

**CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ARTS IN EVERYDAY LIFE:
SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT**

Prepared for the Australia Council's Scoping Study Reference Group

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Once again I would like to acknowledge the generosity and professionalism of the artists and cultural workers who contributed to this project, some of whom interrupted much needed holidays in order to meet the time frame for this research.

I collected this information on the understanding that comments and opinions would not be attributed to individuals.

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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Research Brief

The brief for this supplementary piece of research was to take some of the findings of the earlier research conducted for the Scoping Study (see Discussion Paper, January 2006) and conduct a second series of interviews with the twenty four Key Organisations supported by the former Community Cultural Development Board as specified in the 2004/05 Australia Council Annual Report (see Appendix 1 for details).

Owing to my misinterpretation of information contained in the Annual Report, I sent the letter inviting feedback to twenty five organisations (see Appendix 2) believing that Outback Arts Organisation was a Program Client. In fact this is not the case but I have included information gained from that interview in this report.

The brief specified that this supplementary research be undertaken to provide additional information to inform the thinking of the Scoping Study Reference Group on future strategies in relation to the Key Organisations which are now the responsibility of Community Partnerships.

This research explores the views of these Key Organisations in matters concerning:

- How to expand the capacity of Producing Organisations, that is, organisations which develop and present art form based work;
- How to develop multicultural and ethno-specific infrastructure;
- How to enhance the strategies for skills transfer, leadership and development between Producer Organisations and the communities in which this work takes place;
- Which areas of new activity could be developed by State based Community Arts Networks and which existing areas of activity could be reviewed;
- How best to provide a national information and research clearing house, a monthly on-line bulletin and a critical journal;
- How to develop a national advocacy strategy and what that strategy's main priorities should be;
- How to strengthen and develop pathways for artists and cultural workers wishing to work in this sector, prevent experienced artists from leaving the sector and facilitate crossover and collaborations with artists from diverse sectors.

The Research Methodology

I made contact with twenty four of the twenty five organisations. I interviewed people from fourteen organisations and received written responses from twenty three organisations (see Appendix 2).

SECTION 2: MAIN THEMES

Defining Principles

The issues emerging from this phase of the research include:

- The need for the Australia Council, Community Partnerships and the sector to better articulate and support the cultural development outcomes of work in arts and cultural development in and with communities;
- The need for the Australia Council to develop a clear policy mandate for Community Partnerships which recognises multiple policy objectives and outcomes, not only arts objectives and outcomes;
- The need for the Australia Council's and Community Partnership's approach to cross-sectoral partnerships to be informed by an understanding of the interdependence of social, cultural, environmental and economic development;
- The need for a strategy which can secure comprehensive infrastructure development across Australia and which can leverage the resources of local and regional libraries, performing arts centres, galleries and museums;
- The need for a targeted approach to funding within the broader policy framework of Community Partnerships which recognises the fact that a wide range of community access and participation activities have become the responsibility of state, local and non-arts community funding programs.
- The possibility of Community Partnerships developing a policy and strategic response to creative industries practice.

Sustainability and Long Term Development

Current levels of funding to community cultural development organisations fail to acknowledge or support a range of core costs including administration, technology, sustained employment of artists, traineeships and mentoring, compliance and insurance costs, adequate levels of remuneration and the resources to present and promote the work.

Community Partnerships may wish to consider embedding funding for these costs into the core funding provided for Key Organisations.

The retreat by some state arts funding bodies from funding for core infrastructure in lieu of programming is reported by respondents.

Another strong theme is the need to simplify application and reporting procedures, particularly if Community Partnerships wishes to encourage new entrants to the sector.

The need to embed and to resource skills transfer and leadership development between Producer Organisations and the communities with which they work emerged from the earlier research. Strategies suggested to achieve this include funding for longer cycles of work and embedding the opportunities for (paid) mentoring and apprenticeships into the work and funding of Producer Organisations.

Strategies to assist multicultural and ethno-specific infrastructure

These include:

- Paid employment for artists and arts workers from non-English speaking backgrounds in existing infrastructure organisations;
- Partnerships between existing organisations and particular ethnic communities;
- Developing culturally specific peer assessment and funding criteria.

Career Pathways for Artists

New information emerging from the second phase of research includes the need to develop specific strategies to assist artists at different stages of development. For new artists entering the sector apprenticeships and traineeships (or Attachments) are recommended and then the opening up of pathways to take them to the next stage of development. For experienced artists leaving the sector, cross sectoral and regional exchanges are recommended. There is strong support for these initiatives to be embedded in the core funding for organisations. Accredited and post graduate training in tertiary institutions and improved levels of pay are also recommended.

Supporting the Sector

The additional insights emerging out of the second phase of research include:

- The patchy nature of Service Organisation provision from a geographical perspective;
- The inconsistency of service provision between states;
- The need for a clear map of service provision and gaps;
- The lack of alignment between the expectations of the sector and the services able to be provided by the Networks;
- The need for greater clarity on the roles and responsibilities of service and producing organisations;
- The need to manage competition for funding between organisations providing services and between these organisations and producing organisations;
- The need to manage any potential duplication of services between organisations providing services;
- The sometimes underdeveloped relationships between service organisations and producer organisations, artists and arts workers;
- The need to build an effective national body (or bodies) to advocate, provide policy advice to government and to broker national and international exchange.

Access to information and research

The feedback reveals a sector which has outgrown the services offered by ccd.net. In general respondents are in favour of building on-line information and research capacity on an existing service but only if an experienced editorial team is available to advise and recruit suitable writers for a hub which would meet the needs of this sector.

In relation to an on-line monthly bulletin, the possibility of exploring a model which recognises and supports the need for a national, whole-of sector content which can be supplemented by State/Territory/Regional/local level content is recommended.

The need for a journal to help critique practice emerged in the initial research. Supplementary research makes it clear that behind this idea there are in fact multiple aims and multiple audiences. A range of strategies could be considered including a specialist journal, providing assistance for artists and arts workers from the sector to write for mainstream arts journals and for the key journals of other sectors.

SECTION 3: INTERVIEWS

How can Community Partnerships expand the capacity of Producing Organisations that is organisations which develop and present art form based work?

Responses to this question fall into three main categories:

1. Those concerned with policy principles and strategy;
2. Those concerned with levels of support and the need to recognise the costs of compliance, administration, decent levels of pay, sustained program and community development;
3. Those concerned with strategies to encourage and support new entries into the sector.

Policy and Strategy

Clearer Understanding of Methods and Goals

Strong views emerge on the need for understanding that arts and cultural development in and with communities is not purely about making art, but about challenging and sometimes changing cultural values and assumptions. This can be understood as changing our habits of thinking, seeing and behaving.

There is a view that the sector is arguing the value of the work in terms of artistic outcomes and that this is masking the core cultural development outcomes. This view is somewhat at odds with the views gathered in the first part of this research which express the need to better articulate the artistic outcomes of the work in the face of a perceived overemphasis on social benefits. Perhaps both points of view could concede that cultural development outcomes have been overlooked and that there is a need to develop a better understanding amongst both the sector and arts funding bodies of the methods and goals of community *cultural* development. There is agreement that this understanding needs to acknowledge that it is not only the art works produced by artists and communities which are important, but the capacity that active participation in creative activity and the arts has to change our habits of thinking, seeing and behaving.

Commitment to a Clear Policy Mandate

Strong views emerge on the need for the Australia Council to develop a clear policy mandate for Community Partnerships which recognises multiple policy objectives and outcomes. The Council's expectations of Community Partnerships would appear to be that they build partnerships and funding streams from non-arts partners. Respondents feel that this will only be possible if multiple policy objectives are established which explicitly acknowledge the cultural development, artistic and social outcomes from the work.

There are strong views, but no apparent consensus at this stage, on the field of interest for the Australia Council when considering outcomes. There is a strong body of opinion which argues that the Council needs to focus only on cultural and artistic outcomes. There is an equally strong body of opinion that Council needs to be part of a whole-of-government approach. As one respondent put it:

'It is timely for Community Partnerships to spearhead a cross-government commitment to supporting the true resource needs of the (wider community) sector...and the failure of government to fully resource the complexity of community needs that are being addressed through community cultural development.'

These views also have implications for where Community Partnerships and the sector direct their energies to build understanding, respect and support. Some respondents focus more on building support within mainstream arts organisations and others focus more on positioning the work in the context of the core business of local government, urban and rural revitalisation, natural resources management and so on. There is no sense that these efforts need to be mutually exclusive; in fact what emerges is the need for engagement with a range of key partners from within the Australia Council (Audience Development, International, Artform Boards, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Board) and externally (major Festivals, mainstream arts organisations, local government, the not-for-profit sector, urban planning, education, environmental management, international relations).

Respondents also argue that this multiplicity of policy objectives needs to be supported by a flexibility of approach. Rather than mandate for one particular kind of outcome, Community Partnerships needs to be open to a range of outcomes and understand the inter-relatedness of social, cultural, environmental and economic development.

Some respondents experience whole-of-government rhetoric as a requirement that different sectors work together (regardless that they may be in competition for the same funding). The sector sees a clear opportunity to honour the integrity of this interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral work by acknowledging not only those outcomes relevant to a particular arm of government, eg art, health or economic development, but artistic and cultural development outcomes as well.

It would appear that Community Partnerships may need to consider its own position in relation to these issues, and engage the Australia Council in this conversation. Perhaps discussion could include consideration of the rationale behind the development of cross sectoral partnerships and whether they are seen as important as a source of funding, as a means of broadening government understanding and support for the sector and/or as a means of applying an integrated approach to social, cultural, environmental and economic development. Once the strategic intent is clarified, it may be appropriate to consider developing the policies and protocols necessary to support integrated, multi-disciplinary, and cross-sectoral partnerships.

Comprehensive Infrastructure Development

The theme suggesting the need for thinking beyond State/Territory boundaries which emerges in the first phase of this research is even more pronounced this time.

Several respondents affirm the importance of local cultural workers or someone with a cultural development perspective available on the ground to assist Producing Organisations and communities. A regional approach was favoured with some respondents suggesting that the Regional Arts Development Officer program developed by Regional Arts NSW be rolled out nationally. It is also acknowledged that this would require resources additional to those of the Australia Council.

Some respondents suggested that this strategy should not only be funded by government but enshrined in legislation requiring a whole-of-government (integrated, multi-disciplinary, cross-sectoral, Federal, State and local government) approach to arts and cultural development infrastructure development and implementation for Australian communities.

These views are also supported by respondents arguing for a greater leveraging of the resources of local and regional libraries, performing arts centres, galleries and museums. These ideas resonate with those of the Theatre Board who are thinking along similar lines.

Implications of the Broader Policy Framework for Funding

The Australia Council's move to develop a broader policy framework for managing the growth in 'arts in the community' sector and respond more strategically by targeting resources to create a greater impact has been interpreted by a significant body of respondents as inherently contradictory. The views of these particular respondents represent the views of many:

'Given that currently funding is limited, the key challenge (as the future planning taskforce have identified) is to allocate funding strategically and target resources to create the greatest impact. In the context of maximising support for 'arts in the community' as advocated by the Taskforce, we contend that the critical strategic investment by the Australia Council is in community cultural development..... To put it in a nutshell – if you want a sustainable 'arts in the community sector' you need a healthy community cultural development sector.

Council needs to be especially cautious about committing to again support a wide range of community access and participation activities that in recent decades have become the responsibility of state, local and non-arts community funding programs.'

Creative Industries Practice

An area emerging from this phase of the research is the work being undertaken through and under the cultural industries and creative industries banners. Respondents have cited the work taking place at the Creative Industries Precinct at the Queensland Institute of Technology as an example of this.

A number of local councils are also exploring and investing in this area as part of their economic revitalisation strategies. In some areas local artists are receiving support under a local council's industry incubator program as local government begins to appreciate the role of creative industries in their local economies.

The funding for this area of activity is often outside the traditional arts funding streams. Typically, Creative Industry practices can be characterised by:

- Action research;
- On-line and digital communication;
- A relationship with the tertiary sector;
- An emphasis on small, flexible and innovative projects aimed at generating capital;
- Entrepreneurialism;
- Collaboration or cluster development.

This is an area of interest within the Australia Council which has developed a Creative Innovation Strategy which is directed at this kind of work and one which Community Partnerships may wish to consider.

Levels of Investment in Infrastructure

Investment in core infrastructure was identified by almost all respondents as a critical issue. Current levels of funding fail to adequately acknowledge or support a range of costs including:

- **Administrative support:** Artistic Directors *‘spend their days answering phones, trying to fix computers, picking up the mail, typing up minutes, handling correspondence, answering inquiries, writing strategic planning documents, training support staff and volunteers’;*
- **The costs of technology:** *‘There is a critical gap in organisational infrastructure.....working with new media and digital arts with communities who do not otherwise have access to technology. This needs to cover administrative support, sound managerial and financial (expertise) as well as research and technical support. IT and information management expertise is needed urgently.’*
- **The costs of artists:** Funding usually prohibits the employment of artists on anything other than a short term, contractual basis, severely compromising opportunities for sustained relationships with communities, professional development and discourse on theory and practice;
- **Compliance:** *‘Issues around compliance with occupational health and safety, public liability, company law are all straining the efficiencies of Producing Organisations and service agencies. There is no allowance for compromise in these areas – adding to the pressure on other budget lines such as production, staffing, creative development (dramaturgy, design etc)’;*
- **Insurance:** The escalating costs of insurance (300% - 500% in three years) have had an impact on the whole community sector. Respondents report that in some cases it has curtailed activity entirely with many small groups unable to afford the premiums. This situation is exacerbated by local governments’ practice of passing on the costs of insurance to community organisations and individual artists. Some kind of *‘bulk bought insurance program that can be accessed easily and cheaply by artists and community cultural development workers’* is seen as critical (Could the Australian Business and the Arts Foundation help here?);
- **Levels of remuneration:** Research undertaken by one respondent estimates that wages paid to artists and cultural workers based in arts and cultural development not-for-profit organisations are at least \$10,000 per annum less than those paid for comparable jobs in local and State Government and with the larger non-government organisations. *‘I have lost two really good Company Managers because they can get \$60,000 for what they do’.*

Levels of pay emerge as a critical issue for the sector. Several respondents referred to the recommended rates of pay which used to be provided as a guideline by the Community Cultural Development Board and noted that even when these rates were being used as a guideline, levels of funding from the Board did not always permit these levels to be met. Many respondents cited instances of experienced cultural workers ‘retreating into the bureaucracy’ or leaving the sector altogether as the responsibilities of marriage and/or parenthood made financial security more imperative.

- **Support to present and promote the work.**

Some respondents reported on the **retreat by some state arts funding bodies from funding for core infrastructure in lieu of programming.** Others emphasised the need for the Australia Council to support **funding for arts and cultural infrastructure** as it is **unlikely** that support for this will come **from other non-arts sectors** (with the possible exception of philanthropy).

Another strong theme emerging is the need to simplify application and reporting procedures.

‘Stronger collaboration between funding bodies would also enhance the strategies of producer organisations. If there was a strategic pathway constructed through the different grant systems both sides of the grant scheme would benefit. Projects could be built in an articulated manner and there would be less duplication and misplaced submissions. The Service Organisations would (and do) play a key role here.’

‘Closer coordination between grant-making bodies to develop pro forma and cooperative arrangements is necessary so that we don’t spend our resources reporting and acquitting rather than on the actual program.’

From an artistic director:

‘I spend three quarters of my year dealing with funding and reporting. It is all encompassing and debilitating.’

And from a long standing organisation:

‘We need to simplify the administration, reporting, business planning and financial management requirements on organisations. That stuff is pretty out of control at the moment – more onerous we would suggest than any time previously in our history in the sector.....it is a disincentive for project applicants and emerging organisations especially from Indigenous and non-English speaking backgrounds.’

And another:

‘Design with the sector more appropriate and innovative funding models that value and invest in sustainability. For example the Foundation for Young Australians has a partnership approach. This saw the Foundation collaborating in the evaluation and documentation of the program at no extra cost to the project partners.’

Developing New Entries into the Sector

Several respondents write and speak eloquently about the methods they use to encourage new arts and cultural development groups to develop and on the barriers which prevent this.

‘My work is getting leadership at a local level to bring together federal, state and local government organisations to ensure sustainability. Our focus is to reinvigorate and generate more cultural activity and at the same time to mobilise activity around the marginalised communities we are dealing with. Our primary job is to grow the cultural capacity. If we do this right then disadvantaged groups will organise and grow in their confidence and power.’

One organisation has a deliberate policy of bringing in new and young artists both at a volunteer and paid level. This same organisation is also appointing a Community Development Manager to help consolidate the arts and cultural development groups which become established as a result of the organisation’s activity. These strategies are only possible due to the support from philanthropic organisations.

'The stop start of the nature of funding is debilitating in terms of planning and heartbreaking in terms of sustained process. There needs to be a recognition of the quality of our relationships and support to help make them deeper and to last longer. In many ways the funding process is anathema to good community cultural development process. There is a real need for funding to be more flexible so that we have the means to be more opportunistic and respond quickly to emerging needs and enthusiasms.'

'While we built our track record to get us to the point of Annual Program funding with the advice and guidance of Board staff, this process was in fact extremely challenging. It was only possible because we personally subsidised the work and went into personal debt to achieve the work required to build the organisation. The challenges were at considerable personal cost. So, in fact, this is a process that we do not recommend to others, nor endorse. This is not a pathway that many people will take.'

The answers to this question also referred to strategies for skills transfer and leadership development which are discussed below.

How can Community Partnerships enhance the strategies for skills transfer, leadership and development between Producer Organisations and the communities in which this work takes place?

Some respondents suggested that these should be the core business of Producer Organisations and that specific outcomes in this area should be written into triennial agreements. Others suggested that the guiding principles for support for community cultural development should reflect cultural self determination which is inherent to the practice.

Funding for longer cycles of work, that is for sustained interaction rather than episodic, one-off projects is also a strong theme.

Mentoring and apprenticeships are also favoured with respondents suggesting that approaches need to be flexible – not too doctrinaire (these are discussed more fully in the section on pathways for professional development below) - and must recognise that the work is not just about making great art; that it requires emotional intelligence, that is the skills of active listening, empathy, facilitation and reflection.

The other answers to this question are discussed in the section below dealing with pathways for professional development.

What would be required to assist multicultural and ethno-specific infrastructure?

The answers to this question can be categorised as:

1. Employment;
2. Traineeships – see section on pathways for professional development below;
3. Targeted initiatives;
4. Recognition of cultural diversity in funding criteria and decision making processes.

Employment

'Producers and service organisations need to work at employing arts workers from the communities of interest they work with in real roles, not just as trainees or participants. I

am completely fed up with middle aged arts workers running youth organisations, it is frankly no longer OK – same for Indigenous and multi-cultural organisations.’

Several respondents identified the need for the employment of Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse staff in the Service and Producing Organisations.

‘Direct employment with organisations is a powerful strategy to develop the practical skills required for cultural self determination by multicultural and Indigenous communities..... We need to be proactive in developing strategies to provide opportunities for ‘a way in’ for Indigenous young people to develop their contribution and practice in the arts, their employment and their future role and place in the Indigenous arts sector.’

Targeted Initiatives

Some respondents suggested **forming partnerships between existing organisations and particular ethnic communities** to create opportunities to build skills and, if the partnership works, to share infrastructure. This could be supported by local government as a third partner to provide access to space.

Support for projects and programs which **encourage interactions between displaced or dispersed populations and their ‘root’ culture** are also suggested.

The need to **develop a better understanding of what works and what doesn’t in the sector and in other industries** is also identified.

Funding for arts worker positions *‘Arts worker positions to provide grass root support to communities, artists and emerging arts workers. Communities in great need of strategically placed arts workers are the Arabic-speaking community and emerging communities such as the Somali and Sudanese. These communities require specific and targeted arts worker positions for 3 – 5 years to seed organisations, strategic initiatives and infrastructure. Whilst the long term goal would be to foster independence and create autonomous communities in the short term these targeted positions could help with training, mentoring, funding applications, business planning, project planning etc.’*

Support for **long term operational programs** (as distinct from one-off projects or short term initiatives) is also needed.

Funding Criteria

Some respondents spoke of the need for assistance which is based upon **policies which recognise that a ‘western’ model for development is not appropriate for all societies and cultures.** *‘Development can sometimes mean loss of identity, sense of community and meaning for ‘ethno-specific’ groups.’*

Sensitivity around language and the opportunity for this language to enter into the larger community, arts and cultural development discourse and policy is also recommended.

Culturally specific peer assessment and criteria were seen as necessary if the needs of a particular culture are to be understood and resourced appropriately.

‘Prevailing views in the artform silos tend to discriminate against many communities from diverse cultural backgrounds because they do not fit within the prevailing definitions of those artforms. For instance, such artforms as Chinese and Vietnamese fan and sword dancing, Arabic classical music development, Sri Lankan and Indian dancing are important aspects of our cultural landscape that require nourishment, support and

funding, but there are few avenues for cultural maintenance and development of these cultural forms.'

Community representation: *'Community Partnerships needs to get tough here and ask where the community of interest representation in the organisation's management is.'*

How can Community Partnerships strengthen and develop pathways for artists and cultural workers wishing to work in this area, prevent experienced artists leaving the sector and facilitate crossover and collaborations with artists from diverse sectors?

For new artists entering the sector

- Mentorships for emerging artists and arts workers;
- Pathways to take these emerging artists and arts workers on to the next stages in their professional development. Respondents identified a gap between entry for 'beginners' and then the next step in providing them with more challenging and sophisticated professional development and employment;
- More places where people can get experience in the gap between leaving school and going on to some other form of employment or higher education training;
- Creating opportunities for *'undergraduate artists to apply for paid attachments with experienced artists working in the field. Publicly funded projects should incorporate an Attachment Scheme as an optional, but desirable, extension of the grant...This can also be extended to project managers to build the depth of experience on major national and international community cultural events such as the Commonwealth Games, Arts Festivals and anywhere that organising, communicating and developmental skills can be passed on to a new generation of community arts and cultural workers.'*
- Some respondents were critical of the one-off traineeship and felt that these needed to be operated more strategically so that trainees could then have the opportunity to pass their skills onto others from their communities;
- Learning 'on the job' is identified as critical to this sector. This is not suggested in opposition to academic learning, but rather the two approaches are seen as complementary. Participation in projects, for example, is a requirement of post graduate courses in community cultural development run by the Victorian College for the Arts.

For experienced artists at risk of leaving the sector

- Mentorships for experienced artists and arts workers;
- Looking at models from around the world and bringing in workers from other regions to invigorate and inspire;
- Cross sectoral and regional exchanges;
- Career development. Whilst no specific advice was received on how this might be tackled most respondents said that it was the lack of career development which was driving artists and arts workers from the sector. The instability of the sector in the

face of a lack of policy commitment from the Australia Council is also seen as a contributing factor;

- Training in recognised and prestigious institutions at the tertiary level, including universities;
- *‘Community Partnerships could work with organisations such as Australian Business and Arts Foundation to establish placement for artists with companies. Corporations are slowly developing a greater level of understanding about their corporate cultures and the need to enhance their own corporate and local community relationships. There are underdeveloped opportunities to extend Community Partnerships into corporate cultures....which in turn increases the demand for creative thinkers, artists and cultural workers.’*
- The need to improve levels of pay and have this reflected in the levels of funding to Key Organisations is also identified as critical and is discussed in the section on Levels of Investment in Infrastructure above.

There is strong support for funding for these initiatives to be embedded in the core funding to organisations.

What new areas should State based Community Arts Networks develop and /or what existing areas should be reviewed to meet the needs of increasing arts and cultural activity in and with communities?

The responses to this question were complex and varied.

A diverse and patchy ecology

The first point is that the Community Arts Networks are diverse, offer different services, have different approaches to membership (some are membership based, others are not) and do not cover the whole of Australia. As one respondent put it:

‘Is there a one size fits all approach to service organisations like the Networks? Well, the horse had bolted on that one. We need an approach which covers the diverse ecology of what we have.’

Others noted:

‘The Northern Territory does not even have the luxury of something not working. We acknowledge and value the contribution of Browns Mart...but their reach is limited. We recognise the significant ozco support in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice. ...the isolation we experience has, by and large, precluded us from participating in the current restructure debate.’

Tasmanian Regional Arts received funding from the former Community Cultural Development Board to provide a range of services provided by Networks in other states.

As one respondent put it:

‘Each Community Arts Network has developed and grown to meet the needs of its local sector and has also developed in partnership with its state-based funding. To see Community Arts Networks all the same may diminish their individual strengths.’

One respondent suggested that a mapping exercise was needed to identify what were the support services needed, who are the providers and what are the gaps. A number of Key Organisations identified that the categorisation of their organisation as a Producer Organisation as distinct from a Service Organisation obscures the fact that they provide support services as part of their role.

A strong theme is the competitive nature of funding with Service Organisations pitted against each other and against Producing Organisations. Many of those interviewed for this Paper and for the earlier research would have benefited from access to an analysis of the funding going to the Community Arts Networks, particularly as many respondents thought that this had increased when in fact it has halved over the last 5 years (See Discussion Paper).

The support services identified as necessary by respondents included:

- National profile for the sector;
- Critical debate about practice;
- Access to information, resources, case studies;
- Assistance to navigate the grants maze;
- A relationship with local government;
- Providing policy advice to all levels of government;
- Advocacy to government, arts institutions, other sectors. Some respondents suggested that this could extend to the actual brokering of relationships between community cultural development organisations and other sectors;
- Strategic relationships with the tertiary sector to develop training for the sector;
- Assistance in brokering professional development exchanges;
- Assistance to Fellowship recipients to broker relationships with ‘supervisors’ who are able to offer advice and support during the Fellowship period;
- Assistance to Producing Organisations to develop evaluation methodologies and tools;
- Assistance to broker relationships with research and evaluation institutions;
- Auspicing grants for unincorporated organisations;
- Managing devolved funding on behalf of State governments;
- International liaison;
- Support for practitioners for the any/all of the above.

It would appear from the comments provided by the respondents that there is not a strong degree of alignment between the services required by the sector and the services which the Networks are able to provide.

The following comments represent the feedback provided by respondents. From the information provided by the Networks themselves there would appear to be no standard range of services provided by all Networks. This is important to understand so that the comments reproduced below can be seen in context. A comment about a highly valued service provided by a Network and suggestions for how things could be done differently apply to specific Networks in each state and should not be construed as having wider implications for Networks in other States unless the responses received were consistent from many states, in which case I will make this explicit.

The scope of this research falls far short of the qualitative review and analysis which Community Partnerships may feel needs to be carried out in order to comprehensively map the services provided by Service Organisations (and by Producer Organisations), to identify gaps and potential areas of collaboration and duplication. For instance, the scope of services provided by the Arts Councils fell outside the ambit of this supplementary research.

Advocacy and Leadership

The advocacy efforts of the Networks appear to be concentrated on local government and other sectors, eg health, housing, disability, criminal justice, urban planning – although the particular emphasis varies from state to state. Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia view their training activities as a critical form of advocacy.

Respondents (other than the Networks) from a number of different states emphasised the need for both Community Arts Networks and Arts Councils to provide leadership, coordination and policy advice to government at the state level (more on a national profile later). They commented that the nature of community cultural development practice was changing and intersecting with other areas of arts development including cultural planning, cultural development and creative industry development (See Discussion Paper).

There was a significant body of opinion that these service agencies should not be running projects on the ground but providing strategic support for arts and cultural development organisations and projects. Some suggested that this work in building capacity should not be restricted to arts organisations but extend to developing the arts and cultural development capacity of community organisation in youth work, disability and community development.

A few respondents commented on the need for Networks to have the capacity to undertake strategic marketing/media campaigns. Many respondents felt that Networks should be brokering relationships with other sectors and government agencies.

Training

Respondents indicated that they highly value the training provided by those Networks which provide training. Some respondents would like to see this extended into facilitating professional development pathways for people working in the sector (not all Networks currently do this), making links across organisations and facilitating residencies, exchanges and placements.

The Networks' involvement in training (which again, is not universal) is attributed by them to encouragement from the former Board who saw training as an income generating activity and hence a strategy towards self sufficiency. Some Networks report that costs outweigh income in this regard.

A significant number of respondents from different states expressed the view that the Networks should be brokering strategic alliances with tertiary training institutions. Many of these respondents felt that training provided through these institutions would have the advantage of accreditation and prestige; thereby raising the standing of the sector.

Support for artists and art workers

Those respondents who had received support and advice from the Networks and Arts Councils indicated that this was highly valued. Many respondents from a number of states expressed the view that the Networks no longer provided support for artists and arts workers.

'From consultations we have done with artists, there is no doubt that they are crying out for a network that provides centralised information, support and a voice for artists, advocates etc.'

'Community Arts Networks increased focus on training lead to many of them shifting to Registered Training Organisations status in the 1990s, a trend which

reduced their capacity to continue to sustain their state-wide sector leadership and core information and resource role.'

Some respondents identified what they characterised as dysfunctional relationships between producing and service organisations. They attribute this dysfunctionality to:

- A lack of clear roles and responsibilities for producer and service organisations;
- A competitive funding process that pits producers and service organisations against each other;
- A lack of a shared vision between producer and service organisations.

I refer above to the fact that a number of Key Organisations identified that the categorisation of their organisation as a Producer Organisation as distinct from a Service Organisation obscures the fact that they provide support services as part of their role. Some Producer Organisations identify benefits but also disadvantages in this situation. In particular, many Producing Organisations feel they need assistance to analyse, evaluate and disseminate the implications of their work to the broader sector. Some mention in particular the inability to fully exploit the benefits of international and Fellowship opportunities due to the lack of involvement of a Service Organisation. Many mention the assistance they need in brokering effective professional development placements within and across states and sectors.

Young members

Some Networks reported that they are finding it difficult to attract younger membership (not all Networks are membership based). Others, notably Tasmanian Regional Arts and Community Cultural Development NSW reported significant success in engaging younger people. In both cases this is due to specific, targeted strategies.

A National Network of Service Provision?

Almost all respondents mention the need for a strong national voice and I have mentioned the tension that the lack of this is causing in my earlier Discussion Paper. The additional information on this issue emerging out of this second phase of research can be characterised as:

- The incomplete nature of the national network of Community Arts Networks which does not appear to include Tasmanian Regional Arts or Cultural Development Network, Victoria and the lack of any representation from the Territories;
- The increasing difficulty experienced by some Community Arts Networks to sustain a national focus in the light of active discouragement from state arts funding bodies;
- The apparent lack of connectivity between the work in policy development, advocacy and policy advice to government undertaken by the Community Arts Networks and that undertaken by the Arts Councils – although this is not the case in every state it would appear to be the case at the national level;
- Clear and strong support for a national body delivering advocacy and policy advice to government, although less clarity about the source of this organisation's funding (some say Australia Council, others say Australian Government and others say philanthropy);

- Divided opinion on whether the National Arts and Culture Alliance is the basis for such a national body;
- The existence of models of success in other sectors including the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (FDO) which the Australian Government has funded. The Government recognises this body (a federation of existing peak bodies from each of the disability sectors) as the peak organisation on disability matters and the Government's reference for public policy development;
- The success of the National Association for the Visual Arts and the Music Council of Australia as service organisations, advocates and respected sources of policy advice to government on behalf of their respective sectors.

A critical need for a national information service incorporating an information and research clearing house, a monthly on-line bulletin and a critical journal has been identified. Should these be developed on a stand alone basis or in partnership with existing services, eg Arts Hub, the monthly on-line bulletin of Regional Arts NSW and Real Time/Currency Press?

Responses to this question can be characterised as:

- Those focusing on the operations of ccd.net and *Artwork*; and
- Those deliberating on the appropriate form for information services and writing critiquing the practice to take.

In relation to the operations of ccd.net and *Artwork*, I was not provided with any background documentation from the Australia Council on these services and am reliant on the information provided to me by the Community Arts Networks and other respondents. They are of the view that Community Partnerships must analyse what worked, what didn't and why in relation to both ccd.net and *Artwork* or run the risk of any new initiative foundering.

An On-Line Information and Research Capacity

It would appear from the information I have available that ccd.net was a Board initiated project that was put out to tender.

I have been advised that ccd.net was built to specifications and that those were to provide an opportunity for self-publishing, a gateway for new entrants into the community cultural development sector and an on-line chat service. The requirement that all users of the site log on via a membership number or pass word (which many of those I spoke to during this research found onerous and was cited as a major impediment to access) was established as a means of quality assurance to prevent some of the problems associated with an earlier Board funded website (Orca) where inappropriate, commercial material had been posted.

It is apparent from the research undertaken for this paper and for the earlier Discussion Paper that ccd.net is not meeting the needs of experienced practitioners – but then it was never intended to. The overwhelming theme for this entire research project has been the sector's demand for quick and ready access to an information and research clearing house, something ccd.net was never intended to be and for which it was never funded. The majority of those I spoke to are not interested in an on-line chat facility – they do not have the time.

'It needs to be recognised that organisations have very limited research capacity and that simply providing this information will not make it accessible or useful.'

Consideration needs to be given to this information as part of a broader strategy to lift the research capacity and capability of the sector and its practitioners and organisations.'

From the information I have available and in the opinion of those interviewed it would appear that technology has changed significantly since ccd.net was established and that should Community Partnerships consider another venture into this area that access to specialist technical expertise is viewed as critical.

Opinions on where this facility should be based vary. Some (a majority) see advantages in building on an existing service such as Arts Hub (or equivalent) where the costs of a stand-alone infrastructure and subscriber management platform could be amortised with other users for economy of scale. Others (a minority) feel there are risks associated with such an approach which may leave the sector vulnerable to larger interests. I am advised that a separate branding for such a service to those working in 'the arts in and with community sectors' could be developed within an Arts Hub (or equivalent) infrastructure. Respondents view the need for an experienced editorial team to advise and recruit suitable writers for a hub which would meet the needs of this sector as critical.

In relation to the need for an on-line monthly bulletin the plethora of such material at a State/Territory and regional level indicates the need for careful planning. Perhaps a model in which national and whole-of-sector content is handled at a national level and supplemented with local content State/Territory/Regional/local level could be explored. Another suggestion is to explore a big nationally syndicated feed that enables subscribers to tailor their subscriptions.

Journal

A range of approaches emerge from responses. What is clear is that no one strategy will meet the varied needs identified. It would appear that there are multiple possible audiences and multiple possible strategies which could be explored. Many respondents see the need to link the information and research clearing house with the production of the journal.

The majority of the respondents favour a journal which critiques practice, which is clearly and distinctively branded as being of and from the sector and which could be developed in association with an existing publisher in order to achieve a wide circulation within and beyond the sector. The need for professional editorial staff is emphasised and is something the editors of *Artwork* have also identified as necessary for their publication. While respondents see a clear gap and a strong need for a critical journal they urge that the editorial process encourage and genuinely reflect the diversity of the sector.

Artwork is reported as currently meeting the following needs within the sector:

- The documentation of practice;
- The provision of an historical record of practice; and
- Information which art workers can use to inform the institutions and communities with whom they are working of the range of possibilities open to them.

While many respondents are strongly in favour of this material also being available on line, this is not at the expense of a published version. A number of respondents make the point that, without such a journal, the range and quality of material available for the information and research service will be severely compromised.

Another strategy emerging is the need to seed fund people working in this sector to write for mainstream art journals and for journals servicing other sectors.

How should Community Partnerships develop a national advocacy strategy? What should be its main priorities?

Responses to this question are in two areas; those which propose specific strategies and those which propose who should develop and deliver the strategy.

Some respondents interpret this question as a job for the sector; others as a job for the Australia Council. Others see it as something that both the sector and the Australia Council need to do and advocate that the strategy be developed and implemented collaboratively with the National Arts and Culture Alliance playing a key role (see also discussion in section on A National Network of Service Provision above).

In relation to the scope of such a strategy suggestions include:

- Ongoing research and evaluation of the importance of arts and cultural expression to our psychological, social, economic and physical wellbeing (such as *Art and Wellbeing*);
- A targeted and concentrated effort to ‘sell’ the results of this work to relevant sectors;
- Facilitating, leading and skilling the sector in coordination, advocacy and understanding how the ‘system’ works (Such as the program undertaken by the Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences in 2005, coordinating skill development, briefing and facilitated introduction to the parliamentary process);
- Support by Community Partnerships for recognised leaders, peak bodies and funding to support the advocacy efforts of these organisations;
- Providing key decision-makers, particularly politicians, the opportunity to directly experience the impact of participation in creative activity;
- Increasing the profile of the sector through brokering partnerships with Australian Government agencies and private corporations;
- Continuing to advocate for the work in this sector within the Australia Council;
- Identifying opportunities to link community cultural development and arts development to debates around information technology, innovation and creativity;
- Encouraging and brokering professional collaborations and exchanges between community cultural development and other areas of arts development both locally and nationally;
- Raising awareness of the importance of culture in urban and regional development – encouraging dialogue with local government and bringing attention to cultural planning and cultural development;
- Ensuring that debates around support for the arts and cultural development champion cultural diversity and the needs of all cultures.

Deborah Mills
27/1/06

APPENDIX 1: LETTER TO KEY ORGANISATIONS

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10/1/06

Letter to CCD Triennial and Program Clients

To those of you to whom I have already spoken, thank you for your input and giving so generously of your time and knowledge during a very difficult time of the year. I am writing to ask you for your input into the next stage of the research.

I have finalised the Discussion Paper which should be made available to you early in February.

Meanwhile, the Chair of the Scoping Study Reference Group, Anne Dunn, has asked me to undertake some further research; to seek out and record your views about some of the themes and issues which have arisen during my research in relation to infrastructure.

I need to have this second piece of research finalised by Friday 27th January so that it can be considered, along with the Discussion Paper, at the meeting of the Scoping Study Reference Group early in February.

I would be very grateful if you could find the time to do two things:

1. Complete the answers to the attached questions (there are only seven of them!) and return them to me before Wednesday 18th January;
2. Email me with a date and time for me to ring you to discuss your answers. This will need to be before Wednesday 25th January so that I have time to write it all up.

Please feel free to email or ring me at any time if you have any questions or just want to give me an earful about the ridiculously short time frames and the silly time of the year.

Many thanks and best wishes,

Deborah (Mills)

Infrastructure: Preamble

My research for the Discussion Paper has revealed that the sector is only just recovering from almost a decade of significant investment in project activity at the expense of infrastructure, in particular support for Producing Organisations, that is organisations which develop and present artform based work.

In my Paper I recommend that Community Partnerships needs to give serious consideration to strengthening this artform based work by improving support for infrastructure of this nature both to encourage new entrants into the field and to increase the capacity of existing Producing Organisations.

In my Paper I also recommend that a concerted effort needs to be made to rebuild ethnic arts infrastructure.

Serious consideration also needs to be given to strategies which will enhance the capacity of people belonging to particular cultures to manage their own cultural development. These strategies could include Indigenous employment practices and forms of skills development and knowledge transfer.

Questions

- 1. How can Community Partnerships expand the capacity of Producing Organisations that is organisations which develop and present art form based work?**
- 2. What would be required to assist multicultural and ethno-specific infrastructure?**
- 3. How can Community Partnerships enhance the strategies for skills transfer, leadership and development between Producer Organisations and the communities in which this work takes place?**

Supporting the Sector: Preamble

My research reveals that the need remains for service provision organisations such as the Community Arts Networks and Arts Councils whose work is characterised by the provision of services to client organisations, rather than, but not excluding, artform based work. However, there is a need for greater clarity on who, where and how to provide these services.

What emerged during the work for this Paper was a lack of clarity concerning the Community Arts Networks' relationships with the community cultural development sector, the often inconsistent expectations of state and Federal arts funding bodies and in some cases confusion about the mandate of Networks as lobbying organisations.

Discussion with younger (under 30 years of age) artists and cultural workers interviewed for this Paper revealed that they are reluctant to be part of a membership organisation and that they require a more fluid and opportunistic set of relationships – where they can move in and out of an alliance or association as and when it suits their needs.

Another tension emerging has been the lack of an effective national forum for advocacy and service provision. State based Community Arts Networks have

either assumed responsibility for national initiatives or have had them thrust upon them. My research revealed the need for national advocacy, national on-line promotion and information sharing initiatives and a more active, engaged and strategic brokerage service at the national level.

Question

4. What new areas should State based Community Arts Networks develop and /or what existing areas should be reviewed to meet the needs of increasing arts and cultural activity in and with communities?

Access to Information and Research: Preamble

(i) The need for free and ready access to information about policy and practice.

On-line access organised nationally and with access to international information on qualitative and quantitative research, case studies and outlines of practice and practitioners at the cutting edge is seen as critical. Sharing of information through case study documentation of projects is keenly sought - not promotion, but a detailed analysis of processes and procedures, how and who was involved. Assistance to map the policy priorities of other sectors and to identify key personnel and opportunities is also a priority.

Wider access to research information and to the results of Community Cultural Development Board Fellowships and other professional development grants is also an important issue emerging from the response to these questions.

(ii) The need for an on-line monthly bulletin which updates information on who is doing what nationally.

This could provide news of the sector including advice on new activities and resources. A successful model for this is provided by Regional Arts NSW and their monthly arts bulletin. Put together by a highly professional arts editor, this publication is widely read and highly respected.

The on-line research service could be modelled on the service provided by Arts Hub. This service operates as a gateway to information, operating a list serve which scans the world. The facility would require some organisation to fund the sifting component, sort out the intellectual content and organise its accessibility if the service were to function effectively as a national hub.

(iii) Critiquing the Practice

My research has revealed that the sector is vulnerable in terms of its relationship with arts institutions and its lack of participation in discourse about art.

A number of ideas were suggested to help overcome this including a more direct relationship between community cultural development practice and criticism and mainstream arts practice and criticism, encouraging critiquing of practice by professional arts critics and the publication of a (possibly biannual) journal which needs to be available on-line. Marrying this function to something which is already functioning well is suggested, such as the publication *Real Time* or Currency Press. The presence of a strong editorial vision is seen as critical.

Question

5. A critical need for a national information service incorporating an information and research clearing house, a monthly on-line bulletin and a critical journal has been identified. Should these be developed on a stand alone basis or in partnership with existing services, eg Arts Hub, the monthly on-line bulletin of Regional Arts NSW and *Real Time/Currency Press*?

Advocacy: Preamble

Practitioners interviewed for my Paper identified the need for greater engagement by the sector with politicians in all spheres of government. The need for the Australia Council to more effectively promote the work of the sector is another very dominant theme arising from this research. The difficulty experienced by Board staff and clients in attracting the interest and attention of corporate publicists is a barrier to this. If these constraints persist, then perhaps the Community Partnerships Committee will need to consider other options.

Question

6. How should Community Partnerships develop a national advocacy strategy? What should be its main priorities?

Support the Art, support the Artists: Preamble

Practitioners interviewed for this Paper emphasised the need for:

- Pathways for artists to learn the skills to do this work;
- Strategies to stop experienced artists from leaving the sector.

Question

7. How can Community Partnerships strengthen and develop pathways for artists and cultural workers wishing to work in this area, prevent experienced artists leaving the sector and facilitate crossover and collaborations with artists from diverse sectors?

Confidentiality/attribution

Do you wish our discussion to remain confidential on the understanding that I may use the material you have given me without attribution?

Deborah Mills
10/1/06

APPENDIX 2: KEY ORGANISATIONS INCLUDED IN THIS RESEARCH

NB * Indicates an interview was conducted.

indicates correspondence was exchanged.

& indicates response was from the CCD Arts Roundtable: a group consisting of Kevin Brennan (Arts Industry Council, Victoria), Sally Marsden (Gateways – Jesuit Social Services), Rosalie Hastwell (North Richmond Community Health Centre), Carey Lai (Isis Productions), John Smithies (Cultural Development Network), Ruth Wittingham (Arts Access), Criena Gehrke (Arts Access), Jane Crawley (City of Melbourne), Vicky Guglielmo (City of Melbourne), Maud Clarke (Somebody’s Daughter Theatre) and Maria Filippow (Visionary Images).

First name	Second name	Key Organisation	Nature of contact
Criena	Gehrke	Arts Access	# * &
Jayne	Boase	Arts in Action	#
Lorna	Martin	Barkly Regional Arts	Successful in making brief contact only
Cate	Fury	CCD NSW	# *
Lisa	Philip-Harbutt	Community Arts Network, SA	# *
Helen Jacqui	Le Gresley Doyle	Community Arts Network, WA	#
Zoë	Scroggings	Contact Inc	#
John	Smithies	Cultural Development Network (Vic)	# * &
David	Doyle	DADAA (WA)	#
Norm Sarah	Horton Moynihan	Feral Arts	# *
Rob	Kergevan	Katherine Regional Arts	*
Kamalle	Dabboussy	Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre	Unsuccessful in making contact
Rosalie	Hastwell	North Richmond Community	&
Bronwyn	Jewell	Queensland Community Arts Network	# *
Maud	Clark AM	Somebody’s Daughter Theatre Company	&
Steve	Payne	The Torch Company	*
Lucy	Kenneth	Tasmanian Regional Arts	#
Eve	Stafford	Arts Nexus	*
Bianca	Beetson	Catalyst Youth Arts	*
Jerril	Rechter	Footscray Community Arts Centre	# *
Jenine Virginia	Mackay Heydon	InCite Youth Arts	* # #
Lena	Nahlous	ICE	#
Sally	Marsden	Jesuit Social Services	&
Richard	Bladel	Kickstart Arts	*
Patricia	Whiteley-King	Outback Arts Association	*