western Sydney is a dormitory region'.<sup>2</sup>

The NSW Government's *Metropolitan Strategy Discussion Paper*, released in September 2004, identifies Centres Policy as a cornerstone of the proposed planning framework for Greater Metropolitan Sydney. Centres Policy focuses on enhancing the quality of the city's centres through achieving a balanced mix of homes, jobs and services (which must include cultural services). The seven centres within Greater Metropolitan Sydney are all in Sydney's West: Fairfield, Bankstown, Parramatta, Penrith, Blacktown, Campbelltown and Liverpool<sup>3</sup>. This framework should inform planning for the Government's arts investment in Western Sydney

The number and diversity of the people who have settled in the region is having a transformative impact, and governments at all levels need to pay attention to more

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<sup>2</sup> Premier of NSW, *Transcript of Speech by Premier Bob Carr, Sydney Futures Forum, Wednesday May 19, 2004* [http://www.metrostrategy.nsw.gov.au/dev/digitalAssets/227\\_1085385315205\\_040519\\_Premier\\_Sydney%20Futures%20Forum.pdf](http://www.metrostrategy.nsw.gov.au/dev/digitalAssets/227_1085385315205_040519_Premier_Sydney%20Futures%20Forum.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> *Planning for a Better Future: Metropolitan Strategy Discussion Paper, Sydney Greater Metropolitan Region*, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources, p.18.

consolidated, integrated planning, in order to effectively accommodate changing infrastructure demands, and to recognise that effective planning must encompass the enormity of the social and cultural transformations underway. The *Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney* is significant in that it has been implemented within an arts policy context which places an increasing value and emphasis on the strategic importance of cultural planning.

The relevance of the arts and cultural life has recently also emerged as critical in considerations of social and cultural capital, participatory citizenship, quality of life, sustainable development and environmental sustainability. The arts can contribute to economic development, creative industries, participation, democracy and citizenship, and to *well being* (as a recent Australia Council report has demonstrated). Cultural and community development practices can deliver healthier cities, through what the World Health Organisation has referred to as 'an enlarged vision of health'. Further, culture and the arts are closely linked to economic development, with creative industries emerging as critical for economic development, employment opportunity, innovation and capacity for effective engagement within the 'new economy'.

- Western Sydney has the fastest growing population in the state, with the third largest economy in Australia;
- In the 20 years between 1981 and 2001, the population in Greater Western Sydney grew by 38%, compared with 23% for the Sydney region as a whole;
- Between 1996 and 2001, the population of the Sydney metropolitan region grew by an average of 52,000 persons per year, with the majority of this growth in the West.
- At the 2001 Census, 1.673 million people lived in the GWS region, representing 42% of the population of Sydney, and 27% of the population of the state.
- Population projections anticipate that this high rate of growth will be sustained until at least 2019–20. An increase from the 2001 population of around 30%, to 2.18 million — or an additional half a million people — is expected over this timeframe (see Appendix 6).
- At the same time, decreasing household sizes are expected to result in an increasing density of housing in many areas. The population is also expected to become increasingly culturally diverse.

***The development of cultural infrastructure and service provision needs to keep pace with this rate of growth and change, in order to ensure that service provision is equitably distributed and that access to arts and cultural activity is continuously improving for the region's population, and not falling behind.***

## **2.2. Sharpening the strategic focus of the Strategy**

Cultural development in Western Sydney has come a long way since the advocacy and research of the late 1980s demonstrated inequities in funding and activity in the region. In 1999, the *Strategy* identified the foundations of the problem as that of 'critical mass': 'the levels of infrastructure and activity, including artists and audience numbers, needed to make the cultural life of the region self-sustaining and self-renewing' (p.23). In 2004, while there are still gaps and areas of ongoing need, at the same time there is a great deal of pride in the quality of the region's arts activity, and in its distinctive and innovative character. There needs to be a balance between the Western Sydney Program as a case of affirmative action to address access and equity issues that are a legacy of under-resourcing and under-development, *and* a recognition that there is art activity in the region that is among the best in the State.

As capacity has been built within the region, there is now a need to identify ways to:

- Increase levels of cooperation, collaboration and resource sharing
- Facilitate information flow and communication throughout the region
- Address remaining gaps and barriers to participation and access
- Develop collaborations between Western Sydney artists and arts organisations, and organisations and artists located outside the region (from the rest of Sydney to internationally).

While the *Strategy* can clearly be seen as a success, there is scope for it to become even more strategically focussed, with an increased emphasis on capacity building for cultural development, actualising the potential for the arts to contribute broadly to sustainable development for the region, and targeting resources to still unmet need.

*Recommendation 8: The following are recommended as themes for the future of the Strategy.*

- *Developing a strategic approach to Indigenous arts development*
- *Achieving sustainable growth for regional and sub-regional arts organisations;*
- *Professional and artistic development for artists, especially emerging and disadvantaged artists;*
- *Arts promotion, communication and critical debate;*
- *Creative industries development that draws on the region's rich resources of cultural diversity;*
- *Productive engagement between the arts and corporate sectors;*
- *Art in the development and redevelopment of public space;*
- *Addressing inconsistent rates of development in particular artform areas (especially music, literature)*
- *Promoting resource sharing and collaboration, particularly on a sub-regional basis;*
- *Achieving a coherent cross-program and sustainable approach to support for local government, in particular to those local government facilities that provide programs which impact across and beyond greater Western Sydney*

### **2.3. Leadership and coordination for cultural development**

#### **The NSW State Government**

The Ministry for the Arts in general, and not just the Western Sydney Program, is clearly more significant to the region than as a funding source. Access to its expertise, advocacy and negotiation capacity is also of paramount importance. For some stakeholders, such as large Councils, the grants program may indeed be of lesser importance than that the Ministry for the Arts takes a broader leadership role in cultural development for the region.

Stakeholders within the Western Sydney region clearly look to the Ministry to take a leadership role in relation to the activities and policies of other state government departments which impact on cultural development, as well as at local and Federal government levels. The Ministry's Strategic Plan 2004–7, *Priorities for the Arts* clearly articulates the importance of Leadership by nominating it as one of its strategic priorities. Leadership addresses the role of the arts and culture in the social life of the state by 'better integrating the arts and culture with other arms of government', in order to 'generate more opportunity, more activity, more jobs and greater engagement in the arts' (p.9).

Under the *Strategy*, the encouragement of cultural planning in local government has reached a stage of broad acceptance across the region, with a deeper commitment in some areas. The recently released *Cultural Planning Guidelines* give further impetus to this process, articulated as they are as part of a broader initiative 'to embed cultural development processes into the objectives and operations of Government agencies so that a whole-of-government approach to cultural development can be achieved' (Cultural Planning Guidelines, p.5).

The Ministry for the Arts has an important role to play in making explicit links between cultural development and broader development agendas within the State public sector. This includes, in particular, the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources, the Department of State and Regional Development, the Office of Western Sydney, the Roads and Transport Authority, the Department of Housing, the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Community Services (and particularly the Communities Division, which encompasses the Strengthening Communities division formerly located in the Premier's Department), Department of Health, Department of Commerce (Industrial Relations), the Community Relations Commission and so on.

The status of cultural development within the Metropolitan Strategy, currently under discussion, is unclear and undeveloped, for example. Further, the focus on Centres Policy within the Metropolitan Strategy Discussion Paper, released in September 2004, has particular significance for Western Sydney. The Ministry for the Arts needs to urgently address its participation in DIPNR's planning processes, particularly the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy. (This would also have the effect of enhancing the Ministry's strategic intervention in the Illawarra, central Coast and Hunter regions.)

The cultural interfaces of these State agencies are currently under-developed. Clear points of contact within those agencies are needed to interface with the Ministry for the Arts, and to mirror the increasing level of integration within local government of cultural development and planning with processes of urban development and

regeneration, economic and employment development, and environmental sustainability.

Conversely, points of interface within the Ministry for the Arts with the concerns of other state agencies need to be strengthened. The Western Sydney Program Manager is currently the only role within the Ministry with a cross-artform, regionally based overview. Opportunities to intervene in issues relating to the domains of other state agencies within Western Sydney do arise, but the Western Sydney Program Manager cannot effectively keep pace with and intervene in all of the relevant activities of State Government in the region, and at the same time manage a major development and funding program. It is suggested that a one-day forum be held, to bring together those government agencies with a presence in Western Sydney to initiate productive dialogue into how the arts and cultural development can be integrated into their work, and to increase their understanding of the social and community benefits, employment and economic outcomes, and an urban development program which incorporates environmental sustainability.

*Recommendation 9: That a one-day forum be held bringing together those State Government agencies with a presence in Western Sydney, to initiate productive dialogue into how the arts and cultural development can be integrated into their work.*

## Federal government

Many arts organisations within the region are supported through the various programs of the Australia Council for the Arts (see section 1.4). With its nationally-focussed brief, the Australia Council does not seem to see a role for itself in cross artform, regional cultural development, although the Regional and Outer Metropolitan Audience Development program (a three-year initiative) indicates that the Council recognises that there are specific issues affecting arts development in 'urban fringe' areas like Western Sydney. In 2003, funding of \$40,000 was allocated under this program to develop an audience development strategy to accompany the *Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney* (see section 2.12 below for a report on this project).

The Australia Council recently published a major report on the arts and wellbeing, signalling an interest in strengthening the reach of arts activity into sectors beyond professional arts organisations. Arts activity in the health sector is already established in the Western Sydney region. The Council also recently announced initiatives with significant potential for Western Sydney organisations and individuals, including \$3m allocated to an 'Australian Stories' program, and funding for small to medium arts organisations and expansion of international markets for Australian Artists (additional \$1m funding). Formal discussions with the Australia Council should be held with regard to modelling projects in these areas in Western Sydney.

More broadly, Federal Government policy and programmatic approaches exert a profound influence on the shape of cultural planning, development, policy, programs and infrastructures in the region. They are instrumental in creating a vision (or lack of one) for the role of the arts and cultural life within the nation. Federal policies and programs that have a bearing on cultural development in Western Sydney, arguably encompass health, education and vocational training, economic and regional development (including the GROW councils), international trade policy, the environment and sustainable development, and Federal migration policy. The interest of the Productivity Commission and the Australian Bureau of Statistics in social and

cultural indicators is another such area. The development of indicators of cultural development would certainly be beneficial in assessing the impact of strategic initiatives, such as the *Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney*, over the long term.

*Recommendation 10: That the Ministry for the Arts work with the Australia Council to proactively identify opportunities for Western Sydney artists and organisations through its ongoing and special funding programs.*

*Recommendation 11: That the Ministry for the Arts identifies and commences dialogue with Federal Government agencies that could impact on arts development in the region.*

## Local government

All Western Sydney Councils either have either in place or are now committed to the development of local cultural plans. Coordination is needed between local cultural plans of neighbouring Councils, especially for resource sharing and partnerships. Non-neighbouring Councils can also cooperate in activities that serve common interest.

Cultural planning at the regional level should be more long term, strategic and dynamic, strongly linked to wider social and land use planning processes, such as WSROC's Regional Planning Framework and the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy. Regional coordination is currently achieved through WSROC's WSAAS-funded Regional Cultural Planning Coordination Project, although permanent provision of peak coordination of cultural planning for the region should be seen as a priority given the rate of development within the region.

Regional coordination requires identification of regional cultural priorities, coordination and integration of local cultural policies and implementation plans, coordinating lobbying, research, information gathering and sharing, and identifying opportunities for collaborative projects. This work complements the brief of the Western Sydney Program Manager, and State Government input as well as activity at regional local government level provides diverse occasions for identifying duplication and collaboration opportunities.

Cultural planning at local and regional levels need to be supported by a strong base of qualitative and quantitative information. Quantitative information enables comparative benchmarking and development of cultural indicators at LGA level and regionally. Qualitatively, since cultural development is often conducted on a project-by-project basis with little opportunity for evaluation, cumulative documentation of projects would enable best practice model building of innovative community engagement and project implementation. The Second Cultural Accord between the Ministry and the Local Government and Shires Association, which expires at the end of July 2005, includes the provision of information support for cultural planning as one of its strategies, although how this development will be funded is not specified. Ongoing research and development of resources to support cultural development within the region would be valuable, to build up repositories of information and resources that can be accessed broadly by stakeholders.

*Recommendation 12: That the Ministry for the Arts supports WSROC in its regional co-ordination role as described in this section.*

## **2.4. Infrastructure for cultural development**

### **Flagship cultural facilities**

Securing adequate and sustainable levels of funding for the operational costs for major regional and sub-regional cultural infrastructure is an ongoing and increasingly crucial issue. There has been an expectation that local government will pick up these costs, as they have done to a considerable extent to date. However, the major cultural institutions and venues in many cases have operations and impact beyond the boundaries of a single local Council, and beyond Western Sydney. For example, the major capital development at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, once fully implemented, will position it as the most significant cultural institution for the South-West sub-region, with potential to further enhance those aspects of its work with state-wide and national significance and prominence if adequately resourced on this basis. DIPNR's Metropolitan Strategy Discussion Paper clearly acknowledges the emergence of sub-regions within Western Sydney.

The region's emerging cultural identity would be significantly enhanced by the visible recognition of 'flagship' cultural institutions that can act as potent cultural symbols. Cultural institutions are particularly suited to the task of self-representation, because they can build a sophisticated image that is genuinely representative of the region's cultural diversity, giving it its 'voice' and expressing multiple strands of meaning. There is already a sense of this role for the Casula Powerhouse Regional Arts Centre, the Penrith Regional Museum, the Parramatta Riverside Theatres and Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE). All originally set up through local government, the State Government's investment in project funding and capital infrastructure has allowed these organisations to grow beyond a local provider role, but there is as yet no clear pathway to further sustainable growth for them.

Investment in Western Sydney has tended to facilitate the development of these facilities as a new kind of multi-disciplinary cultural institution, well suited to the task of providing diverse cultural services to a significant segment of the State's population. Developing new ways of engaging communities and creating innovative work that expresses the region's diverse identities and voices, these facilities provide opportunities and activities for a broad range of artists and audiences, mitigating the geographical dispersal of the region.

Their success in developing a cross-disciplinary focus, however, has to date presented an obstacle to sustainable growth, since most arts funding is available on a single artform basis. These organisations tend to appear expensive as single funding recipients, since they have more significant overheads than they would as a single-artform organisation. However, there are economies of scale in funding a single multi-purpose organisation compared to several artform-specialised organisations.

Key characteristics warranting enhanced investment in this infrastructure include:

- Engagement with the region's economy, social issues, history;
- Engagement with the region's ethnic, cultural and religious diversity;
- Collaboration on projects and joint programming with other organisations within and outside the region;
- Significant and long term financial commitment from local government;

- A level of independence from Council;
- They are producers, not just presenters;
- They cross different kinds of arts practice: CCD, Fine Art, contemporary practice, cross-artform practice, multidisciplinary programs, heritage, research and development, and issue based social history work;
- Their work is recognized as cutting edge and best practice outside the region – to international level; and
- They attract artists/collaborators/audiences from outside the region.

These cultural institutions are regional and supra-regional organisations producing work of State significance and beyond, and should therefore not be the sole responsibility of a single council. They are the top tier of the Ministry's relationship with local government in Western Sydney, in that they are genuine partnerships that provide best practice models for the State.

With capital improvements there will soon be a vibrant theatre/performance touring circuit in Western Sydney bringing diverse audiences into contact with the innovative cross artform programming of these centres. Multi-year funding would give them the certainty to plan more projects of high significance and large scale, such as the highly acclaimed *Anita and Beyond*. Increased State Government investment can leverage further funding from councils, and indeed provides a form of insurance that local government will not be able to back out on their investment. The potential now exists to broker a new relationship with local government in Western Sydney, which would include tripartite funding arrangements by bringing in Federal Government investment.

*Recommendation 13: That the Ministry for the Arts extends its relationship with local government in Western Sydney through the increased and long terms support of major regional flagship organisations and developing tri-partite funding arrangements with the Federal Government.*

### **Sustainable development and growth for non government arts organisations**

Cultural development is not necessarily a cumulative progression. Although there are a number of long-established arts organisations within the region's NGO sector, they inherently face challenges to their sustainability not faced by larger public sector institutions. Organisations working for cultural development need to be able to be continually responsive to a dynamic array of changing circumstances and demands.

The Western Sydney arts landscape of the 1990s included not only the major stakeholders still active in the region today, but also organisations like Garage Graphix, Creative Cultures, the Multicultural Arts Alliance and the Community Arts Association that are no longer in existence. The closure of Garage Graphix left a significant gap in the provision of training and development for Indigenous artists. Long-established NGOs have often been substantially transformed to accommodate changed circumstances (such as the emergence of CCDNSW out of the closure of the Community Arts Association, and the refocussed Artswest Foundation).

Comparative to the size of its population, GWS still hosts a relatively small number of such regionally-focussed NGOs, including ICE and CCDNSW. These organisations are inevitably relatively small and there is a tendency for broad expectations to be loaded onto them. In the context of scarce and competitive public funding their



sustainability depends critically on providing a specialist service that is responsive to identified needs and demand, and their ability to marshal broad support from other organisations, and resources from multiple funding sources.

Information and Cultural Exchange, for example, has successfully grown to win the 'Most Sustainable and Successful Arts Enterprise' in the 2004 Western Sydney Industry Awards by translating project-based funding success into what is effectively an organisation providing human infrastructure for the region. Despite its accolade as a sustainable arts enterprise, ICE's dependence on one-off sources of funding to support its infrastructure limits its capacity to grow sustainably, since there is an increasing amount of work involved in applying for grants. ICE's income grew from \$136,889 per annum in the 1999/2000 financial year to \$527,000 in 2003, nearly a four-fold increase in only as many years.

It is critical to sustainable cultural development within the region that such organisations don't become victims of their own success. As an organisation grows, its overheads in management and administration also increase. A growing organisation's ability to plan strategically is limited when its operations are funded on a year-by-year basis. Often built up through the committed and energetic efforts of a small number of staff, there is likelihood of burnout unless there is some clear growth pathway to sustainability for these organisations.

Auspicing projects on behalf of emerging non-incorporated groups is a further problematic issue for non-government arts organisations. These arrangements create work for the auspicing agency, both in the developmental stages of projects and in project management and troubleshooting. Auspicing extends to mentoring and capacity building and is a crucial element of cultural development for the region, but is a role that is currently not recognised or rewarded. Mentoring and capacity building should be funded as part of the programs of relevant organisations.

A performance-based system for rewarding established organisations that are demonstrably successful in attracting resources for cultural development for Western Sydney from sources other than the Ministry would effectively recognise that the Ministry's resources have leveraged other resources into the region. This might work on a 'percentage return' basis. Such a return would provide an incentive to organisations to think laterally about potential funding sources.

*Recommendation 14: Clearly defined pathways to triennial funding should be articulated for organisations currently on annual funding, in the form of clear objectives, targets and guidelines on what they would need to demonstrate in order to move to a triennial funding model. It is further suggested that the Ministry for the Arts develop a performance-based reward system for well-established organisations that are demonstrably successful in attracting resources for cultural development for Western Sydney from sources other than the Ministry.*

## **2.5. Indigenous arts development**

The development of the Indigenous arts sector in Western Sydney remains in urgent need of attention and action. The *Strategy's* sub-goals relating to Indigenous arts development (to hold an Indigenous artists forum and to develop improved mechanisms for training of Indigenous artists) are unimplemented to date. The Ministry for the Arts adopted its Policy for the Promotion and Support of Indigenous Arts and Cultural Activity in NSW in March 2000, however this has not had any impact or implementation in Western Sydney. The major recommendation of this evaluation relating to this issue is that the Ministry for the Arts should develop an updated strategy and policy on Indigenous arts development, including a detailed and comprehensive implementation action plan.

With the appointment of a dedicated Indigenous Cultural Development Officer at the Ministry for the Arts, it is timely that Indigenous arts development should now receive the intensive attention that it needs. Regionally, support for Indigenous arts development is provided by the CCDNSW Indigenous Program Manager, and by an Indigenous Cultural Development and Education Officer based at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre (through a partnership between Liverpool Council and Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council). Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-op represents numerous Western Sydney artists and has expressed interest in establishing a satellite venue in the region.

A key initiative towards improved service delivery and better quality of life for Aboriginal people in Western Sydney is the Biala Partnership, between Sydney ATSIC Regional Council, Deerubbin LALC, Gandangarra LALC, Metropolitan LALC, Tharawal LALC, GWS Regional Co-ordination Management Group and NSW Premier's Department. The Partnership priorities for 2004–7 include improving the capacity of organisations to deliver quality services, and co-ordinating planning and action to improve outcomes to Aboriginal people in GWS.

Efforts towards Indigenous arts development have been hampered to date by a lack of clear access points to the region's artists. Western Sydney is home to the largest urban Aboriginal population in Australia, with concentrations in the north-west and south-west. Further concerted consultation, support and coordinating effort is essential. However, it must be remembered that Indigenous Nations and their land boundaries are distinct from the local government boundaries used to define 'western Sydney', and that many Indigenous residents of Western Sydney have strong relationships to other parts of the State and nationally.

The many recent Indigenous arts activities in Western Sydney give a clear indication of the potential strength of this sector, and the centrality of Indigenous arts to the Western Sydney arts matrix. These include several exhibitions hosted by local Councils, activities included as part of the 'Western Front: Contemporary Art from Western Sydney' initiative of the Blacktown Arts Centre, and a proposed forum on Indigenous arts development to take place in 2005, coordinated through CCDNSW. Taken together and enhanced, these developments can build towards a multi-modal strategy of capacity building for Indigenous cultural development through the arts.

Maintenance and enhancement of the developing links between Indigenous artists and Councils, Arts Centres and other organisations both within and outside the region is needed, and broadening of the range of organisations involved in support for indigenous social development who are linked into these networks.

There is no Arts Officer position (see section 2.5 below) within an Indigenous organisation. An Indigenous arts specialist oriented towards the north-western region would provide a more local contact than currently exists for the significant Indigenous communities of the Blacktown and Mt Druitt areas and beyond, with links into the arts support networks throughout the rest of the region. Blacktown Council's Cultural Plan recommends the establishment of an Indigenous Arts team. Although specialist Indigenous arts support staff have not been appointed, Council is actively pursuing the establishment of an Indigenous Arts and Cultural Centre. A number of potential sites have been identified, and linkages are being developed with relevant stakeholders (including the local Indigenous community, CCDNSW and the Boomalli Aboriginal Artists' Cooperative).

Although there is a significant level of localised activity supporting Indigenous artists, and broad community interest in Indigenous arts, Indigenous artists still report a sense of isolation from support services, and experience barriers to participation in mainstream funding programs. As a component of the consultation process for this evaluation, some information on the needs of Indigenous artists, with a particular focus on the north-western part of the region, was gathered by two Darug artists, by discussion among their networks.

In summary, the artists consulted reported a general lack of services targeting Aboriginal cultural development through the arts. Localised networks and word of mouth are very important in finding out about opportunities. Many Indigenous artists do not have the technological or high level literacy skills needed to access mainstream arts funding programs. Indigenous artists express a need for support services that are locally based but networked to groups and organisations based elsewhere, that will assist them in their artistic and professional development and help them to promote and market their work. Organisations which do provide significant support to local artists include Councils and their arts centres, and local community organisations such as the Holy Family Centre at Mt Druitt.

Indigenous artists, like those elsewhere, express a need for affordable and flexible studio and rehearsal space, and places to exhibit and perform, and also opportunities for people to come together so that they don't feel isolated. Business development skills are also needed. The New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS), a program of the federal Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, provides small business training, but in order for this to be effective in building small arts enterprises and sustainable employment for individual artists, these need to be tailored to provide culturally specific as well as arts-oriented delivery.

Indigenous artists report great difficulty in finding opportunities to explore, promote, and educate the broader population about the *local* Aboriginal cultures of NSW (both metropolitan and non-metropolitan, since all NSW Indigenous communities are represented in Western Sydney), with precedence given to the histories, traditions and cultural expression of Western Sydney traditional ownership groups. Through valuing and disseminating local Indigenous arts and cultural activity, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people will gain an enhanced understanding of the long history of the region and the changes that are still taking place. Over the long term, potential may be activated for cultural tourism through distinctive local Indigenous arts and culture, through educating tourism bodies that the 'top end' and central Australia are not the only places where authentic Aboriginal culture can be found.

A Western Sydney Indigenous Arts Strategy should be commissioned by the Ministry for the Arts, based on a comprehensive audit of Indigenous arts activity, existing and potential organisational capacity and resources, with detailed recommendations for action to address the following issues:

- Creation of education and advocacy resources to reflect and encourage recognition and valuing of local cultures and arts practices;
- Support for the development of local artists' networks and cooperatives;
- Provision of spaces for exhibition, performance, rehearsal and studio;
- Audience development and better opportunities for exposure of Indigenous artists' work;
- Analysis of education and training needs for Indigenous artists and how these might be met;
- Access to information on professional development, employment, exhibition, performance and rehearsal spaces, access to computers and other equipment, locally accessible to artists throughout the region;
- Developing effective links between Western Sydney Indigenous artists and organisations with others in the wider metropolitan region (eg Gadigal, Boomalli, Koori Radio);
- Identifying Indigenous and non-Indigenous organisations with capacity to support Indigenous arts/artist development and mentoring, and how to resource them;
- Current and potential roles of local government in supporting Indigenous arts development;
- Strategies to develop particular artforms, including visual arts and crafts, graphic design, dance, electronic arts, writing and screenplays, oral storytelling and so on;
- The potential for a magazine like *Dawn* to provide opportunities for graphic artists and writers, and to provide information and news;
- Identify initiatives and cross agency partnerships between the Ministry for the Arts and the signatories to the Biala Partnership;

*Recommendation 15: That the Ministry for the Arts commission an Indigenous Arts Development Strategy for Western Sydney, including an audit of Indigenous arts activity, existing and potential organisational capacity and resources, with detailed recommendations for action to address the issues outlined in this evaluation.*

## **2.6. Development for emerging and disadvantaged artists**

Professional support for individual emerging and disadvantaged artists from diverse cultural backgrounds, including Indigenous, newly arrived migrant and refugee artists (who may only be 'emerging artists' in relation to the Australian arts context), remains a major service provision gap within western Sydney. Artists report social and creative isolation, lack of information and training opportunities, and a need for affordable work space. No organisation currently undertakes this support on a regional basis, with only highly patchy support available through cultural development workers who are juggling multiple other priority areas.

The Western Sydney Program should make an intensive effort to prioritise access to opportunities, resources and infrastructure for all emerging and disadvantaged artists — that is, those who experience significant barriers to access services and participation in mainstream funding programs. Barriers include language, lack of awareness of existing opportunities and services, low literacy and numeracy.

These artists need access to:

- Information on opportunities, resources and other arts-related news, recognising that language and cultural difference create barriers to access;
- Affordable spaces for rehearsals, performances, studios, exhibitions;
- Training in business and marketing skills, including how to get started in the arts in the Australian context for newly arrived migrant and refugee artists;
- Employment and industry development, especially for artists who were professionally established in their countries of origin;
- Residencies and internships, and opportunities for gaining curatorial and CCD project development experience;
- Advice, advocacy and lobbying, and liaison with state, local and federal government, and peak bodies such as NAVA; and
- Audience development.

Service delivery along these lines would address the need for clear pathways from non-arts support environments such as MRCs and other NGOs, to the opportunities afforded in professional arts environments. Such a service is best not delivered through the settlement or 'welfare' environment of the non-arts NGOs, but in environments such as Arts Centres that are already providing professional arts services. These environments are better placed to provide a professional level of advice, as well as access to training and employment opportunities. A broadly based exploration of options for funding such a service is needed, including consultation and negotiation with Indigenous support organisations and departments such as DIMIA.

*Recommendation 16: That the Ministry for the Arts address the unmet developmental needs of emerging and disadvantaged artists, to provide them with developmental advice and services on a 'case work' basis. Options for this support include:*

- *The provision of a position (or positions) within existing arts organisations, or a regional service providing such support, or*
- *A major project that would focus on setting up such a service and building it towards sustainability.*

## **2.7. Arts Officers**

Arts Officers (sometimes known as Multicultural Arts Officers) based with non-arts NGOs are vital regional infrastructure for community cultural development in Western Sydney. NGOs are closest to the marginalised constituencies they serve and are often engaged in cultural development as part of their broad service delivery brief.

Arts Officers need support to focus on longer-term developmental goals rather than short term project development, and undertake strategic planning. They should primarily undertake developmental work and design projects which coordinators are employed to run. This will create employment for artists and arts workers, and promote sustainable growth of activity in the sector. A common management strategy is needed for the workers in AO positions, which provides them with:

- Professional external supervision for those not based in arts organisations,
- Opportunities for information exchange and critical debate about the role of these positions in cultural development for the region,
- Support to be more strategically focussed, and facilitation for cooperation and collaboration. The funding for the positions is seen as unstable which can create a competitive environment between workers,
- Mutual support for advocacy in their employer organisations and beyond,
- Consistency of position descriptions and workload to achieve equity between positions in different organisations, and working towards salary equity with similar positions elsewhere (e.g. RADO positions),
- Mutual assistance to develop work plans with realistic and sustainable outcomes (including evaluation),
- Professional development tailored to the needs of the positions, and better career development pathways, especially for workers based in NGOs.

Additionally, these positions should be located in non-arts NGOs where:

- There are strong links with arts organisations and centres, and local Councils.
- Arts development has a high profile and is strongly supported within the organisation, and is recognised in the mission statement and strategic plans.
- The organisation's board of management includes professional arts or cultural development expertise.
- The organisation's strategic cultural development brief is recognised by the agency that provides its core operational funding.

There is currently a concentration of positions in the south-west, but none in the north-west. While many are based in organisations which serve migrant and refugee communities and artists, there are no Arts Officers in organisations providing direct services to Indigenous communities (see also section 2.5).

*Recommendation 17: A specific funding program for the Arts Officer positions, under the Western Sydney Arts Strategy should be set up which includes a mechanism for coordinating support and supervision of the positions. This may be a role taken on by a regional arts organisation, or the Arts Officers may come together to take on this role from within their network. Under this program the Ministry should prioritise the development of appropriate models and positions in Indigenous communities.*

## **2.8. Promotion, communication and critical debate**

For four years between 1985 and the end of 1988, the *ArtsWest* newsletter appeared as a monthly supplement to 9 Cumberland newspapers, reaching the vast majority of the households within the region, and achieving a monthly circulation of 428,000. The publication later evolved into a weekly column published in many of the Cumberland papers. Between 1994 and 2002, the Faculty of Visual and Performing Arts at UWS Nepean (and then the School of Contemporary Arts after the UWS restructure) profiled artistic excellence and innovation in Western Sydney through its publication of 20 issues of the *PostWest* journal. Since the demise of these outlets there has been a major gap in the communications channels for the region's arts sector.

Although a number of email announcement lists circulate information and announcements among cultural workers, there is no venue for showcasing and profiling what is happening that gives a sense of the sector's dynamic diversity, provides venues with somewhere where they can advertise, and which reaches a broad audience within and outside the region.

A Western Sydney based and focused arts publication to showcase the activity of the region and act as a communications channel for the region's arts networks, comparable to the Illawarra's magazine *Sparx*, *ArtReach* the Regional Arts NSW quarterly magazine, or *Artlook*, a new independent arts magazine for Canberra supported by the ACT government through its Cultural Council. Western Sydney arts organisations report difficulty in getting outlets like the *Sydney Morning Herald* to promote or report on their activities. A Western Sydney arts magazine and its infrastructure could provide the basis for improving the profile of the region's activities and events in the mainstream Sydney and national media.

An innovative communications and promotion initiative for the region could be strongly linked to existing online resources such as Artfiles and the Sydney Events Directory (both ICE projects), to the websites of other organisations, and also to TV Sydney, the new community television station. Communication and promotional opportunities will be enhanced by relating them to rich informational sources, and including a range of online materials that do not currently exist, such as a heightened online presence for individual artists with online portfolios, exhibitions or 'galleries'. Such a project could itself be designed as a capacity-building measure, through its potential as a platform for internships and studentships, and employment opportunities for writers.

In addition to communications channels for promotion and profiling, there is also an articulated need within the region for a heightened level of public debate and advocacy. CCDNSW can have a greater role in promoting the 'good news' stories of the region's CCD work. It is a key organisation with strong leadership and advocacy potential, however multiple and diverse voices articulating the broad social, economic and environmental benefits of the arts and cultural activity and making interventions in policy debates are also needed.

*Recommendation 18: That the Ministry for the Arts seeks to support the enhancement of communication and promotion of arts and cultural development activities within the Western Sydney region, through the establishment of an arts magazine (related to online resources).*

## **2.9. Creative industry development**

While the manufacturing industries continue to be the biggest employer within Western Sydney, job growth in this sector is projected to be low. A major challenge for the region is therefore the generation of jobs to replace those that will continue to be lost, and to meet the employment needs of a fast growing population. The youthfulness and cultural diversity of the region is potentially a rich resource, which can contribute to social and economic development that rests on this diversity as productive resource,<sup>4</sup> and on creativity as a driver of innovation.<sup>5</sup>

The term 'creative industries' is a relatively new one, which highlights the potential for economic benefit through applying the dynamics of the knowledge-based economy to the cultural sector (including the arts, heritage as well as leisure). The UK Ministry for Culture, Media and Sport defines the creative industries as 'those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property' ([http://www.culture.gov.uk/creative\\_industries/default.htm](http://www.culture.gov.uk/creative_industries/default.htm)). Creative industries include advertising, architecture, the art and antiques market, crafts, design, designer fashion, film and video, interactive leisure software, music, the performing arts, publishing, software and computer games, television and radio.

Interest is expressed in the region for the development of creative industries. There is, however, a strong sense that creative industries development for Western Sydney should not simply attempt to duplicate models from elsewhere, but should be aligned with the region's distinctive mix of cultural diversity, pioneering spirit and industrious energy. Creative industries development for Western Sydney will have a unique character, with potential not only for impact on the cultural economy of the region, but also strong potential for exporting distinctive cultural products and services to the rest of NSW, Australia, and internationally.

So far, the interest and exploration that is expressed is not being coordinated across the region. A lot of work is needed to determine the creative industries that have the greatest potential for development, what the industry development needs are, how to link educational institutions and training providers with organisations with an industry development focus, and how to harness the potential to target employment for Indigenous, newly-arrived migrant and refugee artists.

No organisation within the region currently has creative industries development as a primary focus. The agencies responsible for cultural development and policy, including local government, the Ministry for the Arts, and arts organisations, need to work closely with those charged with economic and employment development, such as the Department of State and Regional Development and the Federal DoTARS through the GROW Councils. This linking is starting to happen at a local level, in Fairfield for example, where Council's Strategic Plan for the redevelopment of the Fairfield Town Centre envisages developing the area as a creative industries hub.

*Recommendation 19: That the Ministry for the Arts supports feasibility and research studies which have the potential to lead to broader based financial support, into creative industry development for Western Sydney.*

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<sup>4</sup> Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (1997) *Productive Diversity: A New Australian Approach to Work and Management*. Sydney: Pluto Press.

<sup>5</sup> Florida, Richard (2003) *The Rise of the Creative Class*. North Melbourne: Pluto Press.



## **2.10. Engaging the commercial sector**

An important challenge for the arts and cultural sector in Western Sydney is the engagement of the commercial sector in support of cultural development. Although many of the arts organisations within the region have some beneficial arrangements with the corporate sector, these are generally on a small scale. Effective commercial and private sector engagement must not simply be seen in terms of generating philanthropic sponsorship dollars for arts and cultural activity, but as generating real interaction and involvement.

There is great potential for businesses and arts organisations to work together to achieve mutual benefit, and which build on a growing interest within business communities in creativity as a driver of innovation within commercial as well as arts and cultural processes. Exploring common interests between business and the arts community requires innovative partnership models, where business contributions might not be in cash but in-kind, for example by making unused factory space available or allocating staff time to joint projects. Cultural development can harness interest and commitment from businesses (especially small to medium-sized enterprises) in putting something back into the community. CCD projects within workplaces can act to increase arts participation and audience development.

There is a need to think innovatively about policy interventions and incentives that would facilitate effective partnerships. The recently re-constituted Artswest Foundation, for example, models itself after the Australian Business Arts Foundation, and aims to facilitate partnerships between the arts and cultural organisations and the business community. As a volunteer-based organisation with no staff, Artswest is currently limited in its capacity to undertake activities in this area. The organisation, however, would form a logical partner for the Ministry to work with to support development in corporate support for the arts.

Local government should be involved in facilitating and supporting this effort. Exploratory work with ABAF was facilitated by WSROC around two years ago, to set up a programme similar to the Victorian Council for Arts and Business. Negotiations on this initiative were never successfully concluded, although several Councils were interested in being involved.

Engagement with the private sector should also include the developers who are literally transforming the landscape and living conditions for the region's residents. Delfin Lend Lease, the developers for the former ADI site at St Marys, have a Community Development Manager on staff, and a cultural strategy for the site is under development. This is both a great opportunity to intervene at an early stage in a major development, but also a great challenge, since the site straddles two LGAs (Blacktown and Penrith). The appropriate role for the Ministry for the Arts, as the State Government authority charged with overseeing cultural development, in relation to this development is unclear, but is deserving of urgent debate and exploration.

*Recommendation 20: That the Ministry for the Arts actively supports activities within the region towards engagement between the arts and commercial sectors.*

## **2.11. Art in urban development and regeneration**

A high level of interest in public art is evident amongst the Western Sydney Councils, although there is a clear need for capacity building for both the Councils and the public artists within the region. The success of the public art position at WSROC funded by the Ministry to coordinate the integration of public art into four town centre design projects demonstrated unmet need for assistance with a range of aspects of the public art development process, including project development and management, location of artists, contracts, case studies, funding proposals and so on.

Some regional coordination of public art is seen as desirable, with a region-wide protocol for ensuring that public art expresses and reinforces the identity of the region and its distinctive localities, and encourages the involvement of local artists where possible. Public art, being tied to urban development and regeneration, is capable of providing strong growth in employment opportunities for artists within the region. This is also potentially an area for innovation within the region, by broadening how public art is perceived, to include forms and genres which are not generally seen as public art, including projection, multimedia, installation and time-based arts.

Parramatta Council has the most formalised integration of public art into its development processes. Since 2000, Council's DCPs and companion LEPs contain provisions that require the inclusion of public art into developments in the LGA.

Working as an integral part of multi-disciplinary teams, artists are essential contributors to the development and redevelopment of public space, and bring a layer of meaning and delight to the process that enriches the experience of place. This role is particularly crucial in the context of Western Sydney so that urban development and regeneration create places that sustain diverse communities at the same time as they address the challenges of increasing population densities:

Support needs are:

- Advice to Councils on project development and management, including contracting artists, funding, establishing multi-disciplinary urban design teams;
- Advice and assistance with the development of local public art policies as part of cultural planning processes;
- Advocacy, information and referrals; and
- Development through mentoring, training and professional development for public artists from within the Western Sydney region.

*Recommendation 21: That the Ministry for the Arts implement measures to support and coordinate of public art development in Western Sydney.*

## **2.12. Audience development strategy project**

In late 2003, an audience development strategy to complement the Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney was commissioned by the Ministry for the Arts, in partnership with the Audience and Market Development Division of the Australia Council. Audience development is the long-term process of establishing and maintaining an enhanced understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the arts, for a diverse range of participants and audiences, through the development of strategic and sustainable relationships. The Museums and Galleries Foundation is also active in facilitating audience development for the major venues within the region, through its Strategy for Western Sydney.

As observed in the *Strategy*, overall cultural participation levels in Western Sydney are lower than those of the rest of Sydney. Cultural participation rates are correlated with a range of complex factors, including income and educational levels, age and gender, travel times to cultural venues. These factors vary considerably across the region, with complex interplay: areas with high educational levels, for example are not necessarily the same as those with the highest incomes. There is therefore variation in cultural participation levels across the region geographically, and between communities. The cultural mix of participants varies between artforms and types of activity (see Appendix 5).

An audience development strategy was developed, with seven target outcomes:

1. Greater understanding within key arts organisations and venues of audience development principles and practice;
2. Informed understanding within the arts sector of potential diverse audiences in the Western Sydney region;
3. Increased levels of professional arts activity by Indigenous communities;
4. Increased levels of professional arts activity by diverse communities;
5. Improved access to and engagement in cultural and arts activity among the region's diverse communities;
6. Improved access to and engagement in cultural and arts activity by audiences outside the region's community;
7. Long term commitment to audience development for key arts organisations and venues.

Strategies proposed include education programs; ongoing independent audience development and research; specialist teams to build relationships within communities and assist in providing opportunities and seeking spaces for artists; a working body for improved communication with the Indigenous sector; and identifying key resource requirements such as public liability insurance and innovative project funding.

The audience development strategy recommends a model of commitment, as a membership-based organisation with responsibility for audience development in the region's arts sector. Sources of income for such an organisation would include government funding, membership fees and consultancy services to non-members.

*Recommendation 22: That the Ministry for the Arts considers the recommendations of the Audience Development Strategy in tandem with its consideration of this Evaluation and its recommendations.*

## **2.13. Current and potential roles of existing organisations**

The existing organisations and networks within Western Sydney which have a regional cultural development brief are as follows:

**ArtsWest Foundation:** ArtsWest Foundation has recently reconstituted and refocussed itself after 22 years as an organisation which supported and promoted the arts in Western Sydney. Its expanded purpose is to 'promote, support and lobby for arts and cultural activities in Greater Western Sydney and to enrich local communities via business engagement with the arts' ([www.artswest.com.au](http://www.artswest.com.au)). A volunteer-based organisation, it aims to advocate and catalyse engagement between business, arts and cultural communities.

**CCDNSW:** CCDNSW is the peak community arts and community cultural development organisation in NSW. Its activities are focussed into three major programs: Indigenous, Cultural Diversity and Youth. Western Sydney is a priority area for the period of the current Strategic Plan (2003–5). CCDNSW was formed in 2001 and receives operational funding from both the NSW Ministry for the Arts and the Australia Council. The organisation's brief is very broad, and although the Program Managers are separately active within the region's indigenous, cultural diversity and youth networks, it has yet to establish a clear profile as an integrated cultural development 'hub'. With the recent appointment of a new CEO, CCDNSW is currently reviewing its strategic directions. CCDNSW is a key regional organisation, with potential to show strong leadership and advocacy, facilitating critical debate, and intervening in policy debates. As the only regional multi-arts organisation that is not a production organisation, CCDNSW can take a prominent role in promoting the 'good news' stories of the region's arts activity, complementing its communications role within the national CCD network. The CCDNSW strategic plan articulates an aim of bringing new resources to the field of CCD, including engaging the corporate and philanthropic sectors, and non-arts government departments to support CCD. It is in a key position to be a driving force behind strong regional partnerships and collaborations, especially in Indigenous, multicultural and youth arts.

**Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE):** ICE has expanded rapidly, with an increase from 2.2 to 12 staff in the past five years. It has been in existence since the 1980s, and has evolved to become a new media arts and information technology-based community information and arts organisation, developing projects in Western Sydney with a particular focus on refugees, people of non-English speaking background, migrants, Indigenous people, and youth. It aims to provide opportunities for culturally isolated communities to access information and the means for cultural expression. Major projects include the *Artfiles* arts directory for Western Sydney, SWITCH multimedia and digital arts centre and the Sydney Events Directory. ICE's dependence on project-based funding to support its rapidly growing infrastructure imposes limits on its capacity for sustainability. It is, however, a key new media arts and information technology resource for the region. It meets some of the need for the development of online content of relevance to the region through *Artfiles'* online presence, and can contribute to creative industries development through its infrastructure for training and content development.

**Museums and Galleries Foundation:** The MGF is active in development activities for the museums and galleries sector within the region, through its Strategy for Western Sydney. Based on a needs assessment undertaken in 2001, the strategy aims to assist institutions to enhance their relevance to community needs and interests through programs targeting community support and audience-focused development, and to strengthen the contribution of the institutions to the advancement of a socially inclusive and confident region. The guiding principles are promoting best practice, ensuring community relevance through access and audience development initiatives, and advocacy to raise awareness of sector value. MGF aims to work collaboratively with Western Sydney institutions and agencies to strengthen their capacity for leadership and contribute to the growth of the region's networks.

**Sydney Olympic Park Authority:** Located on its the eastern fringe, but with an orientation towards service delivery in the Western Sydney region, Sydney Olympic Park has the potential to become a significant component of the infrastructure to support the region's cultural development. SOPA's business objectives include to become 'a regional centre for culture, the arts, food and entertainment — an active, lively place that offers a distinctive array of social and cultural opportunities through events and other activities'. It has recently developed a Cultural Strategy, appointed a Director, Arts Development, and established an Arts Advisory Committee. It plans to include a gallery, performance spaces, and individual and shared studio spaces in its redevelopment of buildings on the Newington Armoury site, which contains over 100 heritage buildings of varying ages.

**University of Western Sydney:** UWS is the major provider of professional arts higher education within the region. In 2004 UWS completed a restructuring of its undergraduate arts programs, replacing specialised art-form based degrees with an integrated Bachelor of Performance. The new courses facilitate collaborative and interdisciplinary work that develops strong links with the region and aim to contribute community and cultural development in GWS. UWS is a foundation partner in new community television station TV Sydney. Program development will be integrated with both the undergraduate programs and a new Masters in Television Production (from 2006). In 2004 the University established a \$25,000 acquisitive sculpture award and exhibition, and established the Whitlam Chair in Writing and Society to enhance interaction between writers and the university. The University's Research Plan nominates Urban and Community Development as an area in which it has the capacity to address significant issues on an interdisciplinary basis. In 2004, UWS constituted an Arts Consultative Panel to expand the existing framework of engagement with the region's arts community. A core component of UWS's mission is leadership and scholarship in community engagement, and to make strategic use of resources and partnerships to excel in community engagement and regional development.

**WSROC:** Through its Regional Cultural Planning Coordination Project, WSROC is a key coordinating agency for cultural development within local government for the region. Its regional cultural strategy, in development, aims to provide a strategic framework for cultural development within the region, and foster collaborative activity that makes best use of cultural resources and enhances cultural opportunities for all Western Sydney people. The Cultural Planning

Coordinator has also taken on the role of facilitating collaboration and coordination within the region through convening meetings of cultural planners, heritage officers, and managers of cultural facilities within the region. This role will be an ongoing unfilled need should the Cultural Planning Coordination not be extended beyond its current funding. WSROC also has a broad interest in issues of urban development and redevelopment, via its Regional Planning Framework and its support for developmental work in urban improvement through People/Place project.

The following areas of ongoing need have been identified within this evaluation:

1. Indigenous arts development;
2. Professional and artistic development for emerging and disadvantaged artists;
3. Arts promotion, communication and critical debate;
4. Creative industry development;
5. Productive engagement between the arts and corporate sectors;
6. Art in the development and redevelopment of public space;

In addition to these priorities, it has also been recommended here that attention be paid to capacity building and sustainable growth for regional and sub-regional arts organisations, encouraging opportunities for resource sharing and collaboration (particularly on a sub-regional basis); and support for locally determined activity contributing to priorities within local cultural plans and regional strategies.

Table 7 below indicates the extent to which the regional organisations described above seem to share overlapping interests in these areas:

*Table 7: Interests of regional organisations in areas of ongoing need*

	Indigenous arts development	Emerging & disadv. artists	Promotion & communic <sup>n</sup>	Creative industries	Corporate engagement	Public space
ArtsWest Foundation			X		X	
CCDNSW	X	X	X	X	X	
ICE	X	X	X	X	X	
MGF (Western Sydney Strategy)			X			
Sydney Olympic Park Authority	X	X	X	X	X	X
University of Western Sydney	X	X	X	X	X	
WSROC	X	X	X	X	X	X

The extent of these overlaps, while the identified areas of ongoing need are still widely articulated within the region, suggests that there is an urgent need for greater communication and collaboration to address these issues.

*Recommendation 23: That the regional bodies with a cultural development brief be brought together to discuss the identified areas of ongoing need, along with representatives from local government, cultural institutions and arts officers, to identify potential commitments to addressing these issues.*

## **2.14. The long term future of the Strategy**

Western Sydney is distinguished as a region by the level of interest in and commitment to its future. The region is changing rapidly, and all stakeholders need to understand the directions of change so that they can intervene in positive ways and mitigate the negative effects of rapid development. The Western Sydney Arts Strategy has been a welcome commitment by the NSW Government to a long term strategic approach to the arts and cultural life as part of the region's broader development.

There is an expressed need, however, for an ongoing framework for setting the cultural development agenda, shared by the region and the State Government. The process for development of the *Strategy* was similar to the process for this evaluation, that is, one of broad consultation. While this process can identify strategic issues, it is less adequate for determining relative priorities. By underpinning the Ministry's Western Sydney Program with a strategic process which the stakeholders in the region have a central part in and contribute to, the *Strategy* can become a strategic agenda *owned* by the region as a whole. Such a framework might be actioned through periodic forums, held every two to three years, possibly linked to WSROC's TeamWest framework. The major outcome might take the form of a regional 'agreement' naming organisations as regional stakeholders in cultural development, and making commitments over the period of the agreement. Some of the objectives agreed on might have no resource implications for the State Government at all, but be seen to be part of the Western Sydney Arts Strategy in a broad sense.

There is still a marked tendency for the population of the West to orient itself towards the CBD for its cultural consumption. Cultural development can shift this 'centre-periphery' perception over the long term. The M7 'Orbital' road will soon transform the travel topology of Western Sydney by linking Blacktown with Bankstown via Fairfield and Liverpool, providing a symbolically important north-south corridor. Developing major centres of cultural activity in Western Sydney (including Sydney Olympic Park), would be aligned with the Centres Policy framework of DIPNR's Metropolitan Strategy. Recognised cultural precincts or 'hubs' would generate a critical mass of activity in one location, and attract audiences, visitors and workers to a variety of venues and cultural facilities, arts and creative industries incubator infrastructure, including restaurants and other leisure attractions.

For how long will a Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney be needed? Over the long term, equity in access and participation for any region should be integrally supported within mainstream public sector arts support, and can be ensured through reporting and evaluation benchmarks against equity and priority indicators. However, a multi-artform regional focus, as is supported through the *Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney*, and the role of the Program Manager for Western Sydney, has a number of benefits. It allows for areas of need that fall between the mainstream programs to be identified, opportunities for cooperation and resource sharing to be exploited, and strategic interventions to be made that contribute significantly to cultural development at the level of integrated infrastructure.

This role is clearly still valuable for the Western Sydney region, as the legacy of under-development and the rapidity of new urban development continues to be addressed through capacity building and investment in cultural infrastructure. Such a multi-disciplinary and place-based approach may provide a valuable model for other regions with a strategic need for integrated cultural development.