

developing . & sustaining creative industry

Defining culture and creative industries, incubators, sustainability, planning, accountability

Defining cultural and creative industries

If you google 'cultural industries' and 'creative industries' you will come up with a feast of learning about the international conversation around these terms and the activities that come under their banner. This conversation is part of the global awakening about what creative activity means for our present lifestyle and our future economic survival.

The Australian Government recognises the importance of the cultural and creative industries and the need for the financial support and technological infrastructure to service them.

Excerpt from: Garrett sees new energy on culture 'No proud voices' for 10 years
Diana Streak, The Canberra Times, 1 March 2008

Speaking after the annual Cultural Ministers Council meeting in Canberra yesterday, federal Arts Minister Peter Garrett said there would be a new energy and focus on culture. The cultural ministers issued a report, Building a Creative Innovation Economy, which highlighted the value of the creative sector in driving innovation and growth in the economy. Full report: www.cmc.gov.au

In the UK they have moved a long way down this road. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in the UK helps the creative industries thrive by raising their profile and supporting their development. Their vision is that the UK becomes the world's creative hub.

Cultural Industries Development Agency (CIDA) cida.co.uk/ is the leading UK support organisation for the creative and cultural sector. They support 'those working in all areas of the creative and cultural industries - in fact almost any creative sector you can think of'!

This tentacle wrapped around everything creative is both a strength and a dilemma for the cultural sector. Where are the borders on what we are doing and for which we can make claims?

The Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Creative Industries Faculty has been leading the way in the development of creative industries in Queensland and nationally and aims to become an internationally-networked hub of creative enterprise.

According to their website, 'the creative industries foster individual creativity, skill and talent and offer diverse and rewarding career opportunities'. The creative industries include:

- literature and print media
- visual and performing arts
- music composition and publishing
- new media such as animation, games and internet content design
- broadcasting electronic media and film
- heritage activities.

The UK definition casts its net wider. They define creative industries as those industries that are based on individual creativity, skill and talent. They are also those that have the potential to create wealth and jobs through developing intellectual property.

Their list would add to that of QUT:

- advertising
- architecture
- design
- art and antiques markets
- designer fashion
- crafts

www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/Creative_industries/

Other definitional frameworks would include the last three items in the UK definition as 'cultural industries'.

One of the sites that offers an interesting discussion regarding what is included under the banner of cultural and creative industries is http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative_industries. The current information on the wikipedia site states 'there is often a question mark over the boundaries between Creative Industries and the similar term of Cultural industries. Cultural Industries are best described as an adjunct-sector of the Creative Industries, including activities such as: Cultural tourism & Heritage; Museums & Libraries; Sports & Outdoor activities; through a variety of 'way of life' activities that arguably range from local pet shows to a host of hobbyist concerns. The possible difference would thus be that the Cultural Industries are more concerned about delivering other kinds of value to society than simply monetary value, such as Cultural Wealth or Social Wealth'.

The experience of the writers is that this distinction exists in practice and it is useful to keep both the terms alive in documentation so that the whole spectrum of cultural practice from hobbyist activity and community events to economically viable industry development is covered.

Arts Incubators

One of the structures that has been successful in developing the creative industry sector is the arts incubator. As the name implies, the purpose of an incubator is to provide space and resources for new business ideas to take root and grow.

The incubator model includes the provision of subsidised rent within a flexible office or warehouse space and access to centralized management support, training and professional development opportunities. The measure of success is when these small businesses grow to a stage where they have the capacity to move out of the incubator space and into their own premises.

CASE STUDY: Biz Arts MAKers (BAM) www.metroarts.com.au

Metro Arts launched Biz Arts MAKers in 2003, with the support of AusIndustry, to develop the two key factors for artists to achieve sustainability: commercial confidence and the fundamental infrastructure they need to become agents of their own creative practices.

Here are the stories of some of Metro Arts' Biz Arts MAKers residents

Spangled Drongo, Music Theatre Company

In 2007, Spangled Drongo was selected to be the pilot company to explore Biz Arts MAKers capacity to provide specialist marketing and producer management services. Our confidence grows day by day, as has our understanding of the industry. Working alongside artists of various fields is an unexpected inspiration, as we now have a broader understanding of the arts scene as a whole, not to mention an insight into how creative mind works across the different fields.

Joss McWilliam, Possum Dreaming

Entering the Biz Arts MAKers program came at a time when I had just formed a company and was looking to approach my practice with a business framework. I had realised I couldn't rely anymore on a stable income from acting alone. I needed to expand my practice but I didn't necessarily know how to do that. Three years on, I feel like I'm in a fabulous position. I have a variety of income streams—I teach, I've had two years of strong stage acting opportunities, I'm doing commercial acting, both film and TV, my after-school theatre games program has proven to be successful.

Laine Loxlea-Danann, Performer and singer

Before I started BAM in March 2004, I wanted to be involved in fulltime performance but I was always being told that it wasn't possible in Brisbane. I had spent 14-years building a successful one-person training business. I learned that my training services were not necessarily of equal value—I could charge more for some services, and by creating a product range that engaged clients over a period of time, I could attract more money from my services and individual clients. I developed a plan and focused on the challenge of building momentum in my performance practice.

The Commonwealth Government supports incubators through its AusIndustry Building Entrepreneurship in Small Business program. For further information, visit the AusIndustry website at www.ausindustry.gov.au. Click on 'AusIndustry products', which contains an alphabetical listing of all AusIndustry programs, and follow the link to Building Entrepreneurship in Small Business. Alternatively, contact the AusIndustry hotline on 13 28 46 or by email at hotline@ausindustry.gov.au.

Sustaining arts organisations and businesses

Here are some of the threats to sustainability identified by Anne Dunn in the Regional Arts national consultation project (2006:14):

- Resources to administer grants
- Dwindling volunteer base
- Lack of data bases of community resources
- Lack of coordination of local/regional events
- Paucity of facilities for traveling product
- Short-term, one-off projects

Weak alliances between arts and cultural tourism, sport and environmental groups are identified as an issue that we can all begin to address. Community organisations can be vulnerable entities due to the complex environment in which they operate. The arts and other sectors constantly face new increased competition, dwindling resources in the funding arena and changing political environments at all levels of government – local, state/territory and federal. The changing political environment leads to new funding strategies and often, in turn, the necessity for new arguments to access support.

The concept of sustainability in the context of the arts is the subject of a paper by Cathy Hunt and Phyllida Shaw, *A Sustainable Arts Sector: What Will It Take?* commissioned by Currency Press for its Platform Papers Series (2008: No. 15). The paper argues that sustainability in the arts is about much more than money.

Questions concerning the quality of artistic work and services, the efficiency of an organisation's operating systems, and the breadth and depth of its audience base are as important as the more familiar ones about how to achieve a diverse and healthy funding base. (Hunt & Shaw 2008)

So what can you do, as a community based organisation, to ensure that the organisation and its activities not only survive, but thrive?

Facing challenges and taking action

There is a raft of actions you can take to help ensure that your organisation will continue to exist including: succession planning, documenting progress, collaborating across community and being both strategic and visionary in developing creative industries.

CASE STUDY: Eumundi Markets

Eumundi Markets have proved a sustainable project. The markets were started in 1979 with five or six stalls selling locally produced craft and produce. From a modest turnover of around \$30 in 1979, today the markets are a thriving tourist attraction. Held each Wednesday and Saturday, around 1.6M people visit the market's 600 stalls and the economic impact is estimated at \$120M per year (2008).

The markets were originally managed by the Eumundi Historical Association (EHA) on a volunteer basis. In the 1990s managers were employed, initially on a part time and then a full time basis. In 2008, the EHA continues to manage the ongoing tasks associated with the operation and future success of the markets, including administration, marketing and maintenance of infrastructures on the market site.

There are now 13 full time employees supported by casuals. The focus of the markets today is on Australian made craft products rather than on farmers' produce.

However, in January 2008, the EHA responded to a perceived need and successfully held four Thursday night markets focusing on food during the main tourist season. Despite early resistance locally (concern about a potential adverse impact on the town and existing businesses), the success of the markets is now such that around 100 "permanent" market stalls have been built by a private developer close to the original Eumundi Markets site which are open daily.

With a focus on sustainability and world best practice, the management of the smoke free original Eumundi Markets is looking at banning the use of plastic bags and introducing organic recycling using biobins and compulsory compostable packaging. Key success factors:

- Ability of the EHA in the late 1980s to acquire railway land which provides a permanent site in the middle of town with large shade trees
- A generous lease from Council for additional land
- Loyal stallholders selling a diverse range of quality Australian made products

www.eumundimarkets.com.au/

Succession planning

When a key person in your organisation retires or leaves the area, is there someone else who shares their knowledge or could handle the responsibilities they leave behind? Is there a Procedure Manual which outlines all the tasks, funding arrangements and contacts needed to run the activities of the organisation? Are you mentoring younger members for future leadership? You need to be ready to respond to changing circumstances.

...our leadership development work should emphasize how we, emerging and established leaders, can work together to nurture and train current young administrators in ways that enable them to influence the future in innovative and creative ways.

V.J.Saunders. Bridging the Generation Gap in Arts & Cultural Leadership. CultureWork. Dec 2006. Vol 10. No4
aad.uoregon.edu/index.cfm?mode=culturework

Documentation

Being a legal entity enforces the establishment of certain reporting mechanisms but documentation of activity is also important. Often in volunteer based organisations so much effort goes into planning and creating activities, that the recording of the process is overlooked and valuable knowledge lost. Evidence of your practice or event can be used to:

- Attract funding
- Publicise future events
- Build your website presence
- Post on facebook or other group meeting places
- Report to funding partners

Make sure you cost documentation into your budget and give someone the role of managing it.

Accountability

Any community based organisation, especially those in receipt of public funding, needs to recognise that there are continuing and increasing pressures for improved efficiencies, effectiveness and accountability, whether the source of income comes from the public sector or private donors. This will involve good systems of record keeping and a clear role and task description for the person responsible for funds management.

Collaboration

Explore the possibility of linking and working in some way with other organisations in your community – not necessarily those within the arts sector. There may be scope for those with established infrastructure to provide access to facilities or value add in some way in terms of service delivery by sharing facilities, staff, ideas, information.

Consider all the assets in your community: the service clubs, environmental groups, health groups, the open spaces and public buildings. Look across the region and think about how you can network beyond the familiar boundaries of your local community. This asset-based thinking is a positive process which can greatly assist your organisation. See the work of the Asset-Based Community Development Institute:

www.northwestern-edu/ipr/abcd

The Asset-Based Community Development Institute (ABCD), established in 1995 by the Community Development Program at Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research, is built upon three decades of community development research by John Kretzmann and John L. McKnight. The ABCD Institute spreads its findings on capacity-building community development in two ways: (1) through extensive and substantial interactions with community builders, and (2) by producing practical resources and tools for community builders to identify, nurture, and mobilize neighbourhood assets.

www.northwestern-edu/ipr/abcd

For further tips on these topics, refer to Help Sheets on www.ourcommunity.com.au especially *Transferring Board Knowledge for Succession and Building a Corporate Memory*.

Resources

The Queensland Government provides on-line advice on managing and growing your business: www.business.qld.gov.au

Arts Queensland (AQ) provides funding for industry development initiatives with, in many cases, additional support from local councils and businesses. The program is flexible to enable AQ to respond to opportunities and emerging priorities outside the guidelines of other funding programs. Over \$1M has been allocated in 2008 to support targeted arts industry development initiatives for small to medium arts companies. For further information, visit www.arts.qld.gov.au/funding/industry-dev.html

A Creative Business Toolbox can be obtained from Arts Queensland. www.arts.qld.gov.au

Australian Business Arts Foundation (AbaF) is a company of the Australian Government, established in 2000. AbaF promotes private sector support for the arts, connecting business, the arts, donors and foundations through three programs – Partnering, Volunteering and Giving. For further information, visit www.abaf.org.au or contact the Queensland state office
Telephone: 07 3220 1468 Email: qld@abaf.org.au

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This information sheet is Section 12 of 15 Sections from *Ideas into Action: Resources and internet connections to stimulate cultural and creative industry in and with communities*.

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