

LIFE IS CHANGING IN REGIONAL WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The globally recognised boom in the regions has seen rapid regional growth and change; three million people are projected to be living in Western Australia by 2026, this impact is already being felt by communities that are looking for answers to their rapidly fluctuating populations.

Regional populations also need to evolve in the context of long term aspirations, technological change, global economic and political uncertainty, and climate change that affects us all. Communities need the right tools, skills and knowledge to sustain, retain, and revitalise their cultural identity in the face of all this change.

In WA and beyond, arts and culture has proven it can transform towns, cities, and regions. Arts and culture is also a major economic contributor, especially in Australia where we rank fourth in the world in terms of creative workers per capita and the creative industries generate revenue of \$65 billion per year. We also know that West Australians appreciate the contribution that arts and culture makes to a wide range of public value areas including community wellbeing, cultural identity and education.

2012 saw the state's peak regional arts body, Country Arts WA, launch the historic *2020nine Manifesto*; a milestone document and a timely planning tool for WA communities, local government, state government departments and businesses operating in the regions. The Manifesto is a road map for regional development that can be adapted to the identity and aspirations of each regional community.

This *Foundations for the Future - Regional Arts Policy Platform* draws on the *2020nine Manifesto* with a focus on the partnerships, legacy, leverage, places and people needed for growth-fuelled communities to use culture and the arts to help revitalise the identity and liveability of their town and region.

WHAT THIS POLICY PLATFORM MEANS FOR REGIONAL COMMUNITIES IN WA

Realisation of this policy platform will see the regions of this state experience an increase in quality performing arts experiences, a high level of local government engagement, grassroots organisations creating their own world class arts programs and festivals, enviable music touring and writing circuits, schools being a place of arts, cultural and academic learning, a proud living Aboriginal culture, and cultural tourism attractions and events.

The creation of arts and culture through this policy is just the start. Improved quality of life and rich, engaged communities will be the legacy it leaves behind. This policy speaks to a regional culture with a strong heartbeat.

LIVEABILITY OF REGIONAL COMMUNITIES IN WA

People who live in regional WA are deeply attached to their place, the natural environment and their communities. Shifting populations have changed community dynamics and the need to look for new ways to create community ties, integrate an ever-changing group of people and engage young people. All of this remains to be a challenge for most centres.

The growing number of professional artists and cultural organisations in regional communities is recognised as an asset and it is essential they are supported in their development and capacity to work globally as well as locally. Arts and cultural activities are an integral part of communities and support is required to affirm and expand their community-building value in regional Western Australia.

Art and culture lays the foundations to attract people to visit and live in regional WA while also creating a sense of belonging. There is a growing body of work by researchers such as Richard Florida, Elizabeth Currid and Charles Landry that support the planned impact of *Foundations for the Future*. These thinkers make a strong case in the contribution from the arts, culture and creative industries to the future economy and livability of communities.

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE WILL...

- enhance quality of life, foster community cohesion, develop health and wellbeing, build the economic creative capacity of the regions and create opportunities for shared experiences.
- build on the priorities of regionally based people and complement existing programs through state or local networks and organisations.
- play a pivotal role in regional WA's development and identity by providing innovative culture and arts partnerships and programs.
- support peak and regional arts organisations to partner with local, state and federal government, businesses and the community to deliver arts and cultural activities across regional WA.
- leave a legacy by strengthening existing and creating new arts and cultural events, festivals, organisations and human resources. Every dollar invested into this policy by government will leverage matching funds to create a sustainable impact.

Foundations for the Future is a consultative summary of initiatives that will ensure people living, working and growing up in regional WA have access to arts and cultural opportunities taken for granted by their city cousins.

These programs will be responsive to the regional action plans developed by the Department of Culture and the Arts, and the Regional Development Plans by the Regional Development Commissions across the state. This policy is also aligned with the WA Chamber of Culture and the Arts Investment Summary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Foundations for the Future to be delivered directly through existing devolved funding structures.
2. Foundations for the Future to be delivered through Strategic Partnerships and Signature Programs.
3. Dedicated funds to arts and cultural programs in regional WA communities.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

Funding priorities need to focus on the **grassroots** organisations and community groups that are the active hub of these town centres. This policy platform recognises the need for both **strategic partnerships** and **signature programs** while utilising a legacy leaving approach to ensure maximum leveraging of opportunities and the sustainability of regional arts programs for communities.

The following two pages provide a more detailed outline of the proposed strategic partnerships and signature programs.

1. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships with state and regional arts organisations, communities, and local government are important to the long term planning of organisations on the ground and regional communities. There are four Strategic Partnerships streams.

Stream 1. Grassroots Arts Legacy Program: The Grassroots Arts Legacy Program will provide a boost to regional arts and culture organisations currently funded by Country Arts WA through a devolved state funding program and will enable a special four year legacy program of diverse activities and events to be delivered by these organisations. This program will also act as a catalyst to stimulate the three-tiered structure to be represented in all nine regions and provide professional development support and networking opportunities. Grassroots regional arts and culture organisations are the foundation of arts development in the regions and 27 will be supported over a four year period. This funding will be matched by a local government commitment. The existing model has a multiplier effect of \$2.48 for every dollar invested by the State.

Stream 2. Circuit West Community Engagement Initiative: 16 Circuit West venues around the state operate locally, and present high quality artistic and cultural programs. This initiative will offer a range of community engagement and audience development programs; tailored for each venue's show mix and demographics. The Community Engagement Initiative will develop partnerships with a range of arts and community organisations within their town and region.

Stream 3. Peak Body Legacy Program: The Peak Body Legacy Program will support ten peak arts organisations over a four year period to extend their existing specialised regional programs that have long-term impact, build community capacity, leverage matching funds, and most importantly leave a legacy to be enjoyed well in to the future. The peak bodies will represent all art forms and will have a track record in delivering high quality programs to regional WA. The Peak Body Legacy Program builds on the existing model delivered by Country Arts WA through devolved federal funding.

Stream 4. Wellbeing and Resilience Fund: The Wellbeing and Resilience Fund will support community groups and arts organizations to deliver projects that promote wellbeing and creativity. Priority will be given to projects or events that celebrate community survival, resilience or strength. This fund will develop partnerships with local, state and federal government, community organisations, and the corporate sector.

2 SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

Signature Programs will prioritise Indigenous arts and culture, contemporary music, writing, children and young people and community arts practice. The Signature Programs will be delivered by Country Arts WA and other key arts organisations with experience in delivering high quality programs to regional WA; not limited to but including the Western Australian Industry Music Association (WAM), Community Arts Network WA (CANWA) and the Aboriginal Art Centres in Western Australia (AACHWA).

Stream 1: Schools Performing Arts Touring: Research has shown a direct link between in-school performances and student learning and social outcomes. Students in regional WA deserve to see the best performing arts available to add value to their education, challenge their worldview and expand life experiences. Schools Performing Arts Touring will support the four existing professional schools touring companies to increase the time they spend in the regions, commission four new works directly inspired by regional stories and communities, and provide a platform for these stories to be told to a broader audience, nationally and internationally.

Stream 2: Writers in Regional Centres: Meeting the people who create the books we read has a proven positive impact on boosting interest in literature and writing for people of all ages. The explosion of book clubs across Australia indicates that people love to read and discuss what they've read. WA is home to considerable number of outstanding contemporary authors for all reading markets. Writers in Regional Centres will provide additional funds to enhance the *Writers' on the Road* program that delivers writers and illustrators into regional centres. This small existing program encourages reading and writing by school-aged students as well as creative contemporary and historical writing by adults.

Stream 3: Focus Region Initiative: Country Arts WA has developed a successful focus region model that supports one region over a four year period to generate and increase quality arts activity, deliver arts and culture strategy and build the foundations for a strong creative region. The Focus Region Model delivers services and benefits to the region, such as a full-time Regional Arts Development Officer, Out There Youth

Arts Leadership residency program, priority performing arts touring initiatives, and funding programs. The focus region is delivered in partnership with the Development Commission and Local Government. The existing model has a multiplier effect of \$4 for every dollar invested by the State.

Stream 4. WAM Regional Music Development: WAM will deliver a four year regional program that will include regional network development, industry access and skills development for regional musicians, annual regional musician roundtables, regional touring circuits, recording tuition and community CD projects. WAM's program will build on its long-term, state-wide relationships and inject vital skills development initiatives into regional WA for the contemporary music industry. Priority regions will be the Pilbara and the Wheatbelt.

Stream 5. Seeding Creativity in WA: Seeding Creativity in Regional WA is a strategy by Community Arts Network WA designed to foster community development, creativity and vitality through community arts practice. Over a four year period, Seeding Creativity will deliver a series of signature community arts projects, community development and cultural planning skills to local government, artists and community members in regional WA and direct devolution of funds for community arts through the Catalyst Community Arts Fund.

Stream 6. Sand Tracks Remote Aboriginal Contemporary Music Program: Sand Tracks is a cross border, Central Desert program. The program attracts high quality artists to tour, mentor emerging musicians, and deliver dynamic performances and workshops. The program has attracted national partnerships and funding, and the Mental Health Commission in WA has funded a feasibility study of a similar circuit from the Kimberley to Katherine. Sand Tracks would build on the foundation of the Central Desert Model and expand into the Kimberly region in partnership with the Mental Health Commission.

Stream 7. Aboriginal Art Centres in Western Australia: The Aboriginal Art Centre Hub Western Australia (AACHWA) works with Aboriginal art centres across regional WA to assist them to be seen, heard, respected and represented. AACHWA is the only Aboriginal visual arts peak body based in Western Australia. It provides professional support and development for art centre managers and artists, and advocates for the sustainability and viability of the centres. AACHWA helps sustain communities and artists, and make sure their stories will remain long into the future. Its members are Aboriginal Arts Centres located across the state of Western Australia; in the Pilbara, Mid West, Great Southern and Goldfields regions. These member centres combined serve 32 communities and over 400 artists in WA..

COUNTRY ARTS WA

Country Arts WA is the peak regional arts body for Western Australia and is highly regarded as an innovative and valuable leader across the arts and regional arts development.

Established in 1994 by merging the Arts Council of Western Australia and the Performing Arts Touring Information Organisation, Country Arts WA combines the responsibility for delivering touring services with support for an extensive arts volunteer network and arts development program.

Country Arts WA is the only arts organisation with a 100% regional focus across WA and is also proudly regionally governed by its members. Each year the organisation assists regional communities to improve quality of life, build community-cohesion, improve economic sustainability, increase sense-of-place and boost activities that engage people of all ages and cultures through the arts.

As a non-Government and membership-based organisation, Country Arts WA members include professional and community organisations from across the state as well as country-based practitioners and supporters of the arts.

Country Arts WA is supported with core funds from the State Government through the Department for Culture and the Arts (DCA), run devolved programs on behalf of DCA and also manages the delivery of the Commonwealth Government's Regional Arts Fund.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THIS PAPER PLEASE CONTACT :

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