

**STATS AND STORIES - THEME 2**



**DEAKIN**  
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Worldly

# ECONOMIC REGENERATION

THE IMPACT OF THE ARTS IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

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## FAST FACTS



### REASONS TO VISIT REGIONAL DESTINATIONS

- 58%** Domestic day and overnight trips are to regional destinations.<sup>1</sup>
- \$34 b** Spent by visitors in regional areas during 2013.<sup>2</sup>
- 57%** First-time visitors to a region state an event is their main reason for visiting.<sup>3</sup>

### BOOSTING REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT

- 176,560** Jobs are created each year in the planning and operation of festivals in non-metropolitan Australia.<sup>4</sup>
- 2,800+** Rural festivals in Australia per year.<sup>5</sup>
- 4** Full-time jobs on average are directly created in festivals during the planning stage.<sup>6</sup>
- 13** Full-time jobs are created on average in the planning stage of festivals.<sup>7</sup>
- 12.6** Part-time jobs on average are created at the time of operation.<sup>8</sup>
- 99,448** Jobs are directly created on average in the planning and running of festivals collectively in Victoria, Tasmania and NSW.<sup>9</sup>
- 310,723** People within Australia are employed within the arts and cultural industry.<sup>10</sup>
- 6%** Increase in regional employment through investment in the arts.<sup>11</sup>
- 22%** Increase in total non-farm employment through investment in the arts.<sup>12</sup>

### AUDIENCES AND THE ECONOMY

- 38%** Australians attend visual arts and craft events.<sup>13</sup>
- 86%** Australians attend at least one cultural event or performance each year.<sup>14</sup>
- \$10 b** Economic activity is generated by rural communities in Victoria, New South Wales & Tasmania.<sup>15</sup>
- 45%** International tourists enjoy seeing Aboriginal art, craft and cultural displays.<sup>16</sup>
- 32%** International tourists visit Aboriginal galleries.<sup>17</sup>
- 22%** Domestic tourists visit an Aboriginal cultural centre.<sup>18</sup>

### Regional snapshot: Grace Kelly: Style Icon exhibition, Bendigo Art Gallery, VIC

- 152,500** Audiences visited the Grace Kelly: Style Icon exhibition in Bendigo, a town of less than 100,000 people.<sup>19</sup>
- \$16.3 m** Contributed to Bendigo's local economy due to the Grace Kelly: Style Icon exhibition.<sup>20</sup>

“Active investment and strategic support of the arts in regional areas can result in the return on investment three times over.”<sup>21</sup>

“Economic Regeneration is not only concerned with growth and property development and finds expression in prestige projects and place-marketing<sup>22</sup> but also is not simply about bricks and mortar. It's about the physical, social and economic wellbeing of an area; it's about the quality of life in our neighbourhoods. In relation to the physical, this is as much about the quality of public realm as it is about the buildings themselves.”<sup>23</sup>

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*Cover Image: Conflux Dancers, Emu Feathers.  
Photograph by Adam Hobbs.*

*Fletcher Jones Factory, Warrnambool, VIC.  
Photograph by Emma Charlton.*

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## OVERVIEW

### STATS AND STORIES: THE IMPACT OF THE ARTS IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA

**Stats and Stories: The Impact of the Arts in Regional Australia** is a ground breaking project funded by Regional Arts Australia and Australia Council for the Arts that calls for new ways to identify and respond to Australia's vast land, diversity and differences, including its challenges and opportunities in regional Australia, using the arts as the vehicle.

The Stats and Stories project covers five themes and five case studies. The five themes were developed from the literature on the regional impact of the arts. One case study is written on each of the five themes.

The five themes are:

1. Community connectedness
2. Economic regeneration
3. Social inclusion
4. Civic pride and community identity
5. Regional development

The five case studies are:

1. Animating Spaces
2. Silver Ball Screening Festival
3. In the Saddle; On the Wall
4. BighArt
5. First Coat

The research project was undertaken by academic staff at Deakin University in the Business School. The project was led by Professor Ruth Rentschler, and Dr Kerrie Bridson at Deakin University, as well as Associate Professor Jody Evans at Melbourne Business School. Research support was provided by Claudia Escobar, Emma Winston and Nick Cooke.

For more information about the project please contact John Oster, Executive Director, Regional Arts Australia [john.oster@regionalarts.com.au](mailto:john.oster@regionalarts.com.au)

# ECONOMIC REGENERATION

## INTRODUCTION

Economic regeneration explores how and where the arts impact regional Australia. The dimensions examined include: place marketing; widening opportunities; encouraging investment; growing the economy; improving people's lives; tackling disadvantage; community strategy and policy; tackling industrial decline.

Opportunities identified include: the arts and tourism, the arts and employment, event-related spending and regional value. Some of the main challenges identified for economic regeneration include displacement of residents, sponsorship, long-term under-investment and unstable employment.



*Cathy McKenna, Hunting for Foxes, Mullewa WA.  
Photograph by Pene Stevens.*

## DEFINITION

### ECONOMIC REGENERATION

entails concerted action to address challenges and problems faced by the community of a particular place, including through marketing of place. It's about widening opportunities, growing the local economy, and improving people's lives. Hence, it increases employment, encouraging business growth and investment, and tackling economic disadvantage.

It contributes to community strategy in advancing an area's economic wellbeing, and underpins cost-cutting approaches to tackle deprivation as a result of industrial decline.<sup>24</sup>



The arts provide a total hedonic experience, prompted by an arts event that enables visitors to engage with the region in multiple ways.

## BACKGROUND

Against a backdrop of rural and regional decline, the arts are being used as cornerstones of economic regeneration, framed around tourism to generate income in uncertain times for regional communities. They provide non-traditional means of income, linking cultural tourism to economic growth and attracting particular demographic groups with disposable income.

Revitalisation of communities comprises economic and physical elements. Economic elements generating income through business growth, tourism, marketing of place, and growing the local economy. Economic regeneration provides insights on how the arts develop regions economically, individually and for the community, generating income and regenerating the community. For example, 58% of all domestic day and overnight trips in Australia in 2013 were to regional destinations, where visitors spent \$34 billion.<sup>25</sup>

Physical renewal manifests itself through public policy targeted at strengthening rural neighbourhood economies by leveraging the gentrification cycle, thus overcoming disadvantage.

Arts events and festivals are a major driver

of physical renewal, providing an increase in regional tourism, with 57% of first-time visitors to the region giving an event as their main reason for visiting.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, three-quarters of event attendees would not have gone to the destination on this occasion if not for the event.<sup>27</sup>

While the arts are part of the tourism experience, they are not only about making money. Gentrification has noticeable effects on housing market renewal and public consumption within the gentrified area. As this theme suggests, the arts are about regenerating community and activating the local economy by hiring services, attracting audiences, increasing tourism with visitors staying in hotels and B&Bs, eating in cafes and restaurants and going shopping in local stores.

Additionally, the transformation of derelict industrial precincts contributes to boosting the regional economy that improves the vitality and quality of rural and regional environments. A complex system of interactions containing both socio-economic and physical factors aid adaptive efforts of economic regeneration and enhance interactions between community members.

*Nancy Jackson, Bridget Jackson, Dianne Ungukalpi Golding, Eunice Yunurupa Porter with Tjilkamarta Minyma Kutjarra Mumu Wati Ngirtaka Warta, 2013.*  
Photograph by Claire Freer  
©Tjanpi Desert Weavers, NPY Women's Council

# DIMENSIONS OF ECONOMIC REGENERATION

There are eight dimensions of economic regeneration addressed through the arts: Place marketing; Widening opportunities; Encouraging investment; Growing the economy; Improving people's lives; Tackling disadvantage; Community strategy and policy; Tackling industrial decline.

## PLACE MARKETING

Economic regeneration is about place marketing. Place-making—including branding—enhances the overall perception of a destination's image. The internal and external perception of a destination's image contributes to both global and local competitiveness resulting in growth through wealth creation and inward investment. Economic growth within regional areas compliments a destination's naturally attractive environment, which helps with the 'place-shaping' efforts.

Place marketing is a means of establishing communities as tourist destinations. Typically, vibrant communities are open to new ideas and diversity and are able to communicate the identity of the place through street life and successful use of natural and human resources. The arts generate business opportunities, jobs and attract tourism dollars that increase the desirability of a place as somewhere to live or visit.

Arts events contribute to a regional economy by attracting visitors that would otherwise have limited awareness of the area. Attendees of arts events contribute to the economic environment of a region through interaction with people, venues, cafes, bars, and institutions.<sup>28</sup> Arts programs that encourage visitors to stay longer provide greater opportunities to showcase attractions and increase spending within a regional area.<sup>29</sup>

The arts provide an opportunity for regional areas to market their uniqueness and create a sense of place. Festivals allow marketing of a region to be a celebration of nature, local produce and industry and create images that may linger in the national imagination.<sup>30</sup>

A study looking at arts events and festivals in regional Australia found that promoting or showcasing a region or locality was the aim of 14% of festivals and another 10% of festivals are based around celebrating or showcasing local produce.<sup>31</sup>

Arts events and festivals within a regional setting engage with audiences by advertising a rare experience, unique to a time and place. A case study conducted by Curtis<sup>32</sup> explored the Wangaratta Jazz Festival as an example of a festival that has strengthened a regional community by positioning the festival as a unique attraction. The festival creates a sense of place through its marketing that does not exist anywhere else in Australia.<sup>33</sup> Festivals within a regional setting offer an alternative to existing efforts to attract visitors.

Festivals can place or keep towns on the map, and are a way to market them, often more effectively than official branding strategies.<sup>34</sup>

*Aleshia Lonsdale and Tony Lonsdale  
exploring the Wirksworth Festival, Derbyshire, UK.  
Photograph by Chris Webb.*





## WIDENING OPPORTUNITIES

The arts play a role in widening opportunities for employment within rural and regional areas. A study of festivals in regional Australia found that 176,560 jobs are created in the planning and operation of festivals in non-metropolitan Australia.<sup>35</sup> Investment in the arts sees opportunities for arts workers, artists and volunteers, contributing to the livability of a regional area.<sup>36</sup> For example, increased opportunities for volunteers sustains a region's workforce by encouraging more people to move towards employment within the region.<sup>37</sup>

Similarly, local creative industries strengthen regional areas that have seen a decline in traditional industries.<sup>38</sup> Creative industries produce arts projects that attract media attention and boost a regional area's profile, thus sustaining local jobs and businesses through increased visitor spending.<sup>39</sup>

*Left: Maypole at Rupanyup show, 1954, still image from Teasdale film archive.*

*Photograph by John Teasdale.*

*Right: Crowd at Rupanyup show 1954, still image from Teasdale film archive.*

*Photograph by John Teasdale.*

## ENCOURAGING INVESTMENT

The arts provide opportunities for investment through a number of means. Arts activities are often supported by government investment, private sector sponsorship or philanthropy. Thinking strategically about the purpose of the arts provides an opportunity to encourage investment from these sources. Investment from government, sponsorship or philanthropy injects money into the economy that can be spent on creating jobs for local people.

Art sponsorship, as an additional example, can be an effective marketing strategy for the arts in regional areas. Sponsors of arts events are associated with 'quality of life' and 'environmental engagement', whilst promoting their product or business.<sup>40</sup> Art sponsorship encourages business partnerships and boosts the local economy.

The arts invest significant resources in sponsorship and generate an estimated return of \$2 for every \$1 invested in fundraising.<sup>41</sup> There is a concern when local communities experience economic hardship, such as drought, that the arts in regional areas may suffer in terms of reduced sponsorship from local business.<sup>42</sup>

## GROWING THE ECONOMY

Growing the economy can be helped through the arts. For regional communities, a strategic approach to cultural regeneration can have an impact on the economy. A study on festivals in regional Australia found that festivals and arts events have a 'flow-on-effect' where the surrounding communities benefit from hiring local expertise and sourcing local services and materials from an array of small businesses that are functionally connected to the festival.<sup>43</sup>

The economy can be grown by investment and strategic support through the arts. For example, investment and strategic support of the arts in regional areas can result in the return of the investment three times over.<sup>44</sup> The arts are key in promoting regions and significantly contribute to local spending.<sup>45</sup>

In regional Victoria, the SheppARTon Festival in 2005 saw an average of \$250 for accommodation, \$130 for food and beverages and almost \$200 in other expenses per festival attendee spent in secondary services surrounding the festival.<sup>46</sup>

Event-related spending is one of the major economic benefits that the arts provide in regional areas. Arts events and festival attendees generate significant income for theme-related local businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and retail stores.<sup>47</sup>

Arts events and festivals also provide incentives to local businesses and build capabilities to supply local goods and services.<sup>48</sup> While events cannot not produce a substantial direct profit alone, they facilitate collective financial benefits for a regional community.<sup>49</sup>

## IMPROVING PEOPLE'S LIVES

People's lives can be improved through an arts-led recovery. Cities and towns have been regenerated by the arts, such as the gentrification of Glasgow in the UK. For Glasgow, a major event with an arts focus led to a 'radical transformation of the city's image' where associations of place developed from images of gangs and unemployment to an attractive placement for business, shopping, and culture.<sup>50</sup>

**Gentrification can stimulate economic development, boost morale and minimise crime but has been criticised for displacement of low-income earners, rural decline and youth unemployment.**

Arts and cultural activities may contribute to the moral improvement of communities and improve people's lives but a balanced approach needs to be taken in assessing how to implement economic regeneration to prevent the downside from occurring.

*Left: Harvest footage c. 1959, still image from Teasdale film archive.*

*Photograph by John Teasdale.*

*Right: Dawn and Peter, 1965, still image from Teasdale film archive.*

*Photograph by John Teasdale.*

Cities, towns and regions have cycles of employment and growth driven by agriculture, manufacturing and services, sometimes one after the other.

## TACKLING DISADVANTAGE

When a region is in transition from manufacturing to services, for example, the arts can assist in tackling industrial disadvantage caused by decline. If the economy booms due to a culture-led economic regeneration, low income residents and local businesses may be displaced.

For example, housing values have shown to increase in areas that have invested in the arts and culture.<sup>51</sup> Local amenities, including those made up of the arts and culture, play a significant role in the value of localities. However, this strong relationship between housing prices and cultural vitality raises concerns for the survival of small local business and rising house prices and rents for low-income residents.<sup>52</sup>

The benefits of the arts and culture in regional areas will be ineffectual if economic impact fails to allow for the character and appeal of the region to remain consistent. Strategies for regional development through the arts should aim to improve the lives of original residents and enhance their opportunities, rather than pushing them out.<sup>53</sup>

Tackling disadvantage through the arts sees a pattern of 'unstable equilibrium' amongst creative and cultural industry employment.<sup>54</sup> The creative worker has limited opportunities

for stable employment due to the 'rise of the creative subcontractor and the downgrading of creativity.'<sup>55</sup> There is criticism that the arts have a 'garage mentality' and 'not enough of them want to be Microsoft.... They do not live to build the business.'<sup>56</sup>

However, creative industry workers are passionate and driven by cultural factors, often wanting to drive change to tackle disadvantage. This passion impacts on the compromises they are willing to undertake for these roles.<sup>57</sup>

Economic regeneration may have unanticipated growth in certain areas and displaces residents responsible because of the cultivation of the area's heritage sites. Such implications make tackling disadvantage through the arts more important than ever. There are additional concerns regarding the displacement of residents where challenges persist in seeking to reduce social isolation.

Community heterogeneity brings special challenges, especially when they are socially and materially structured in ways that limit access to power, creating constant struggles.<sup>58</sup> It is called commodification. In commodification of 'the rural' there have been links to property market rises and to subsequent social displacements and exclusions.<sup>59</sup>



## COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND POLICY

Community strategy and policy is led by entrepreneurial leaders at board and executive levels in municipal, non-profit and business organisations.

They are crucial to economic regeneration as they are instrumental in developing community strategy and policy that is implemented at the local level. Community strategy and policy lead to change in the way things are done, providing opportunities for new ideas and operations.<sup>60</sup>

Pro-activeness entails doing what is necessary to bring an entrepreneurial concept to fruition.<sup>61</sup> Effective development within a regional area is achieved through a team approach to governance,<sup>62</sup> where culture-related institutions are invited to participate and a collaboration between Chair, board, CEO and key stakeholders occurs.<sup>63</sup>

Innovative and pro-active leaders enhance regional governance, leading to calculated risk-taking that informs new ways of working. Hence, new ideas come to the fore and new activities are undertaken, bringing in new audiences to regions that need them in order to develop.

Policy is wider than the arts, but includes cultural policy as a means of providing strategic thinking to harness activities into a framework for action. It can be developed in concert with economic policy and social policy.

Cultural policy provides a means of leveraging resources at a local, state or national level, providing a strategic argument for change and development. It provides a region with a means of promoting both high and low culture that covers theatre, festivals, public art, visual art and music, for example, making the intangible tangible, through key marketing tools.

Additionally, cultural policy reflects the development and promotion of flagship cultural projects and leverages a 'Place Marketing' (see above) approach to community identity.<sup>64</sup> Policy can then be translated into practice through strategic plans that lead to tangible cultural projects.

*Cowra Civilian Internment,  
Cowra Canowindra Art Project, Cowra, NSW.  
Photograph by Mayu Kanamori.*



## ENDNOTES

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<sup>21</sup> Dunphy, Op. Cit.

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