



Southern Grampians and Glenelg Primary Care Partnership

Community Arts Liaison Project; Southern Grampians

Community Arts Mapping Report

Elise Armitage
Community Arts Liaison Officer

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1. Background

1.1 Introduction

The Southern Grampians and Glenelg Primary Care Partnership received funding from Arts Victoria to conduct a two year Community Arts Liaison Project to enhance the development of community arts in the Southern Grampians Shire.

The aim of this role is to facilitate a partnership between local artists, non-arts organisations and the community in order to strengthen local community arts. A key outcome of the project is the promotion of the arts for enhancing the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our community.

The first phase of the Community Arts Liaison project was to conduct a mapping survey of current activities and support needs.

1.2 Purpose of Mapping

The Community Arts Mapping initiative aimed to identify the:

- i) current arts activities in the Shire and relevant activities beyond the Shire;
- ii) needs and interests of local artists; and
- iii) level of interest of local businesses and non-arts organisations.

1.3 Methodology

i) About the participants

- Over 100 people were interviewed from across the Shire, including at Balmoral, Cavendish, Dunkeld, Penshurst, Branxholme, Coleraine and Hamilton. This has included approximately 80 practising artists.
- The mapping was conducted over three months between October 2007 and January 2008.
- Participants were interviewed either in person or via telephone. The majority of interviews were conducted face to face.
- A range of artists were interviewed, including visual and performing artists. Representatives from key groups were also interviewed, including from local festival committees.
- A number of non-arts organisations were interviewed, including small businesses, large corporations, health and community services, state and local government.

ii) Information gathered

The following information was gathered from participants:

- their interest in the arts and arts vision for the Shire
- their current activities/initiatives regarding the arts
- their level of skills and knowledge
- professional development or other support needs
- what they see as priority issues for arts development in the Shire
- their interest in sharing their knowledge and skills with other artists or the community
- their interest in using arts to assist their core business (for non-arts organisations)

2. Results

The following summarises the key themes regarding issues and needs identified by the mapping process.

i) Training & Professional Development:

- Quality of local arts needs to be enhanced and promoted
- Access to professional development including marketing skills – particularly for emerging artists
- Art Therapy training (from artist and organisation perspective)

ii) Communication:

- Increased awareness and access to avenues of funding.
- Establishment of greater networks between arts groups and individuals
- Access to information on arts events and general groups needs strengthening.

iii) Exhibition Space/Opportunities:

- More community exhibition opportunities and spaces.
- Artists would like greater opportunities to sell their visual art work
- Increased general public involvement in art culture, ie. visibility on streets.

iv) Other:

- Access to arts in smaller towns is difficult.
- Youth involvement in Arts - encouragement is needed, as well as financial help.
- The need to enhance the sustainability of Arts
- Cost of running arts programs can be prohibitive
- Increased shire support wanted, in forms of advertising, funding
- Increased number of festivals
- Inclusion of all sectors of society.
- Creation of a strategy for an arts industry.

3. Addressing the Priorities

3.1 Current Initiatives

The following actions have been taken by the PCP in response to the needs identified in the Mapping initiative:

i) Exhibition Space:

- Options for community exhibition space are being explored with local businesses

ii) Communication:

- A monthly online bulletin “ARTS News’ was commenced in February 2008
- Information on funding, professional development and other opportunities will be circulated via “ARTS News”
- Progress towards forming a Southern Grampians Arts Network’ has been made with the first meeting to be held on 17 March to be Chaired by Councillor Marcus Rentsch, Mayor
- Involvement of businesses who have expressed an interest in the arts have been contacted.
- Community Arts Liaison Officer is providing support for the festivals within the shire which are currently operating.

3.2 Future Initiatives:

It is envisaged that the Arts Network will provide a focus for the development of an Action Plan to address the priorities identified within the Mapping initiative.

This will initially focus on securing exhibition space for community arts; supporting enhanced communication strategies and developing a strategy for professional development.

The Arts Network will also be encouraged to explore ways to bring arts to smaller towns; to engage youth in the arts through more contemporary art forms and to explore the development of public art pieces.

4. Conclusion

The PCP’s Arts Mapping initiative has interviewed over 100 artists and interested organisations. It has identified the needs of artists; interested organisations and key contacts within the shire. The mapping has identified key priorities to address, including the need for exhibition space for community arts; training and professional development opportunities and enhanced communication and information distribution. The PCP will work with the Project Advisory Committee and Arts Network to explore mechanisms for addressing these priority needs.