

tips from the road

communication strategies

COMMUNICATION IS A TWO-WAY STREET. BY CORRECTLY IDENTIFYING THE AUDIENCES TO BE REACHED, COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES CAN EVOKE THE DESIRED RESPONSE.

"PUBLICITY IS DEFINED AS NEWS OR INFORMATION ABOUT AN ORGANISATION, INCLUDING ITS PRODUCTS AND SERVICES, THAT IS PUBLISHED OR BROADCAST ON BEHALF OF THE ORGANISATION BUT IS NOT PAID FOR BY THEM."

Arts Marketing: The Pocket Guide

Publicity tactics

But publicity can be more than just news stories, photos or interviews. When your art gallery is situated in the same complex as the central bus station and tourist information centre, a whole new group of people is encouraged to have a look. Loreto Hewitt, a driving force behind South Australia's Arts and Tourism Centre at Port Pirie, says people might have five minutes to spare before their bus leaves so "they just pop in".

The Information Centre is also a "last stop" for many who are heading up to the Flinders Ranges and these people too are very likely to buy at the shop or look around the gallery.

Art works extend beyond the gallery walls into the waiting room and Tourist Information reception. The whole area is open, encouraging a free-flow within this multi-purpose space. The gallery estimates annual attendances at around 14,000 per annum in this population area of just 17,000.

Malcolm McKinnon details this initiative and others in the local Council's publication *Cultural Development in Port Pirie, A Strategy for A Positive Future*. Local journalist Greg Mayfield is quoted as saying "The Tourism and Arts Centre provides a focus for the city to promote itself as part of a broader region . . ."

Getting the best from your local newspaper

Greg Aitken, until recently Marketing Manager of Northern Rivers Performing Arts (NORPA), is a publicity whiz. Not only does he send press releases out on a weekly basis - "It is important to keep it coming - there can never be too much" - he also writes a weekly page on Wednesday for the *Northern Star* and a page for the weekly free newspaper that comes out on Friday. Greg's pages have attracted entertainment advertising and actually changed the way the Wednesday paper is being promoted! He did not restrict his columns to NORPA - "that would be a bit over the top" - and includes news and views from the region, around the country and overseas.

This kind of publicity service is valued by Richard Peake, proprietor of *The Naracoorte Herald*, who says that contributed arts stories and pictures are often a useful complement to the coverage generated by the country newspapers' own reporters and photographers. With a keen personal interest in the visual and performing arts, he often takes a camera and notebook to arts events; and his family-owned newspaper provides generous coverage of cultural activities, sometimes publishing special supplements. But he acknowledges that some other editors are not so "arty", and sometimes the small newspapers can't afford to pay for staff to review or report on out-of-hours arts events.

The argument that the local papers are eschewed by arts attendees in favour of the metropolitan daily is debunked by many. "There is no doubt the local paper is vital - television is better, mind - and that it is read. It is the only place where locals can find out about their region," says Carla Hartog, of the South Australian Country Arts Trust.

Many arts organisations also use the local paper for planning, checking the paper's regular calendar of future events. "Before we decide on a date for a performance, we check out the calendar in the local . . . a clash with a sporting event or fundraiser can kill your audience in a local community. At one time, the local calendar was held at council chambers - but no-one used it. That's why we got the paper to do it for us. It's a pity they don't publish anniversaries and significant birthday celebrations - these too are major competition in a small local area," states Darryl Morley, local presenter at Kingston, South Australia.

Queensland Arts Council Executive Director, Peter Dent, notes that local newspapers can be very generous with their coverage and often print exactly what is sent to them. He is very proud of the hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of free advertising they have been able to generate through convincing media people to provide space. (The Brisbane *Courier Mail* gives the Queensland Arts Council a full page each year to promote their activities.)

The Professional Arts Working Group established an arts calendar and it is now run semi-independently so that "the flu can't ever stop the calendar happening." A form is filled out for the upcoming event and it is then sent to a central collection point, where it is picked up by commercial courier service who takes it to commercial typing agencies. It goes back to the coordinator for checking and is then faxed off weekly to the *Townsville Bulletin; Bar Fly*, an independent arts and music guide; *Gig Guide*; the *Community Services Courier* and *Northern Services Courier*, which are Defence Force monthly papers, and the newspapers print the calendars in full. It also goes weekly to the electronic media who primarily use it as a check list. Every six months, it goes to Townsville Enterprise, the local economic and tourism development authority, for their regular events calendar. Townsville Enterprise edits key events, which are then sent to the Queensland Travel and Tourism Corporation for their Annual Events Guide.

Media Relations

Writing a good press release: Basic rules for a good press release

- clarity
- active voice (passive voice is ambiguous and difficult to read quickly)
- present tense
- one idea per sentence, if possible
- who, what, when, where, how, why: always check that these questions have been answered
- contact name and phone numbers, including mobile and/or e-mail (so that you are accessible for interviews)

A picture is worth a thousand words

Pictures, as they say, are worth a thousand words. Many regional presenters and galleries are in a situation where they do not have good, useable material.

"It is taking ages to get our artists to record their work - without good photographs there is no catalogue, no newspaper story, no prospective buyer for a work of art. We are spending considerable time and effort training artists in how to sell themselves," says David O'Connor of the South Australian Touring Exhibitions' Program and New Land Gallery.

Professional Arts Working Group Coordinator Lorna Hempstead says "interesting photographs and good captions are essential and need to be readily available. Musicians playing instruments on a stage just doesn't make it". Wearing another hat as the former vice-president of the Chamber of Commerce in Townsville, Lorna realised that the arts in the community were not included in corporate promotional material. Her determination to see this changed has resulted in good representation of the arts in Townsville in a range of annual reports, regional tourism and economic development brochures.



Drawing Machine, Philip Gamblen from Techné Exhibition Imago Multimedia Centre and the Australian Film Commission

Greg Randall (recently Director of the Sir Robert Helpmann Centre, Mt Gambier, now Director of Glen Street Theatre) states that photographs that work in the cities may not suit a more conservative regional environment: "Nipples that might sell dance in the city are more likely to create outrage in a small town."

Photographs need to be:

- colour - today, computers can digitise colour to black and white
- good contrast
- not too "busy"
- a strong focus on a single situation

Photographs supplied with three or four short, snappy sentences as a caption can be more effective than a long story. Digital audio tapes (DAT) or CDs should be supplied to radio stations, and broadcast quality one inch tape or Betacam to television stations, who if given good sound or moving footage are more likely to run your story.

Getting good results from interviews

- develop a relationship with radio and television presenters by inviting them to organisational functions - and give them something to take away as a reminder of your organisation
- provide a media release or other details, highlighting the interesting angle on the person to be interviewed
- provide a list of questions or discussion points
- provide press clippings and other information
- attend the interview with the interviewee, arriving before air time to discuss important marketing points that should be highlighted in the interview
- know how much time the interview will take
- have contact details on hand
- have a giveaway contest to ensure listener attention
- send a thank you note to interviewer

Broadcast media

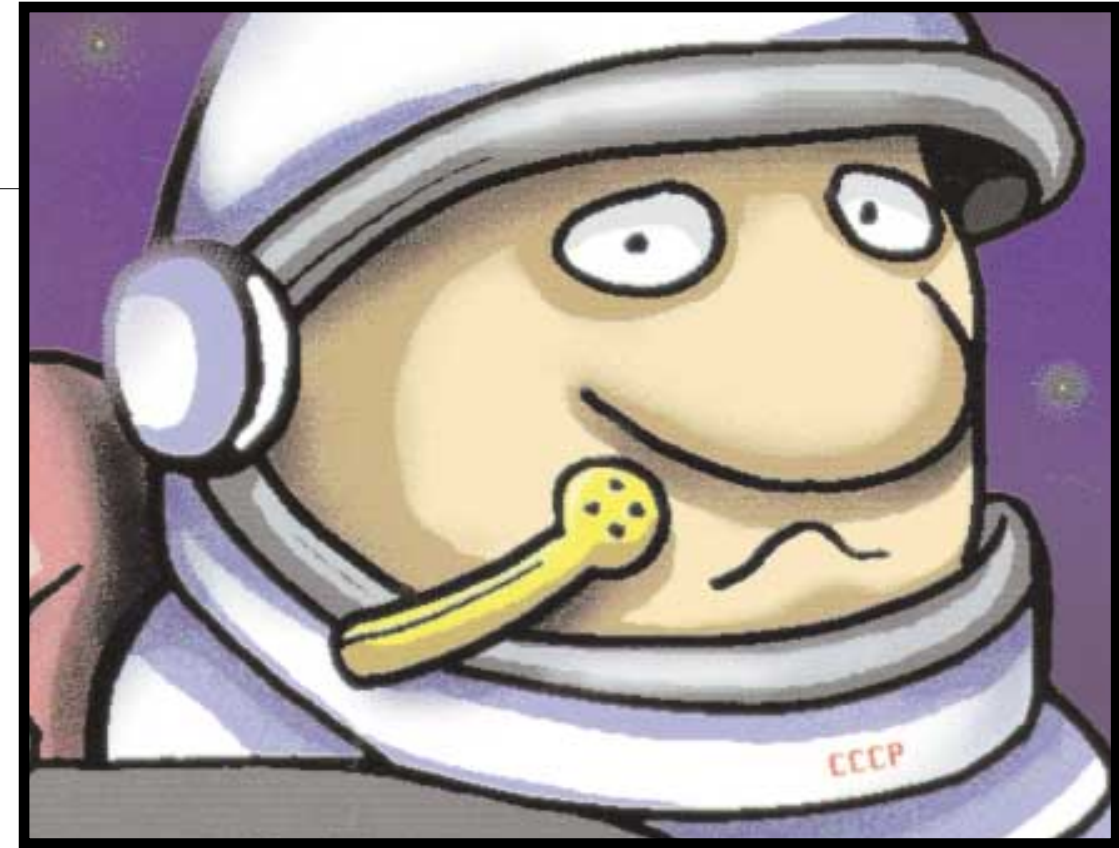
There are three sectors in broadcasting that offer outlets for promotion - public, commercial and community. CAAMA Music has found that public radio is the best vehicle for reaching a national audience. Triple J can be vital in giving new labels exposure. After all, "how did silverchair become so popular?", asks head of CAAMA Music, Richard Micallef. (silverchair musicians themselves acknowledge the important role the radio station played in launching and promoting their career.)

Relationships too are vital. Being chums is not the point. "A journalist or proprietor needs to trust you and know you won't sell them a pup." So if an artist isn't good on television, Greg Randall says don't use them! You can also do a lot to help artists inexperienced in dealing with the press if you give them a list of questions, suggesting the points you would like them to get across, and briefing the artists about a particular journalist's or broadcaster's style. Ticket giveaways can sometimes add value to an interview. And always attend an interview with the artist.

If you deliver the goods, a television or radio journalist will be more likely to take your idea next time. Always make sure those who are in a position to provide interviews or support the company are invited to the performances.

Never forget that the media has control over whether it will or will not run your story, which may be up against falling wheat prices, murders, cabinet changes, animals, babies and flowers. Your story needs to talk to the reader/viewer. There is never a moral obligation to run a story.

While companies may not have control over the media, there are ways to lobby that may achieve the desired result. The Professional Arts Working Group in Townsville mounted a campaign to reinstate the *Gig Guide*. They contacted everyone in the arts community with a letter including bullet points they could excerpt and use in their own personal letter to the newspaper. The following day, the editor received 150 letters. The *Gig Guide* was reinstated!



Totally REDiculous, Greg Zaritski from Techné Exhibition
Imago Multimedia Centre and the Australian Film Commission

Paid advertising

Although television advertising in Darwin is comparatively inexpensive, it is still outside the reach of most local arts organisations. In 1997, the Festival of Darwin was able to allocate \$2,500 to this important medium, and with \$6,000 costs in commercial production rates, secured \$4,500 in sponsorship towards production costs.

Liaison with Darwin City Promotions, who represent all the city retailers, means they included appropriate festival content in their television and newspaper advertising.

Darwin's Channel 8, sponsors of the Grand Parade, also run a very high frequency television advertising campaign valued at \$10,000, including festival program content, prior to the Grand Parade - at their cost.

The *Northern Territory Daily Newspaper* provides the festival with free advertising to a value of nearly \$9,000, including a colour lift-out Festival Guide supplement, which is inserted into the newspaper a week before the festival. Festival staff write the copy and supply artwork.

The Festival of Darwin acknowledges the importance of their media coverage, but has found that the major Newspapers will not promote sponsors. The *Yellow Pages* sponsors a major concert on the Esplanade, but it is difficult to get it known as the *Yellow Pages Concert on the Esplanade*. The festival therefore intends to place its ad at the same time as coverage, so these links are made.

Drawing on his recent experience as Director of the Sir Robert Helpmann Centre, Mount Gambier, Greg Randall says a major difference in the regions is the importance of television advertising. "It's crucial and many city companies - because they don't use television - do not have good base footage for their regional touring."

Greg negotiated royalty deals with his local commercial television station. A royalty arrangement returns a percentage of the box office to the station. In Greg's case, he gave only a minimal financial guarantee. "This gives the station a stake in the end result." Most television areas in the regions are aggregated now, so you can reach your catchment area with one station. The downside of this, Greg says, is that you need to make sure "you are not being ripped off by a monopoly".



The Cute Machine, Martine Corompt from Techné Exhibition
Imago Multimedia Centre and the Australian Film Commission

"The problem with royalty deals, good though they are, is that the station can over-estimate the audience for a show and keep throwing time at it - to the point of viewer boredom - or they will think this is a bit arty-farty for the South East and you won't see an ad!" Consequently, Greg's royalty deals included a minimum number of spots at prime time, with the remainder of the schedule based on the kind of demographic he thought the show would attract - over 40, young and hip, etc.

Television station contacts must be nurtured and deals documented in writing, Greg emphasises.

The Araluen Centre prepares a menu of information for every performance. The media and promotion plan sets out its editorial promotional strategy, as well as paid advertising. Graphing television advertising by comparing time of commercials to ticket sales, Publicity and Promotion Officer Angela Whitlock is able to measure its impact. Television campaigns can then be altered. Rather than running a straight two week campaign, she has begun swapping them, putting on an advertisement, taking it off and then putting it back on again. With experiences in late bookings by the community, a feature of many regional audiences, Araluen runs an intensive campaign the very last week of a show.

Over the past couple of years, Araluen has seen an increase from 10% to 90% of user groups hiring Angela on a cost-recovery basis to do their public relations. She will implement a publicity and promotional campaign for them, from doing all the press kits beforehand, writing and distributing press releases, organising photo shoots and arranging interviews.

Media campaigns

Bill Searles of Northern Territory Contemporary Music plans a campaign so it has a baseline of promotion and then lots of peaks closer to the event. The baseline of promotion includes posters, fliers, editorial content and interviews. Little peaks will come out every now and then. For example, little peaks of television advertising are planned and are concentrated right up until the last week of promotion.

Because television is the most expensive media to use for promotion, Northern Territory Contemporary Music produces their own commercials. This is where the big expense is - filming projects first for footage, then actually sitting in an editing suite to get appropriate footage to suit the concert and audience. Bill has negotiated sponsorship deals for both production and air time in exchange for acknowledgment on their promotional material.

Northern Territory Contemporary Music uses all the print media available in Darwin, ranging from the local newspapers to the local street press magazines, and any lifestyle magazines, and their campaign plans involve as many forms of media as possible. Radio is used as a media tool for interviews, live-to-air performances and promotional carts (a loop of tape used in radio pre-recording), and their limited budget is not spent on paying for air time. With a promotional budget of \$5,000, Bill seeks in-kind support from radio stations. He prefers to put his limited budget into newspaper advertising, posters and television.

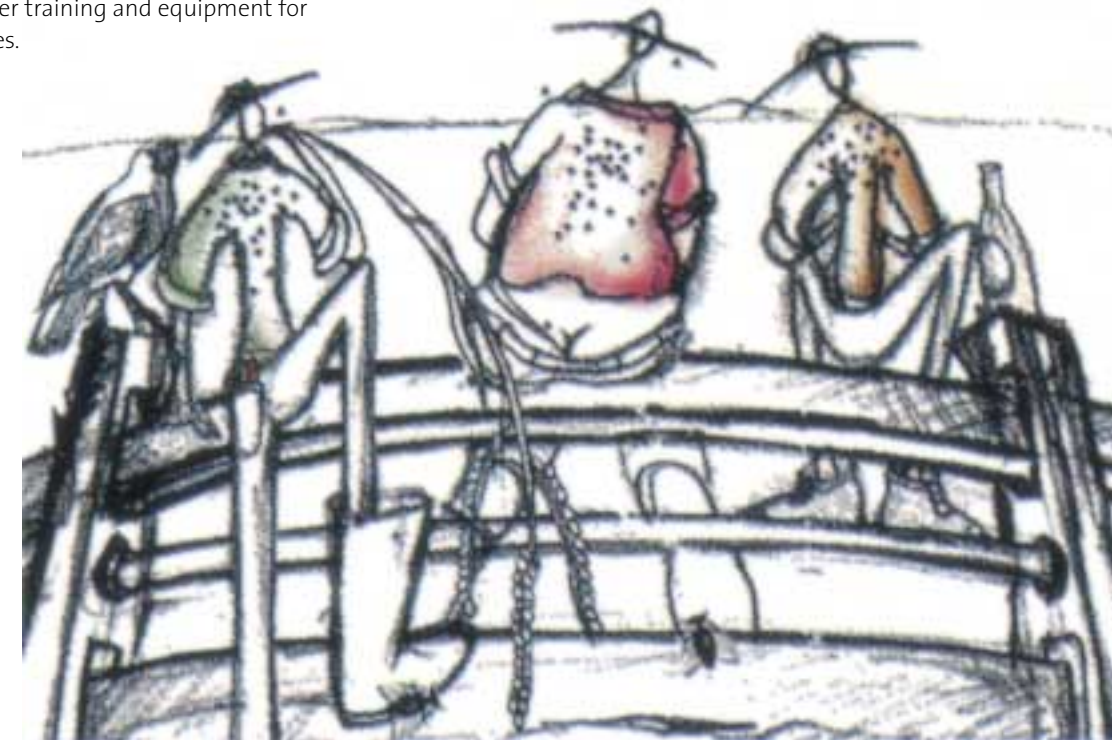
When the Queensland Arts Council tours a show, they conduct a series of publicity campaigns, as they have found that each regional town has their own valued newspaper. The only thing they might have in common would be the electronic media and the ABC which is very supportive in promoting their tours and other activities. Executive Director Peter Dent says that the Queensland Arts Council "could not live without the ABC".

All around the country, the miles ahead team heard stories of support by the ABC, with many of its presenters playing an active role in their communities as board members, volunteers and more.

On the world wide web

Cooperative Multimedia Centres (CMCs) have been established as a Commonwealth Government initiative to foster the development of a world class interactive multimedia communications industry in Australia through a variety of focused programs. A number of these centres are working with arts organisations to help them develop effective web sites by providing training in technical skills and access to equipment.

Corrugated Iron Youth Theatre, Ausdance, Northern Territory Contemporary Music and the Festival of Darwin are just a few of the arts organisations tapping into this resource. Some of the CMCs have been able to offer training and equipment for a period of time without charges.



Three Mile Creek, Alyssa Rothwell from Techné Exhibition
Imago Multimedia Centre and the Australian Film Commission

MILES AHEAD MET WITH QANTM IN DARWIN AND WAS INTERESTED IN HEARING ABOUT THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN THE ARTS. YOU MAY BE TOO.



Image courtesy of QANTM

Putting target groups in touch with multimedia by providing technical support and training, a number of QANTM's program areas focus on youth, indigenous culture and the arts. This CMC has appointed two staff members to work with these communities - Mary Jane Overall and Trevor Van Weeren - to look at the ways in which multimedia can be used as a means of self expression or for furthering artistic creativity - or for whatever value it might have for artists and arts organisations.

QANTM NT's support for the cultural sector is ongoing and has included:

- encouraging audience advocacy by funding Imago to bring the New Media Arts exhibit (techné) to the Territory
- offering technology access and training to local artists
- developing web pages for museums and art galleries that reflect their vision and other information
- developing an on-line catalogue of arts-related topics
- documenting and providing on-line ready art works for local arts organisations
- supporting various Aboriginal initiatives involving training and resource development in the arts

The Association of Co-operative Multimedia Centres

- STARLIT Multimedia Centre Pty Ltd - Brisbane QLD (university research only) impart@impart.com.au
- Ngapartji - Adelaide SA admin@ngapartji.com.au
- eMerge - South Melbourne VIC emerge@emerge.com.au
- Access Australia - NSW cmccaccess@cmccaccess.com.au
- IMAGO Multimedia Centre - East Perth WA imago@imago.com.au
- QANTM Australia - Milton QLD omoon@qantm.com.au
- Darwin NT cbishop@qantmnet.com

New technologies are beginning to be used by artists and arts organisations around Australia as a marketing tool to grow audiences. Designed by members Russell Milledge and Werner Burger, Kick Arts' Collective Inc's web site first went on-line in 1997. "It draws you in - it's simple and visually compelling," says Mary Jane Overall, project officer for QANTM NT. Russell, who now lectures at TAFE on the subject of web site design, has also designed the web site for the 1997 *Laura Aboriginal Dance and Cultural Festival* for Cairns

Regional Arts Gallery, and has been asked to submit tenders to design other arts web sites. Both Werner and Russell's strength in this area has led to their being awarded, respectively, a scholarship and a place at Silicon Studios QANTM in Brisbane and the Australian Network For Art and Technology Summer School at ANU in Canberra.

The Aboriginal Arts and Culture Centre in Alice Springs get 4,000 hits a day on their site, which is way in excess of the average hit rate for businesses their size. Their five year development plan is on their site. It is an information site based on historical information about who they are, what they are, Aboriginal culture and the homelands. It has become an important marketing tool to reach the rest of the world.

When people use the search engine looking for Aboriginal culture, the Aboriginal Arts and Culture Centre is the first name they often come across. They have marketed their site well with certain key words - and in areas where people are likely to pull up a certain word, they are going to be directed to their site.

About web sites

"We are so bombarded with information that well-targeted material is essential," emphasises Tess Dryza, the Australia Council's AD&A consultant on development of its marketing web site, *fuel*.

Tess stresses the importance of targeted content to the success of a web site:

- access to information and people that is not available anywhere else
- no longer enough to provide information; users need to feel that they are part of a growing, on-line community
- sites can not just be a public relations tool
- sites need to offer users something constructive
- users need to get something more than information

fuel was user tested in December 1997 with positive feedback reinforcing a need for specific information.

Greg White, composer, multimedia producer and technology lecturer, offered an overview on arts marketing on the Internet, at an Australian Institute of Arts Management and Australia Council (Audience Development & Advocacy Division) seminar at the end of 1997. He pointed out that the value of a web site is only as good as the currency of its information, and that the development of a complex web site is secondary to the development of an internal office information management system to keep the information up-to-date.

A web site can be a useful tool for:

- promotion
- direct marketing
- advertising
- links to other sites and reciprocal links

and needs to:

- offer up-to-date information - and regularly
- offer more than interactivity, and get the user to participate
- offer fluent and intuitive navigation

Robert Chirgwin, General Manager of QANTM in Darwin, says that organisations need to move out of the comfort zone of providing brochures as a primary promotional tool. He points out that it is important to make reference to a web site in all communication, including e-mail with a hot link back to the web site. It also needs to be seen by people within an organisation as a primary means of communication, not just as an adornment.

General principles of marketing apply to the web site as they do to anything else.

Getting people to visit your web site is like getting them to visit your gallery or theatre. People also need a reason to come back. If they bring along a friend, that's growing the audience.

By thinking the same way on the world wide web, you can do the same. Robert suggests sending postcards and getting viewers to send them to someone else.

Web design or authoring does not have to be expensive - you can log onto and learn the principles of web design. QANTM Youth Workers have been trained in Queensland to design web sites and are looking for more experiences.

Artsnet in Adelaide, South Australia, provides private conference facilities for networks on the Net. The conference facility is text-based - and therefore quick - and indexed by subject matter for easy reference and use. Currently, Directors Susie Harris and Phillip Bannigan have the Association of Performing Arts Centres (APACA); its state offshoot, South Australian Country Arts Trust (SACAT), and its four regional theatres; and the Australian Presenters' Group on the system.

A problem familiar to all arts workers - but exacerbated in the regions - is that of isolation. Distance, isolation within a community that may not have many cultural activities and lack of time make it hard to keep up with what other people are doing in the business.

APACA and its state and regional offshoots recognised the value of Artsnet early on. Managers and marketers use their password to log in and read comments on a tour about to reach their venue. The technical, marketing or contractual difficulties experienced thus far arm venue managers with the information necessary to handle any problems when it comes to their theatre.

"It improves the way people solve problems," Susie says. Phillip adds that new venue managers have found that by reading the archive they can quickly come up to speed with the major issues ahead.

The fact that it is entirely text-based means that it does not take up much space on a user's computer, is quick, can be used on all platforms and links in with existing e-mail suppliers - although Artsnet can also provide this facility.

Miles ahead had a quick look at the system while at SACAT, and questions being asked under the marketing section were mainly about subscription at that time. Theatres across the country were talking about different ways of packaging subscription across artforms, about starting up a senior citizens' series, views on pay-on-the-day payment plans (a lot of correspondence on this one!), lowering the entry point for subscription to four shows, and so on.

Phillip explains that if an interest group or network wishes to set up their conferencing facility, it usually needs a few "tribal elders" to get it going and accepted. The index also needs to be structured in a way that is appropriate for the business of a network, and when it first goes online, there should be a lot of activity.

Certainly, APACA members spoken to by *miles ahead* all say they consult the conference facility at least twice a day and find it an extremely useful way to solve problems and to extend their knowledge. The initial motivation for establishing the conference facility stemmed from the fact that the marketing materials provided by their touring companies often did not suit a regional context. By consulting each other on Artsnet, the results of campaigns can be tracked as a tour progresses, and then adapted as appropriate. This networking opportunity provides a way for like-minded businesses and artists to share information, cheaply and informatively, over large distances.

"IT IMPROVES THE WAY PEOPLE SOLVE PROBLEMS," SUSIE SAYS. PHILLIP ADDS THAT NEW VENUE MANAGERS HAVE FOUND THAT BY READING THE ARCHIVE THEY CAN QUICKLY COME UP TO SPEED WITH THE MAJOR ISSUES AHEAD.



Astroturf, Ian Haigh from Techné Exhibition
Imago Multimedia Centre and the Australian Film Commission



Invert, Lloyd Sharp from Techné Exhibition
Imago Multimedia Centre and the Australian Film Commission



papermachine, John Lycette from Techné Exhibition
Imago Multimedia Centre and the Australian Film Commission

growing audiences

Marketing the Arts, the Australia Council's research report, defines audience development as both building understanding and appreciation of an artform amongst existing audiences and potential audiences, and about increasing attendance or visitor numbers.

Marketing that builds on the relationship between an arts organisation and its audiences interprets and optimises opportunities for its programs by identifying target audiences and determining how to reach and motivate them to participate in experiences on offer, planning and coordinating communication through promotions and advertising, providing the means by which people can most benefit, and monitoring and evaluating the results.

As Dr Peter Steidl states in *Marketing Strategies for Arts Organisations* "some arts organisations simply hope that an audience might find out about their offerings, might sample them and might find them appealing. Other arts organisations are actively developing an audience. They develop programs that they hope will interest the public, inform and, if appropriate, educate the public and promote what they have to offer".

"However, being active does not necessarily mean being effective. An audience development program that is not well-targeted or does not relate to the potential audience will fail to generate audience support. Worse than the inactive approach, the arts organisation will have wasted valuable funds and time without any positive results."

***Marketing Strategies for Arts Organisations* maps audience development in relation to an organisation's target markets and the "instruments" that can be used to do this effectively:**

- communication
- product
- location or venue
- price
- service And it points out that one of the key issues that needs to be addressed in audience development is knowing who competitors are.

Collaborative opportunities also exist for building audiences and cutting costs, yet it is exceptional when arts organisations turn to one another to find ways to achieve similar goals. The competitor is not always another arts organisation. A combination of lateral thinking and cooperative spirit would go a long way towards vitalising interest in the arts. The fear of losing audiences to another arts organisation through joint subscriptions or other cross-promotional efforts can be offset by the economies of growing audiences through collaborative approaches.

"LOCAL FOCUS - GLOBAL VISION" IS DANCE NORTH'S MISSION, AND EMPHASISES A COMMITMENT TO ADDRESS ISSUES RELEVANT TO TOWNSVILLE AND THE REGION IN WHICH DANCE NORTH RESIDES. THE COMPANY SEEKS TO PROMOTE CONTEMPORARY DANCE THAT IS INNOVATIVE, ACCESSIBLE AND AT THE FOREFRONT OF EVOLVING GLOBAL SOCIAL ISSUES, TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURAL MOVEMENTS.

niche marketing for growth

Founded in 1969 by Ann Roberts, Dance North has become a central force in the cultural development of Townsville's community life. Each year, the company performs to around 17,000 people, including schools and one-off specials.

Joanne Keune, Business Manager of Dance North, cites the imminent opening of a purpose-built company venue as one of their most significant marketing opportunities. A secure base will enable the company to develop a consistent performance pattern.

Targeting markets

"Gone are the days when arts organisations can be everything to everyone. You have to decide where your growth is, what will support your artistic aims, take the risks and go for it. In this respect, the regions are the same as a big city - except perhaps the risks are a little greater," says Joanne.

"You have to be careful not to alienate too many people in the process . . . in smaller communities, networks are essential to your business, but these same efficacious networks can work against you if the word of mouth is bad. One bad school show, and all the teachers in the region will hear about it and you are into damage-limitation mode - and that's not a nice place to be."

Contemporary dance, be it in the city or the regions, has traditionally attracted the under 35s. This group is Dance North's key target market. According to the 1991 census, around 64,000 people fall into this age bracket in their community. Their product is also a good fit for the many young people who attend clubs and love the dance culture there. The money and energy spent in trying to convert middle-aged people with no previous interest in contemporary dance is considerable. Dance North

prefers to put its energy into extending the entertainment patterns of younger people.

Additionally, Dance North targets the indigenous communities, those who work in the CBD and primary and secondary school students

Schools

Joanne says "Each community is different. You need to understand that the experiences and values of Julia Creek (pop. 200) will be different from those of people in Cairns, which has a larger alternative culture. You must plan your programs, understanding the needs of each community. And, of course, a detailed understanding of curriculum needs is absolutely essential, and we work closely with Education Queensland to achieve this."

"For our education market, we have devised one show for primary schools and three shows - which are curriculum-based - for secondary schools. These are not lift-outs of the main adult program, but are specifically devised for that audience along with carefully produced teachers' resources. The most successful educational productions have been based on already created children's stories, *Ruby* by Alison Lester being an example. For children, it works so much better if they can study the notes and read the story beforehand. School shows often bring in the highest percent of income for our company."

"Our schools and education program has helped enormously and ten years down the track, we are definitely seeing results in the changing demographic mix in our audience."

Drowning in a Sea of Dreams- dancers: Sophie Bowen & Avril Huddy; choreographers: Graeme Watson & Julie-anne Long; photographer: Glenn Campbell, courtesy of The Townsville Bulletin.



photo: The Unbearable Suspense of Desire- dancers: Tim Kay, Martine Redman, Kay & Peter Furness; choreographer: Graeme Watson.



DESTINATION: **Townsville Qld**

COMPANY: **Dance North**



World Cafe - choreographer: Graeme Watson; dancers: Csaba Buday & Debra Clements; photographer: Ned Kelly.

Broken Places- choreographer: Cheryl Stock;
dancers: Csaba Buday & Lisa Wilson.



Youth

Dance North has a youth company called Extensions, the youth link to Dance North. "Each of these has ten friends, who has ten friends," says Joanne, "and it is an excellent link into the community for us. Extensions' members have access to discounted tickets for themselves, their family and friends. The more senior of these sometimes perform with the main company of seven dancers.

Also, Dance North has performed at the Playpen, Townsville's most popular dance club. This gives people a first hand experience of contemporary dance and their work.

General public

Dance North does not niche market the company out of existence!!! Around three times a year, they reach far and wide by doing a post office mailbox drop - it's much easier to get this kind of penetration in the regions.

Another example of reaching far and wide was the occasion when Dance North was paid to perform at the Cowboys League match - eight minutes of prime time Foxtel viewing nationwide. This was a fantastic opportunity to image the company and develop audiences - and the envy of many other companies who would like such "Pavarotti" status at their local league match.

"Subscription selling is on hold until we get our new theatre and . . . yes, a computerised ticketing office system! This will help in trapping names and addresses, tracking our campaign results . . . and much more!" says Joanne.

"DEVELOPING A YOUNGER, LESS CONSERVATIVE AUDIENCE WILL ALSO SUPPORT ARTISTIC GROWTH."

"OUR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION PROGRAM HAS HELPED ENORMOUSLY AND TEN YEARS DOWN THE TRACK, WE ARE DEFINITELY SEEING RESULTS IN THE CHANGING DEMOGRAPHIC MIX IN OUR AUDIENCE."

Niche marketing is more than ads and fliers

Targeting your niche market is much more than a few advertisements and fliers - it's about:

- the experience (it's party time from the moment audiences enter the foyer)
- the price (a range of prices appeal to all pockets)
- the performance times (lunchtime and early evening performances appeal to CBD workers)
- the language and the imagery you use (bold, active images - active, emotive words)
- the performance environment (performances in the local quarry attracted fantastic crowds)
- and, of course, the show! (In 1998, Dance North presents its first co-production with Mornington Islander Dancers)

"We are exploring all of the above," says Joanne. "We are looking forward to putting together a program to pull in those people we identify as Dance North audiences. Developing a younger, less conservative audience will also support artistic growth."

Touring

Touring is essential to Dance North's mission to serve the region. A residency format provides two separate schools shows held at the local theatre workshops and an evening program for the general public.

The company's commitment to the schools sector has generated revenue and built the audiences. "In many ways, it would be easier to do an Arts Council Tour and take our programs into the schools," comments Joanne, "but we see the value in having them come to the theatre, developing the theatre-going habit, and giving them incentives to return to the main shows in the evening".

"Come Back" vouchers

A "Come Back" voucher scheme has been very successful, but it doesn't develop audiences overnight. "It is just one of the seeds sown for educated audiences of the future.

"Come Back" vouchers are given to all attendees at a school or mainstage performance. These vouchers, when presented with a ticket stub, may be exchanged for a \$5 ticket for another performance of the same program. Joanne believes that "when you see a dance work a second time, you see it entirely differently . . . that's what I mean about developing educated dance audiences for the future".



"Extensions"- youth company of Dance North - Swan Lake-
dancer: Rachele Bliss: choreographer: Jane Pirani;
photographer: Chrissie McGuire.

Developing versatile education kits

The Dance North Study Kit: Who Creates the Dance? is an impressive teachers' resource kit designed for Years 11 and 12 that includes a 100 page, A4, perfect-bound book, a poster and video attractively packaged in a durable box. The kit was created by Ralph Buck, Senior Education Officer, Dance in Education Queensland, who in turn liaised with the Board of Secondary School Studies on curriculum needs. He assessed the curriculum requirements for all other states, so as to make the book useful across the country. The kit retails for \$75 and can be ordered from Goprint (fax 07 3246 3534). Dance North receives a 20% royalty on sales and Goprint (the Queensland Government's print arm) receives a 30% royalty to cover administration and handling costs.

Discussions started in 1992 and the kit was completed in 1997, costing a total of \$17,500 for the 500 packs (excluding wages). This includes the sales brochures and editing of the existing video material. A reference group was established of teachers in the field, university lecturers and policy advisors from within the department. Additionally, a draft of the kit was mailed to 20 different schools in Queensland and one school in Perth seeking feedback. The kit is now receiving rave reviews from users across the country.

BELLINGEN GLOBAL CARNIVAL IS AN ANNUAL WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL HELD IN OCTOBER, WHICH ATTRACTS 12,000 PEOPLE TO THE PRETTY INLAND VILLAGE OF BELLINGEN (POP. 2,600), SITUATED ON THE BELLINGER RIVER ABOUT MIDWAY BETWEEN NAMBUCCA HEADS AND COFFS HARBOUR.

DESTINATION: **Bellingen NSW**

COMPANY: **Bellingen Global Carnival**



getting started

The event

This major event grew out of the passion of Bryony Taylor and her musician partner John Richards for music influenced by traditions from around the world. For years, they had toured artists, finding suitable venues in their area, through their company Die Happy Productions.

A dream came true when funding was secured from the New South Wales Ministry for the Arts, Ethnic Affairs, Playing Australia and the International Year of Tolerance in 1995. Bryony said that they had been planning the Carnival since 1993, but were waiting until the infrastructure in Bellingen was developed sufficiently, and for a time when world music had the profile and recognition to support a big event.

For the third Global Carnival in 1997, they attracted 12,000 attendances, up significantly from the 8,000 achieved in the first year. The maximum audience the event could support is 20,000, without destroying its quality and atmosphere and driving the locals mad, Bryony explained.

One upset local threatened to let loose her weaning calves - at heel, but separated from their mothers - in the paddock neighbouring the showgrounds where the event is held. This caused a local uproar and front page stories documented the event's economic value to the traders and leaked the real possibility it might be moved to Byron Bay. "Bellingen is like many towns and having to move away from the traditional industries . . . so the community embraces the Global, as it's called around here. Traders report an increase in turnover ranging from 10% to 40% - depending on the size of business. The event is significant. The weaning calves incident was the best publicity we could have had, because it galvanised everyone into a position of real support."

The four core organisers, John Richards, Bryony Taylor, Lyn McCormic and Bill James, take a modest retainer, but forfeit this if they don't meet their budget estimates. (Incidentally, the budget allows for a \$15,000 provision to roll over to the next year to provide working capital.) Everyone else largely works for free. During festival week, there are 80 volunteers, and for the four month lead up to the Festival, there are around 12 volunteers. "Some work a day or two, others an afternoon a week." All artists are billeted by local residents. Bryony estimates the value of the labour and billeting is around \$75,000.

Currently, the festival turns over \$230,000, of which \$27,000 comes from government funding. Of this, \$10,000 is spent on marketing - in budgeting terms, around a dollar per paid attendance. "We want to reach a point where we are able to pay our volunteers something, to recognise their value and

professionalism. Also, this gives back some of this money to the local community. To achieve this goal, we need around 20,000 attendances. That is also as much as the event itself and the Bellingen infrastructure can accommodate. You have to be careful to grow at a rate that the infrastructure can cope with."

Bryony believes in the layering effect of marketing. Jaslyn Hall from Triple J has attended since the first festival, and, in 1997, recorded the mainstage events for later broadcast. Seth Jordan, the artistic advisor, is Station Manager of 2MCE in Bathurst and writes for *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *Rolling Stone* and *Rhythms* magazine. A 500-strong mailing list reaches Bryony's own list of artists, industry contacts, etc. A poster and postcard are widely distributed in the region. "No one thing creates the result - it all combines and adds up over time to sell and grow the event."


The advice

Bryony's advice to others wishing to set up a local festival:

- think nationally - you need to create an event of national significance to support your event and increase your marketing reach. ("Our whole shire only has a population of 11,600 - we need people to travel from far and wide to the event.")
- have the skills of marketing and publicity and practical know-how so that you can set up multiple stages, sound, lighting, etc., and keep the best artists wanting to come back
- get people of influence on your side
- develop great networks
- have the ability to delegate and motivate volunteers and the community
- raise start-up money
- have a detailed knowledge of the artform/s
- understand good timing
- know where you want to be - how big is right

"They say money follows a good idea. That's right. But the time has to be right too. The interest was there for world music when we started up the carnival. We waited for that moment."

“YOU WORK WITHIN YOUR COMMUNITY. A LIVELY EDUCATION/RECREATIONAL APPROACH IS THE ANSWER. BUT TO BE RESPONSIVE TO LOCAL ISSUES, YOU HAVE TO BE FLEXIBLE AND QUICK.”

DESTINATION: Tamworth NSW	
COMPANY: Tamworth City Art Gallery	

Coaster design by artist Reg Lynch



attracting first-time attendees through popular events

It's hard to avoid country music in a town (pop. 35,600) that is home to Australia's largest country music festival, which began in 1951 with just ten performers in a talent quest. Now the ten day event each year in January attracts visitors from all over the country. Tamworth boasts guitar-shaped swimming pools; the Hands of Fame (impressions of the hands of famous country music artists); the Winners' Walkway; the Australasian Hall of Renown; and the Folio of Fame in the Southgate Shopping Centre, a memorial to the great songwriters, including Slim Dusty.

Tamworth City Gallery decided to join them!

Michael Rolfe, former Gallery Director, decided the way to find new audiences for fine art was to present his region with the unexpected - humour - and in ways that linked with non-art related issues. Each year, the Tamworth City Gallery presents as an adjunct to the Country Music Festival an exhibition titled *It's a Guitar Shaped World*. Significant promotions include beer mats, t-shirts and posters. For the event, artists known and unknown from all over Australia submit artworks of objects that are guitar shaped. 1998 marks the fourth year of this exhibition.

The gallery also plays an active role in the Calvalcade, when at least 30,000 people line two to three kilometres of the main street - Peel Street - to see a procession of floats. "Many are pretty dire!" Michael says. "The gallery has worked with a variety of artists and young people for the past four years to create floats for the parade."

One week prior to the festival, the gallery coordinates an art camp Summer School with 50 to 60 secondary school aged children, conducted by five or six artists involved with *It's a Guitar Shaped World*. This self-funding event provides bursaries and scholarships for the six day intensive workshop that costs \$180.

"Responsive" is Michael's motto. "You work within your community. A lively education/recreational approach is the answer. But to be responsive to local issues, you have to be flexible and quick."

A great example of this is *Rugby League: It's Our Game*, an exhibition held during the bitter Rugby League/Super League War, which was a hot issue in Tamworth. "We took a position in the debate, supporting Rugby League and we hit the news bulletins and front pages with the exhibition." The exhibition included art photography and memorabilia of the Australian Rugby League Game. A local league hero opened the show and the public poured in the doors - a first-time opportunity for many to view the gallery's other exhibitions of contemporary art.

Another example of community link-ups was the gallery's exhibition, *The Perfect Panel*, where 20 panel beaters submitted doors and car bonnets. The exhibition was hung alongside a fine arts show. The panel beaters and their families and colleagues all came to the opening . . . and a whole new audience walked through the door.

being realistic

THE HUB OF KINGSTON (POP. 1,800) IS THE KINGSTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL, WHICH ENCOMPASSES ALL STUDENTS FROM YEAR ONE TO ADULT AND TERTIARY LEVEL AND HOUSES THE COMMUNITY LIBRARY. LOCAL INDUSTRIES ARE FISHING (THEIR LOBSTER IS UNIQUE), SHEEP FARMING AND AGRICULTURE.

Darryl Morley, President of Kingston Local Presenters and Deputy Principal of Kingston Community School, sees the success of his Presenters' Group as keeping realistic goals. "You need to know your market, be aware of competing influences, work within your funding and not be too grandiose in your plans or expectations. Success here means achieving results within the funds available and involving as wide a cross-section of the community over time as possible."

Since 1994, Kingston has presented *Wool Away, No Shame* and *Mad Wicked Folly* by Mainstreet (a regional theatre company based in Mount Gambier), *La Boheme* and *Carmen* by Co-Opera, *Mara; Shakespeare Without Tears*; exhibitions at the library; workshops; street parades; *Carols by Candlelight* . . . and much, much more. The "in-school" program often links with the public program, each supporting the other.

In a small community, people are busy, Darryl explains. Fiftieth birthdays, anniversaries, fundraising events for sporting facilities, the opening of the tennis season and the last three weeks of the final school term are dud times to put on a show. Every community has its movers and shakers who are involved in lots of different things and you need to involve them in your plans. "If they are behind a show, you'll get an audience. It's as simple as that."

The pub, with its wide cross-section of the community, is another major source of information and feedback.

Once a year, the community school closes and mums and dads and grandparents take courses in breadmaking, blacksmithing, etc. The stained windows in the library, for example, are the result of a community project under the guidance of an expert, and express the cultural icons of the South East.

"There's a real sense of camaraderie in a place like this. Everyone wants to make sure their kids have opportunities and will get behind projects that do this."

Darryl is putting in place a strategy that makes the presenters less dependent on the school, its resources and him. Any of the five-strong committee would be able to take over should he leave, he says, and the Presenters' Group members are encouraging organisations such as The Senior Citizens' Club, Golf and Tennis Clubs to also present shows and events by giving them advice and training. Kingston Local Presenters is now a member of the local Tourism and Development Board, so ensuring that culture takes a permanent place in the planning and development of the area.

“THERE’S A REAL SENSE OF CAMARADERIE IN A PLACE LIKE THIS. EVERYONE WANTS TO MAKE SURE THEIR KIDS HAVE OPPORTUNITIES AND WILL GET BEHIND PROJECTS THAT DO THIS.”

DESTINATION: Kingston SA	
COMPANY: Kingston Local Presenters & Kingston SE Community School	

LOCATED ON AN HISTORIC AVIATION SITE IN ALICE SPRINGS (POP. 25,000), THE ARALUEN CENTRE WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1984, AND OVER THE YEARS HAS BECOME A FOCAL POINT FOR CULTURAL LIFE, ATTRACTING 72,000 VISITORS IN 1997. PRESENTING DANCE, MUSIC, DRAMA, VISUAL ARTS AND CRAFT, ARALUEN HAS TAKEN AN APPROACH TO PROGRAMMING THAT GROWS AUDIENCES THROUGH A SELECTION OF PROGRAMS AND EXHIBITIONS FOR SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS IN THE REGION.

accessibility grows audiences

The Araluen Centre houses two public art galleries, a 500 seat theatre, artist's residence: The Mess House, meetings and functions rooms. Its five hectare site also incorporates the offices and studios of the Crafts Council of the Northern Territory (Alice Springs Division) and The Alice Springs Steiner School.


Home of the Albert Namatjira Gallery, which features a permanent collection of paintings by this famous Australian artist, Araluen also owns significant collections of art and craft, including collections presented to the people of Alice Springs by the Alice Springs Art Foundation and the central Australian Art Society. The Alice Craft Acquisition Collection, owned by the Crafts Council of NT (Alice Springs Division) is housed at Araluen.

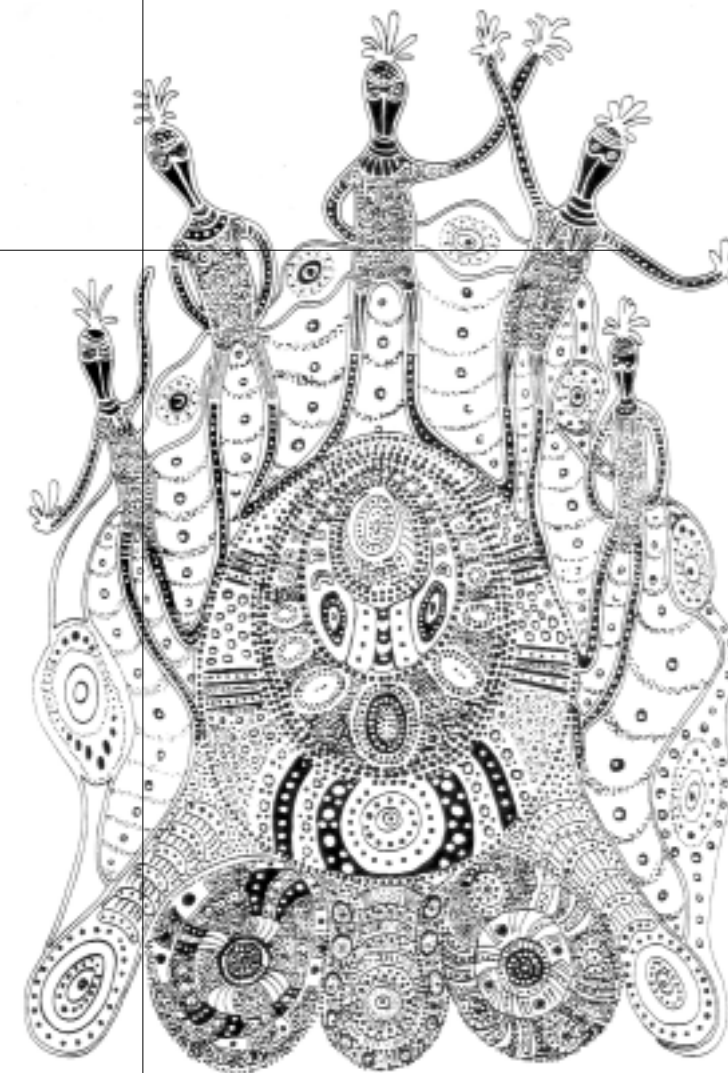
One of its most successful shows, *Desert Mob Art Show*, curated by the Araluen Centre, is unique in that it is the only exhibition in Australia that brings together over 25 Central Australian Aboriginal community-based centres from the Northern Territory, South Australia and Western Australia. Initiated by Araluen, it showcases emerging groups beside established organisations with international reputations, and sells contemporary Aboriginal art. Araluen Curator, Alison French, says, "word has spread about the uniqueness of this exhibition and audiences come from all over Australia - the *Desert Mob Art Show* has become something special for Araluen and the people of Central Australia".

In addition to tourists, Araluen draws its audience from a massive area with a scattered and sparse population of about 30,000. A venue for many regional groups as well as touring exhibitions, it has been successful in targeting a whole range of niche markets and responding to their differing needs.

Witchetty's, originally the centre's restaurant, has been transformed into a highly successful community access space. Araluen's research of potential users indicated a demand for a facility that the town was not providing. In less than a year, the community has come to regard it as their space, and it is constantly booked. As a performance venue, Witchetty's can flexibly accommodate 220 and is now home to many local music groups, and is used for a range of events including book launches, conferences, funerals, wedding parties, dance parties, senior citizens' events and concerts.

A change in Araluen's policy of access, as highlighted by Director David Whitney, is that, from experience, "if you open the one facility to the general public, and it is always open, you don't actually necessarily really reach the widest number of the public. If you allow particular sectors of the community to book it, then in fact your total reach is vastly extended. Witchetty's is now used approximately four times a week attracting new audiences and community groups".

DESTINATION: Alice Springs NT	
COMPANY: The Araluen Centre	



'Dancing Women' Kathleen Wallace - Desert Mob Art Show

"WORD HAS SPREAD ABOUT THE UNIQUENESS OF THIS EXHIBITION AND AUDIENCES COME FROM ALL OVER AUSTRALIA - THE DESERT MOB ART SHOW HAS BECOME SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR ARALUEN AND THE PEOPLE OF CENTRAL AUSTRALIA".

Araluen takes an all-round approach to its community relations and making connections. To connect the community with its collection, it has developed a number of innovative exhibitions, such as *Favourites and Phobias* - where high-profile members of the community select works from the collection. Local artists also have been asked to make a selection and to create a painting in response to the collection. An exhibition showcasing local private collections in association with the collectors' personal selections from the Araluen Collection is also planned.

The Alice Springs Town Council Araluen Community Access Development Grant, which provides a guarantee against loss, is an important means by which local community artists and groups hire the facilities. Araluen has also developed a unique scheme to ensure that local groups can afford to exhibit, perform and/or otherwise access the centre.

The Araluen Centre draws on approximately 250 members of "user groups" to work as gallery attendants and theatre ushers. They are trained and paid; however, their salary is credited against the hire fee charged to their group. Their familiarity with Araluen from their training, which covers management, technical and philosophical detail, has led to their ongoing support and interest in the centre's programs.

Marketing a multi-functional venue successfully means having a strong awareness of different products and how they relate to potential user groups.

Venues can grow and change as their community develops; they can also use their own programs to add value to other issues and activities that are relevant to a community or region.

Araluen's flexible, accessible approach to its venue has led to successful project partnerships, such as annual exhibitions with many other arts organisations, including the Crafts Council of NT (Alice Springs), Watch this Space, Desert, Central Australian Art Society, Alice Springs Art Foundation and the Alice Springs Quilting Club.