

The Arts in Western Sydney



2006 Progress Report on the NSW Ministry for the Arts
Western Sydney Arts Strategy

CONTACT INFORMATION

>>
Viet Food Village,
Casula Powerhouse
Arts Centre.



FOREWORD

>>
Foyer Gallery,
Campbelltown Arts
Centre, photo
Tanner Architects.



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HOURS OF BUSINESS

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Monday to Friday

February 2006

FRONT COVER (LEFT TO RIGHT): Gugu dance group from southern Sudan, African Festival of Cultures, organised by Bankstown Youth Development Service, photo Stuart Slough; *Hospital Beds* by Susan Milne and Greg Stonehouse, Hawkesbury Regional Gallery, photo Greg Stonehouse; Fling Theatre presented by Western Sydney Dance Action at Parramatta Riverside Theatres, photo Paul Hopper; *india@oz.sangam*, Urban Theatre Projects at Parramatta Riverside Theatres, photo Heidrun Löhr.

BACK COVER (LEFT TO RIGHT): Campbelltown Arts Centre; Jenny Siu Pham, *Culture and Cultivation: Backyards in Fairfield* exhibition, Fairfield City Museum & Gallery, photo Danny Huynh; *Making Sugar* exhibition, Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest, photo Victoria Harbutt; MC Trey, Gorjess, MC Kraz, MC Earthquake, MC Karma, L. Breeza, Suburban Sista Soundz, Information & Cultural Exchange (ICE), photo ICE.

In November 1999 the Ministry for the Arts launched its Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney. This document summarises some key achievements of the strategy to date, reaffirms the Government's commitment to the original goals of the strategy, and signposts the way forward for the strategy's continuing implementation.

The Western Sydney Arts Strategy is part of a broader Government commitment to strategic initiatives for the region. These measures have contributed significantly to an increasing regional sense of place, identity and greater civic pride and participation, as well as providing pathways for employment within cultural industries. The Strategy for the Arts in Western Sydney is not concerned solely with arts development. It extends to broader capacities for local cultural development, infrastructure planning, community participation, integrated policy and planning, and partnerships for sustainable development.

The strategy has provided an effective framework for enhancing cooperation and developing a strong culture of collaboration within Western Sydney. The State Government's substantial investment in Western Sydney has contributed to redressing historical imbalances between the West and 'the rest' and has created a foundation for continued development.

We would like to thank local government across Western Sydney who have been major partners in the successful implementation of the strategy. We would like to gratefully acknowledge the work of Dr Elaine Lally who was commissioned by the NSW Ministry for the Arts to evaluate the first four years of the strategy. Her findings have provided a valuable estimation of the strategy and its impact. Most importantly we offer a round of applause to all the artists and artworkers whose strong commitment to producing and presenting high quality work in partnership with communities has seen enthusiastic audiences embrace the arts in Western Sydney.

Bob Debus
Attorney General
Minister for the Environment
Minister for the Arts

Diane Beamer
Minister for Western Sydney
Minister for Fair Trading
Minister Assisting the Minister for Commerce

OVERVIEW

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Fast Cars and Tractor Engines, a co-production between Urban Theatre Projects and Bankstown Youth Development Service, photo Amanda James Photographic Services.



«
Time and Love: The Handcrafted Bedroom exhibition, Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest, photo Adam Hollingworth.

»
 Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, photo Tyrone Branigan.



Since the Government launched the Western Sydney Arts Strategy there has been a significantly and impressively greater commitment from local government in this region for arts funding. A joint investment in cultural infrastructure has fostered the growth of increasingly robust arts organisations of local, state and national significance, an increased level of confidence within the arts sector of the region, and increased regional co-operation. With the assistance of the strategy many of the arts activities in Western Sydney offer models and benefits for the whole state.

The 14 constituent local government areas are Auburn, Bankstown, Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Camden, Campbelltown, Fairfield, Hawkesbury, Holroyd, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith, and Wollondilly.

It is important to note the demographics of greater Western Sydney. These factors have provided a critical context for the formulation and implementation of this strategy.

- At the 2001 Census, 1.673 million people lived in the Greater Western Sydney

region, representing 42% of the population of Sydney, and 27% of the population of the state.

- Western Sydney has the fastest growing population in the state, with the third largest economy in Australia.
- Western Sydney is home to the largest urban Aboriginal population in Australia and the cultural diversity of the region is well documented.
- Population projections anticipate that this high rate of growth will be sustained until at least 2019–20. An increase from the 2001 population of around 30%, to 2.18 million – an additional half a million people – is expected over this timeframe¹.

A number of key organisations have developed in size, diversity of programming and audiences, and in the quality of their operations and outputs since the strategy commenced, including the Blacktown Arts Centre, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Penrith Regional Gallery and The Lewers Bequest and the Parramatta Riverside Theatres.

All originally established by local government, the State Government's investment in project funding and capital infrastructure has enabled these organisations to grow beyond a local provider role.

All spheres of government must now work together to ensure the sustainability of these facilities.

Other organisations have also demonstrated significant development, most notably Information and Cultural Exchange, Western Sydney Dance Action and Urban Theatre Projects.

Some key indicators of significant progress in capacity building for cultural development include:

- Major development of cultural infrastructure;
- Growth of regional and sub-regional organisations supporting cultural development;

- Increased investment in arts and cultural activity by local government;
- Increasing success for the region's artists and organisations in attracting funding from the Ministry's other funding programs and other funding agencies;
- Establishment of a leadership role for the region in cultural planning;
- An increasing level of arts activity, resulting in enhanced opportunities for artists and audiences;
- Increasing numbers of Western Sydney residents employed in cultural industries and participating as audiences;
- *Increased recognition of the region and its unique cultural values and expression.*

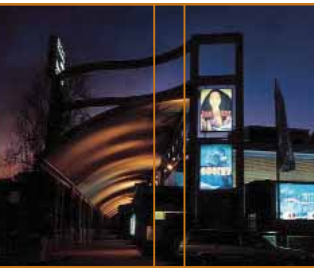
¹ Gleeson, B. Holloway, D. and Randolph, B. Western Sydney Social Profile (Part A) November 2002, Urban Frontiers Program, University of Western Sydney, (WSROC, Blacktown) for the Greater Western Sydney Regional Planning and Management Framework. The authors source the statistical sources as ABS, CDATA91, CDATA96 and 2001 Census Basics.



»
 Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest, photo Ian Hobbs.

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 Blacktown Arts Centre (entrance), photo Blacktown Arts Centre.





»»
NOMiSe, Aaron Fa'Aoso and Leo Tanoi in *Back Home*, Urban Theatre Projects, photo Heidrun Löhr.

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Parramatta Riverside Theatres, photo Riverside Theatres.



««
Volunteer Pauline Zilko, Hawkesbury Regional Museum, photo Kathleen von Witt.

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DJ Nick Toth, MC Trey and Maya Jupiter at the launch of the SWITCH Multimedia and Digital Arts Access Centre, Information & Cultural Exchange (ICE), photo ICE.



Up to July 2005 the following funds have been disbursed under the Western Sydney Program:

- \$14.9m under the Major Capital Infrastructure Package announced by the NSW Government in February 2002 (matched by local government);
- 18 fellowships totalling \$384,613 under the Western Sydney Artists' Fellowships Program;
- \$2,098,111 under the Western Sydney Local Government Arts Incentive Fund;
- \$2,623,551 under the Western Sydney Strategic Initiatives Program;
- \$1,081,245 under the Western Sydney Capital Infrastructure Program.

Over the last five years the impact of the strategy has been felt among the 14 local government areas through greater

co-operation, the development of partnerships, and the emergence of a strong regional identity.

Western Sydney has become an incubator for innovative strategies – not only in terms of policy initiatives that have piloted 'whole-of-government' and partnership strategies, but also in arts practice.

Cutting edge, hybrid and innovative artistic and cultural practice has featured across a range of artforms, and 'community cultural development' has been reinvented in 21st century terms.

The Ministry's Cultural Planning Guidelines for local government authorities, released in July 2004, are part of a broader initiative to embed cultural development processes into the objectives and operations of Government agencies so that a whole-of-government approach to cultural development can be achieved. All Western

Sydney Councils have, or are committed to developing local cultural plans.

The Western Sydney Arts Strategy has demonstrated the contribution the arts can make in traditionally non-arts related social policy areas through cross-agency projects and across the State. Major cultural projects have been delivered across the region in partnership with the health, education, environment and urban planning sectors.

In addition to continuing to implement the goals of the original strategy, the Ministry will continue to focus on building regional capacity by supporting:

- Regional infrastructure;
- Artist development;
- An Indigenous arts development strategy;
- Industry development;
- The creation of arts development indicators;
- Cross-government and State/ Federal Government funding partnerships.

Cultural industry development for Western Sydney should not simply attempt to duplicate models from elsewhere, but should align with the region's distinctive

mix of cultural diversity, industrious energy and extraordinary growth.

Cultural industry development for Western Sydney needs its own unique character integrating the cultural economy of the region while also realising the strong export potential for distinctive cultural products and services nationally and internationally.

There is great potential for businesses and arts organisations in Western Sydney to work together to achieve mutual benefit, to build on a growing interest within business communities in creativity as a driver of innovation.

In the past there has been a tendency for the West to orient itself towards the CBD for its cultural consumption. Important shifts are now happening to change the 'centre-periphery' perception.

The recently opened M7 'Orbital' road has already begun to transform the travel topology of Western Sydney by linking Blacktown with Bankstown via Fairfield and Liverpool, providing a symbolically important north-south corridor. Developing major centres of cultural activity in Western Sydney aligns with the Centres Policy framework of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources' 2005 Metropolitan



»»
Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre (interior), photo Tyrone Branigan.

««
Missing Spain by Dani Marti, installation image, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre.





« Cabramatta Story, Powerhouse Youth Theatre.



» Fairfield School of Arts, photo Fairfield City Council.

GOAL 1

To encourage arts and cultural activity that is locally determined and helps communities to grow



« SWITCH Multimedia and Digital Arts Access Centre, Information & Cultural Exchange (ICE), photo ICE.

Strategy. Recognised cultural precincts or 'hubs' can generate a critical mass of activity in one location, and attract audiences, visitors and workers to a variety of venues, cultural facilities and arts and creative industries incubator infrastructure.

The legacy of under-development and the rapidity of new urban development is being addressed through capacity building and investment in cultural infrastructure by the State Government.

The multi-disciplinary and place-based approach that the Western Sydney Arts Strategy has demonstrated, and that continues to underpin it, provides a valuable model for other regions with a need for integrated cultural development.

This approach allows for areas of need that fall between the existing programs to be identified, opportunities for cooperation and resource sharing to be exploited, and strategic interventions to be made that contribute significantly to cultural development.

» Achievements

The Ministry for the Arts released Cultural Planning Guidelines in 2004. Western Sydney has been at the forefront of cultural planning within the State.

The Ministry for the Arts established a Western Sydney Local Government Arts Incentive Fund in 2001 to broaden partnerships with local Councils. Providing dollar-for-dollar matched funding (cash and in-kind), the Fund has encouraged local Councils to invest in the development and promotion of the arts in their areas. Up to July 2005, the Fund has disbursed a total of \$2,098,111 to local Councils in greater Western Sydney. The Western Sydney Local Government Arts Incentive Fund has also provided a strong impetus for cultural planning within the region.

NSW Heritage Office completed a survey of heritage in Western Sydney. The resulting report provided a valuable resource for the future management of Western Sydney's cultural heritage.

Engaging the corporate sector in broad cultural development, including support for the arts, is still a high priority for the region. Artswest is commencing work in this field, following funding for a position at the organisation.

» The Future

The Western Sydney Local Government Arts Incentive Fund will be continued, prioritising applications which address identified areas of ongoing need.

Opportunities will be provided for Councils with stable and well developed programs and facilities, to which they have made a significant and sustained financial commitment, to negotiate annual or triennial whole of Council funding agreements. To this end, as part of the Third Cultural Accord with Local Government, a pilot program offering one consolidated grant across all Ministry programs will be trialled with two Western Sydney Councils. In the future the option to negotiate Tripartite funding with the Federal Government for organisations already receiving significant Federal funding will be explored.



« Parramatta Riverside Theatres, photo Riverside Theatres.

» Fast Cars and Tractor Engines, a co-production between Urban Theatre Projects and Bankstown Youth Development Service, photo Amanda James Photographic Services.



GOAL 2

To assist artists in Western Sydney to achieve their full potential

»
Q Theatre, Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, photo Tyrone Branigan.



GOAL 3

To increase participation in the arts by the people of Western Sydney



<<
Mechanix, Urban Theatre Projects, photo Heidrun Löhr.

»
Blacktown Arts Centre, photo Blacktown Arts Centre.



› Achievements

The Ministry for the Arts Western Sydney Artists' Fellowship was created to support the development of new work by Western Sydney artists. Grants of between \$5,000 and \$25,000 were offered under the program. Priority has been given to visionary or ambitious activities that have shown the potential to offer long-term cultural development in the region. Between 2001 and 2005 a total of \$384,613 has been disbursed through the Artists' Fellowship Program. In total 18 fellowships have been awarded at an average of \$21,000 each.

A number of flexible multi-purpose spaces across Western Sydney have been enhanced through the Government's 2002 Major Capital Infrastructure Package providing a range of improved facilities to support artists in the region. These include Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre in Penrith, Blacktown Arts Centre, Campbelltown Arts Centre and Fairfield School of Arts. Redevelopments in Bankstown, the Hawkesbury and Liverpool are in process, and the Penrith Regional Gallery and The Lewers Bequest is due for completion in June. An artist residency program will soon commence at Margaret Farm near Penrith.

Funding has been provided for two Indigenous contemporary art curators, one at Campbelltown Arts Centre and the other at Penrith Regional Gallery and The Lewers Bequest.

› The Future

The Ministry will formulate an Indigenous Arts Development Strategy for Western Sydney. It will incorporate an audit of Indigenous arts activity, existing and potential organisational capacity and resources, and provide detailed recommendations for action. The strategy will form a key part of the Ministry's overall strategy for Indigenous arts development across the State.

Support for venues to create opportunities for emerging and disadvantaged artists (including those with overseas professional careers but emergent in Australia) in the region will be given increased emphasis in the Ministry's funding and advisory programs.

The Ministry will encourage opportunities for the development of low cost accessible spaces for artists. At present the Ministry is working with Parramatta Council to source low cost studio spaces.

The Western Sydney Artists Fellowship will focus on particular artforms from year to year, commencing with Literature and Music in 2007. The Ministry will investigate a means by which Western Sydney Artists Fellowship recipients can be promoted, and seek the views of all fellowship applicants on the ongoing needs of artists in the region.

› Achievements

Through the Western Sydney Arts Strategy the landscape of the arts in Western Sydney has been reconfigured. The investment made by local Councils in cultural life has increased dramatically and has been a vital ingredient in the development of Western Sydney arts infrastructure. Organisations and individuals previously at a disadvantage securing funds have had access to support through the grants programs attached to the strategy.

Over the period of the implementation of the strategy the State cultural institutions and festivals have increasingly undertaken activities within the region, generally in collaboration with Western Sydney cultural facilities and organisations. Entrepreneurial Western Sydney organisations are developing partnerships with Sydney CBD based organisations, and some CBD organisations are developing strategies to extend their reach to Western Sydney.

The strategy has enabled key Western Sydney cultural organisations to develop both national and international partnerships to produce contemporary cultural projects that have resonance with their communities. These investments have increased access to high quality professional art activity for audiences in the region.

A Western Sydney Audience Development Strategy was commissioned by the Ministry for the Arts in partnership with the Australia Council for the Arts.

› The Future

The NSW Government has allocated \$1.9m for the period 2003 – 2007 to implement an arts in education strategy (ConnectEd Arts) across the State. Specific Western Sydney initiatives will be developed as part of this program. Western Sydney schools in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage will be given priority as will the involvement of Western Sydney artists and arts organisations.

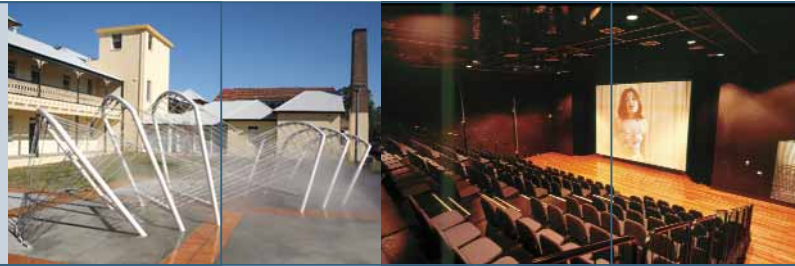
The Ministry will investigate the establishment of outreach positions or programs based in the major arts organisations (Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre/Penrith Regional Gallery and The Lewers Bequest, Blacktown Arts Centre, Parramatta Riverside Theatres) to address the developmental needs of emerging and disadvantaged artists.

Options for implementing some of the recommendations in the Western Sydney Audience Development Strategy, involving other partners such as the Australia Council for the Arts, will be explored.

GOAL 4

To support and nurture the arts industry in Western Sydney

>>
Hospital Beds by Susan Milne and Greg Stonehouse, Hawkesbury Regional Gallery, photo Greg Stonehouse.



<<
Performance Studio, Campbelltown Arts Centre, photo Tanner Architects

>>
Fling Theatre presented by Western Sydney Dance Action at Parramatta Riverside Theatres, photo Paul Hopper.



› Achievements

A major capital infrastructure package of \$14.9 million was announced in 2002 enabling the most substantial advances in physical infrastructure for the arts in Western Sydney on record. This was accompanied by specific provisions for operational funding over three years for some facilities. Local government provided matching funding for the capital works.

The major capital infrastructure package has arguably represented the most important and strategic intervention by the State Government in Western Sydney. The following works have been completed or are in process:

- Campbelltown Arts Centre – opened in June 2005. The new \$10 million facility is a centrepiece for contemporary multidisciplinary arts in Sydney's South West. The NSW Government contributed \$3.32 million to the centre for a 180 seat performance studio, rehearsal and workshop spaces, café and gallery space.
- Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre – a \$6.4 million State Government (\$1.9 million Ministry for the Arts, \$4.5 million Department of Education) grant has doubled the size of this centre and provided a new home for the Railway Street Theatre Company. The extensions consist of a new 380 seat theatre (to be named the Q Theatre), 23 music studios (previously 9), two recital rooms and two orchestral rooms, box office, administration area, foyers, restrooms and bar. The centre was opened in September 2005.
- Blacktown Arts Centre – the NSW Government contributed \$700,000 to convert a former Anglican church into an impressive contemporary multi-arts space. It has offered local and regional artists, including those from new migrant communities, the opportunity to promote and display their professional skills.
- Parramatta Riverside Theatres – the NSW Government provided \$1.8 million for an improved foyer, entrance and courtyard, new lighting and sound equipment. The works were completed in 2004 and the enhanced courtyard area has provided a new outdoor performance area. Riverside is now a regular part of the Sydney Festival program and has its own dynamic program.
- Penrith Regional Gallery and The Lewers Bequest – \$1.65 million grant for work to commence this year on a new gallery, café, research library and archive.
- Bankstown City Council – new accommodation is being provided for three arts organisations - the Bankstown Arts Hub: Urban Theatre Projects, Bankstown Youth Development Service and Citymoom Youth Theatre. The NSW Government is working with the Bankstown City Council to finalise the location for the new centre, being funded with a grant of \$1.5 million.

- Hawkesbury Regional Museum – the NSW Government has provided \$1.5 million for the construction and fit-out of a new regional museum at Windsor. The discovery of Aboriginal artifacts on the proposed Baker Street site has delayed construction of the new museum which will join the original museum via a landscaped courtyard.
- Liverpool PCYC – funds have been provided for a band room, DJ booth and a music recording studio to provide young people of the region with a professional recording centre. This will help develop employment skills, with training programs to teach young people about producing and recording music.
- Fairfield School of Arts – \$60,000 was granted to Fairfield City Council towards building improvements enabling the relocation of the Powerhouse Youth Theatre to the space.
- Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre – a joint initiative with the Liverpool City Council, the NSW Government is investing \$7.2 million towards a major refurbishment of the centre. Work due for completion in 2007.

Up to July 2005 the Western Sydney Capital Infrastructure Program, a separate ongoing annual program, has disbursed more than \$1 million to local government and non-government organisations (NGOs). A key outcome under this program is establishment of the SWITCH Multimedia and Digital Arts

Access Centre at Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE) which opened in February 2005. SWITCH offers a space where communities and artists can make digital sound and music, web and graphic design and screen-based arts.

› The Future

The Ministry for the Arts will examine issues affecting creative industry development in Western Sydney and options for broader based financial support for creative initiatives.

The Ministry for the Arts will work with Artswest and the Australian Business Arts Foundation to actively support activities within the region to encourage engagement between the arts and commercial sectors.

The Ministry for the Arts will encourage regional artform development strategies in literature, public art and music.

The Ministry will maintain its close relationship to Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC), with a future focus on implementing the arts components of WSROC's Regional Cultural Strategy.

The Ministry will give priority to Western Sydney NGOs which demonstrate outstanding leadership in arts development for the region and the State.

The Ministry for the Arts will commission the formulation of arts development indicators through a pilot program involving key Western Sydney organisations.

GOAL 5

To encourage regional cultural development



>> *Explorations of Landscape* exhibition, artwork by Glenda Ewin (background) and Gulsum Yilmaz Tuncer (foreground), Blacktown Arts Centre, photo Blacktown Arts Centre.

>> Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre (interior), photo Tyrone Branigan.



<< *Metaball* by James Angus, 2000, leather (courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney), Campbelltown Arts Centre launch exhibition *C'town bling*, photo Ian Hobbs.

>> Ghana Association Children's Cultural group, African Festival of Cultures, organised by Bankstown Youth Development Service, photo Stuart Slough.



› Achievements

The Ministry for the Arts' Program Manager for Western Sydney liaised extensively with a broad range of agencies and clients in Western Sydney throughout the implementation of the strategy. The role entailed acting as a broker to facilitate development of projects; participating in a number of arts advisory committees in Western Sydney; assisting with recruitment of positions; implementing strategic initiatives; and encouraging regional and sub-regional cooperation.

The Ministry funded WSROC for the management and implementation of its Regional Cultural Strategy released in March 2005. Regular meetings of local government cultural planners have occurred through WSROC's Regional Cultural Planning Coordination Project and the Local Government Association and Shires Association. The Ministry is represented on the steering committee for the WSROC project, and attends meetings convened by the Associations.

The Second Cultural Accord between the Ministry for the Arts and the Local Government Association and Shires Association of NSW was signed by the then Premier and Minister for the Arts and the Presidents of the Local Government Association of NSW and of the Shires Association of NSW in 2002, to 2005. The second Accord gave particular priority to Western Sydney.

The Western Sydney Arts Strategy recommended that Ministry for the Arts include more people from Western Sydney on its policy and funding advisory committees and on the boards and trusts of the arts portfolio. The appointment of Western Sydney representatives on artform committees has proved successful to date. Western Sydney representatives will continue to be appointed to artform committees.

› The Future

The Third Cultural Accord covers the 2006-2008 triennium and will maintain and further develop the working partnership between State and Local Government. It aligns with both the Ministry and the Associations' strategic plans. This will enable both organisations to achieve their objectives in partnership. The Third Cultural Accord recognises the significant commitment both Local and State Government has towards cultural development. The following principles underpin this commitment:

- Local and State Government are complementary partners in the development of arts and culture at a local level and that Local Government has primary responsibility for the planning, development and operation of cultural facilities at the local level.

- Local and regional cultural planning is integral to the establishment of shared priorities for governments and communities, and for the effective integration of State Government support for cultural activity at the community level.
- Local and State Governments continue their commitment to the development of contemporary Indigenous culture.
- Local and State Government will advocate for all spheres of government to work together to develop and provide up-to-date, easy to use and accessible public library and information services for their communities.

The Ministry and the Associations will work together on a number of initiatives designed to further these principles.

A Cultural Development Standing Committee with representatives from both the Associations and the NSW Ministry for the Arts will oversee the implementation of the Third Accord.

The Ministry for the Arts will support Community Cultural Development NSW (CCDNSW) and WSROC to discuss with representatives from local government, cultural institutions and arts officers, areas of ongoing need in relation to cultural development and to identify potential strategies to address these issues.

The Ministry will work with key organisations in Western Sydney to investigate more effective ways to offer support to culturally and linguistically diverse artists.

