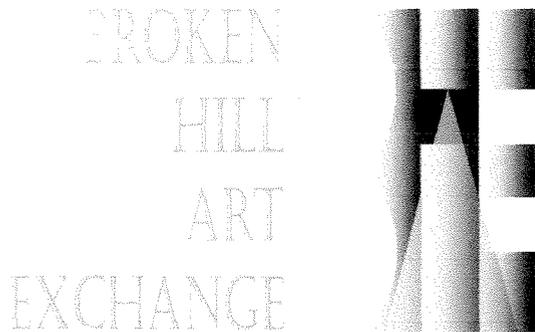


Submission
No 70

INQUIRY INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF ARTS AND
CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE OUTSIDE THE SYDNEY
CBD

Organisation: Broken Hill Art Exchange
Name: Ms Susan Thomas and Sheridan Williams
Position: I.C Media Lab/ Res Manager and IT Manager
Telephone: 08 8088 3171
Date Received: 10/09/2008

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Broken Hill Art Exchange Inc,
P.O. Box 1083
Broken Hill NSW
Australia 2880

PH: 08 80883171
ABN: 33 892 538 379

www.brokenhillartexchange.org.au
info@brokenhillartexchange.org.au

The Committee Manager
Public Works Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

29th August 2008

Dear Ms Watson,

I am writing to you in regards to the enquiry into the development of the arts and cultural plan for NSW. My experience in this field is through the Broken Hill Art Exchange (BHAЕ), a volunteer based art and community cultural development organisation. The aim of Broken Hill Art Exchange Inc is to:

- promote and support artists and the progress of art
- Increase awareness, funding and creating opportunities for the community to participate in the creative arts and culture in far western regional NSW
- Develop projects between local and visiting artists and create partnerships and linkages between the community, educators and local businesses
- increase educational, experiential and professional development opportunities across all arts disciplines and practices

The organisation's concept of exchange operates on multiple levels, between different art practices, industries, communities, and the exchange of skills, knowledge and resources. Currently the main

focus is on developing an inter-disciplinary precinct that supports a cross disciplinary approach to art and sustainable environmental practices to develop in Broken Hill.. We are also expanding links with several universities in NSW, as well as community stakeholders such as the Broken Hill City Council, Maari Ma (health), mining, employment groups and industries/businesses. Our facilities include an Information Communications Media Lab/residency, a recording studio and an administration office.

Being a not for profit volunteer organisation, BHAЕ relies on community good will, engagement, donations of an office building, equipment, administration and grant funding. While our grant applications for project funding have largely been successful, we still survive through the goodwill of a creditor who substantially keeps the operation running.

In regional areas there is a pattern of short term turnover in management positions, making it more important for the community to have consistent promotion and growth. As representatives of a cross section of artists, it is apparent to me that more infrastructure/building, project and equipment grants are required in our region to support the growth of both existing and new and emerging artists and art groups.

At present small funding opportunities are very competitive and a barrier to collaboration, knowledge sharing and communication between groups. It has been noted that greater accountability and transparency is needed by local arts funding bodies to develop trust and enable developing arts groups to give feedback. More small grant opportunities will enable new and emerging groups a better understanding funding application processes, and provides them experience and confidence in grant writing. At present the greater potential for growth is being stifled by the limited funding opportunities for art and cultural development in our region.

In 2006 the Charles Sturt University (CSU) and BHAЕ conducted a survey titled "the Community Cultural Education and Creative Arts/Crafts Development". Of the 191 respondents, it was found:

23% are keen to further their arts practices through further education

44% indicated that they have studied or were studying at the Robinson Education Centre and a

32% indicated that they have studied or were studying at TAFE NSW.

The results indicate that increased access to local higher educational studies is potentially needed as well as more avenues for professional development and employment for ongoing education opportunities.

A community project by BHAЕ titled “Zero AGL” attracted over 35 local participants. This project included the engineering and construction of Sandra Landolt’s sculpture, an old Cessna air craft attached to a children’s swing. When the swing was used, the wings on the plane flap. It also included a performance piece on the Mundi Mundi Plains and a video production workshop. The sculpture gained national media attention and has been shown in exhibitions such as Sculpture by the Sea 2007. Another example of new educational opportunities provided by BHAЕ was a photography workshop conducted by German photographer Patrick Neu (2007). Six members of the community took part in the workshop. Two of these participants have gone on to enter works in a local festival and another two exhibited at the Regional Gallery, one of which was a first time exhibitor.

8% are interested in research and development

BHAЕ hosted an artist gathering with International artists to conduct research into sustainable environments in the arid zone (2007). Many people from the arts community came to the meeting largely because of their interest in sustainable agriculture and environmental subjects. Increasingly, local and international artists are seeking out BHAЕ’s help to engage different communities to build support networks. The potential benefits to regional NSW are enormous in:

- Providing educational opportunities outside of the metropolitan area
- A much needed economic boost to regional areas
- Increased industry / tourism
- Growth in jobs in creative industries
- Enhancing the reputation of NSW as a “State of the Arts”

To this end, BHAЕ has been working with industry, health and education to create a sustainable community plan in the event of mine closures in Broken Hill. The pathway for developing the creative arts often takes a commercial/commodity angle rather than investigating the engagement between art and economic development generally. Jason Potts from the ARC Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, Queensland University of Technology, School of Economics, University of Queensland states:

“The creative systems framework ... provides a way of analysing the contribution of creativity to the economy not as a commodity, for example in the form of cultural production. Rather, it contributes to the growth and evolution of the economy in the form of an innovation system in three distinct ways: as (1) originative creativity; (2) adoption creativity; and (3) retentive creativity.”

There is a need for greater awareness about the role of creative arts in economic development in regional areas; Mr Potts goes on to say

“Creativity is not just something that happens at the beginning of a technology trajectory, when a new idea is hatched or discovered, but continues throughout the trajectory until the novel idea is completely embedded in the economic and social order and becomes a normalised part of the knowledge base. The creative industries, in this view, are an essential service in the process of economic growth, development and evolution. They deserve, then, corresponding analytic and policy attention. “

Our role in the evolution of the creative economy in NSW is by assisting new and emerging artists to consider roles in the creative world outside of commercial galleries such as community development, research and development and cross sector partnerships with artists.

Due to the scope of engagement by artists in society and lack of resources to develop local creative initiatives in regional Australia it is my belief that the potential of arts contribution is being limited and that a competitive rather than a cooperative environment is being unintentionally supported. The communities collective knowledge and the diversity of local initiatives, that encourage a personal sense of responsibility to learning and education, is being lost among commercial ones and impeding economic development. Broken Hill is a unique city with a thriving arts community, housing approximately 35 artist run galleries. As a city with much historical significance Broken Hill & the region, attract many tourists, artists and art enthusiasts to the city each year.

I believe that Broken Hill is uniquely placed to become a model city for demonstrating growth in creative economies outside ‘commodity driven’ art practices due to the interest being shown in Broken Hill by industry, health, researchers and art related stakeholders both within and external to the city.

Our isolation has left Broken Hill in many aspects behind the rest of the state. I believe that there is *a greater need for technology infrastructure. Access to more small grants e.g. up to \$5,000 would allow community organizations to obtain the technology needed for contemporary art practices to develop and local artists to access the global markets e.g. computers, Internet access / networking etc. This not only supports the administration and creative production for creative groups but provides a technology hub for community members to upload / access information on the web to maintain and build partnerships. Greater access to technology would enable communities to*

participate in developing local creative economies and encourage a 'personal sense' of responsibility towards community building, professional development and education in the arts.

Providing greater support for and acknowledgement of locally initiated organisations such as ourselves, outside and/or in partnership with the formal institutional frameworks creates more opportunities in the arts. The running of smaller, more affordable workshops with flexible timetables enables participation by those who are financially disadvantaged and/or 'time poor' due to family and work commitments. A larger investment in the arts and technology, education, community development in regional communities will enable wider community participation in developing the infrastructures outside the Sydney CBD.

To summarise the recommendations from BHAЕ Inc. include:

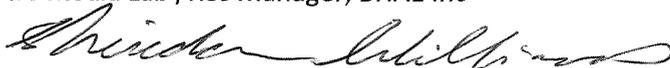
- Greater support and acknowledgement of local initiatives
- More small volunteer equipment and operational grants
- Greater transparency for local art funding bodies
- Increased opportunities for education / research
- Satellite stations for art and research / development in Broken Hill
- Technology hubs for access and communication

Please find enclosed a copy of our brochure. For more information please contact BHAЕ on (08) 8088 3171 or email info@brokenhillartexchange.org.au

Yours faithfully



Susan Thomas, BFA (hons 1), B Des.
I.C Media Lab /Res Manager, BHAЕ Inc



Sheridan Williams
IT Manager
Broken Hill Art Exchange Inc.