

Mobilising rural communities to achieve environmental sustainability using the arts

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ABSTRACT

Despite over twenty years of government intervention, Australia's environment continues to worsen in several key areas such as soil salinity, urban sprawl, the greenhouse effect, declining water quality, and the loss of biodiversity. These challenges will require the engagement and participation of the whole of society if they are to be reversed. However, existing programs and development strategies from the government, non-government and private sectors are failing to achieve this level of engagement and new methods are required. Only limited attention is usually given to the cultural elements that reduce the efficacy of conventional modes of promoting change, or of using cultural elements to effectively create change.

This paper suggests that the visual and performing arts may be useful in affecting environmental behaviour at the individual and community level. Arts based events can aid participation by a broad cross section of the community, can strengthen a community's abilities to promote inclusion, and can be powerful vehicles for community mobilisation, empowerment, and information transfer.

The paper summarises observations made from three case studies of arts-based events which combine community development with environmental education, in rural New South Wales, Australia. The paper provides practical methods that community development workers, facilitators, group organisers and extension agents might find useful to help facilitate changes in environmental behaviour in the rural context.

INTRODUCTION

This paper explores some of the ways that the visual and performing arts might assist in community mobilisation, empowerment, information transfer and in strengthening inclusion, while at the same time affecting environmental behaviour at the individual and community level. It does this through an examination of three case studies of arts-based events in rural New South Wales (NSW), Australia.

Australia, is facing many serious environmental challenges, including a high per capita level of greenhouse gas emissions; pressures on its coral reefs from global warming as well as large nutrient loads of nitrogen and phosphorus being discharged into coastal and estuarine waters; continued loss of vegetative cover and continuing broadacre clearing; continuing soil erosion which is a major contributor of turbidity, nutrients and pesticides to waterways as well as loss of soil fertility; continuing deterioration of the health of water bodies and the increase in salinity in the Murray-

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Darling Basin; declining biodiversity; and worsening pressures from human settlements (Australian State of the Environment Committee, 2001).

Despite over twenty years of Commonwealth and State government intervention in attempting to repair Australia's environment, improvements are patchy and in some critical aspects the environment is worsening. Part of the reason for the continuing decline of Australia's environment is a technical failure in getting information to all in the community and convincing people to change their land-use management or patterns of consumption so that they are more environmentally sustainable. Another reason is that some of the most intractable issues have a "high structural dependence" and are "accidents in slow motion" (Roqueplo, 1986). Such problems are the most resistant to policy change even though the majority of Australians identify the environment as one their major concerns.

In our analysis of the history of the trees on farms movement on the Northern Tablelands, Hugh Ford, Chris Nadolny and I suggested that to achieve broad ecological sustainability it is necessary for most people to come to embrace a conservation ethic (Curtis *et al.*, 1995). We suggested that the arts might have an important role in doing this by changing shared perspectives on what is 'good' for the environment and by questioning the consumerism which dominates our era. We felt that celebrations and festivals could potentially link conservation of the natural environment with the rest of human concerns. Certainly other methods appear to be failing. For example the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program is reported as saying that environmentalism's dull but worthy image is not working and that its often negative message is not reaching the hearts of people (Peatling, 2003).

Some types of arts based events can aid greatly in community development. Onko Kingma suggests that in the face of relentless change, many rural communities are realising that the only way for survival is through cooperative effort and the rebuilding of social capital. He suggests that the arts not only provide the practical framework for developing new community cultures, but can help to build social capital, overcome communications problems and boost growth in economic activity (Kingma, 2002). In her work with small towns in Victoria, Maureen Rogers found that the arts had a valuable role in community development and planning for economic sustainability, as well as a means for increasing community participation (Rogers, 2003). Can the arts also be used to motivate changes in environmental behaviour?

METHODS

The case studies reported here are part of a larger study that is examining how the visual and performing arts shape environmental behaviour¹. The research methods are based on an approach of methodological pragmatism that draws from a range of social science paradigms according to circumstance (Crump, 1995). In some stages of the project I have used a quasi-grounded theory approach that interlaced data collection and analysis to ensure that emerging concepts and theoretical constructs were firmly grounded in the life experience of the research participants. Social constructivist methods such as focus groups and semi-structured interviews have been employed. Quantitative evidence of the impact of arts events and the causes underlying these

impacts is coming from formal surveys and data collection prior to and after arts events. This purposeful methodological diversity will enable triangulation between the different types of data, and in so doing afford greater confidence in the conclusions. Qualitative research methods have been largely based on Neumann (1997).

The three case studies are a selection from about ten community-based art and environment events that have been studied, which included concerts, festivals, art exhibitions and community events. They involved a range of participants including farmers, scientists, artists, performers, extension officers, community groups, school and tertiary students and covered a range of environmental themes including rural and urban issues, natural resources and global environmental issues. Organisers and active participants were selected for interview due to their high level of involvement. Audience members were also interviewed and surveyed. The methods used in these case studies are outlined in Table 1. I acted as a “total participant” in the case studies (Neumann, 1997, p. 357), and helped organise *Nova-anglica* and *The Plague and the Moonflower*.

Table 1: Methods used in the case studies reported on in this paper

Data collected	Nova-anglica	Bungawalbin	Plague and the Moonflower
“Total participant” observations	✓	✓	✓
Survey of participants		✓	✓
Participant interviews		✓	✓
Audience survey		✓	✓
Audience interviews			✓
Written material (minutes of meetings, grant applications, correspondence, project documentation)	✓	✓	✓
Photographs	✓	✓	✓
Numerical data of attendees	✓	✓	✓

CASE STUDIES

NOVA-ANGLICA: THE WEB OF OUR ENDEAVOURS

Nova anglica: the web of our endeavours was an event that took place in Armidale NSW in March 1998. It told the story of the devastation of dieback, when millions of rural trees died in the 1970s in the New England region of NSW (Heatwole & Lowman, 1986; Kater, 1995; Mackay *et al.*, 1984; Nadolny, 1984). It celebrated the ongoing efforts by farmers, community groups, government departments and

individuals to repair the land and to integrate nature conservation with farming (Curtis *et al.*, 1999; Dunsford & Curtis, 1998; MacKinnon, 1998).

'Nova-anglica' means New England and 'Web of our Endeavours' symbolised the network of environmental repair activities throughout the region. The event took place at the New England Regional Art Museum in Armidale over three weeks. Most of the museum was filled with installations to show the ecology of the region, dieback and tree decline, and community and individual actions to repair the environment. Over 2,000 people were physically involved in the event and over 5,000 people attended, from a rural city and surrounding shire of only about 24,000 people².

The event grew from an initiative by local artist and active Landcare member Leah McKinnon. In mid-1997 she decided to present to the public the sixty-two maps developed by Kath Wray and the Citizens Wildlife Corridors Group (a community group of 800 landholders who had agreed to conserve corridors of natural vegetation throughout their properties). The maps showed the properties involved in the corridor group and were a representation of the network of landholders interested in nature conservation on their properties. From this initial idea grew an event which also celebrated the broader environmental repair initiatives at the regional level. The event adopted an image developed by (Curtis *et al.*, 1995) and later properly renditioned by artist Anna Curtis which summarized the themes of the event.

Working with the community-based environmental organizations Landcare and Greening Australia, Leah formed an organising committee of artists, farmers, landcarers, nurserymen, and Greening Australia, Landcare and departmental staff. This committee was assisted by a larger group of farmers, artists, musicians, writers, educators, community groups, government extension officers, scientists, interpreters, tree growers and people with finance and media skills. A team of volunteer interpreters were trained and made available to the general public and school groups every day of the event. Many of these people were recruited from the pool of volunteer guides at the Art Museum.

The exhibition venue consisted of seven exhibition spaces including a courtyard area, a foyer area, map room, dieback area, cafe, creeklands area and a "treasure room". *Nova anglica: the web of our endeavours* and its associated events incorporated many forms of the visual and performing arts, including paintings, photography, drawings, wood carvings, ceramics, floral art, stories, poetry, songs, music, a colouring-in competition, embroideries, sculptures, installations, collages, and musical cabaret. The event was launched with a spectacular opening featuring a lantern parade and music. Artwork summarising environmental themes were incorporated into postcards, greeting cards, posters, mugs, pots and prints. Public educational activities associated with the event included Landcare tours and demonstrations and a public lecture by acclaimed author Mary White on the geological history of Australia and its history of land degradation.

In the planning stage and throughout the event a broad cross section of people were involved. A richness of ideas emerged from numerous brainstorming breakfasts that tapped into the creative talents of many people. The visual and performing arts were incorporated into meetings to facilitate this. New networks of understanding were

formed as people who might not normally work together such as artists, farmers and scientists collaborated on the event.

This event appeared to allow farmers, scientists, government workers and others involved in landscape change, new and creative ways of expressing their feelings for, and knowledge about the land and the natural environment³. Participants were able to tap into their expressive sides and describe their involvement with the environment and their farms using stories, paintings, photography, sculpture and poetry. For some participants the creativity that was drawn out of them flowed back into their work in the community.

The event affirmed people's beliefs in caring for the environment and celebrated the work they did to repair the environment. It provided a vehicle for considerable community education, information transfer and networking. By linking the environmental educative elements with the arts it may have led to people retaining information, or at least a heightened sensibility for the topics, and even more importantly to associate the environment with positive thoughts and images. The diversity of methods used meant that the themes of *Nova-anglica* could be understood and accessed by a range of visitors regardless of learning styles and abilities.

The event increased the audience being exposed to environmental issues and it enabled a broad participation by a cross-section of the community for people to work together for environmental change.

Organisers hoped that visitors would leave having discovered a different view of nature conservation and how it related to farming. The number of interpretive and educative techniques adopted and the vast numbers of people involved in the event made it a diverse and dynamic project for the community. This was the result of input from many individuals with an interest in the environment. Its success owed much to the strong foundation of pre-existing networks of people in the community who were eager for an opportunity to celebrate efforts in land repair. Furthermore incorporating music and art forms into the planning meetings improved processes by helping find new ways of looking at a problem, stimulating creative thinking, motivating participants and helping improve the cohesiveness of the group.

BUNGAWALBIN WETLANDS FESTIVAL

The Bungawalbin Wetlands Festival took place at the Yarringly Nature Reserve near the rural city of Lismore on the North Coast of NSW in September 2003. Its aim was to promote the value of wetlands. The festival was organised by the Bungawalbin Catchment Management Group which works to conserve and protect this abundant wetland system which forms the lower part of the Richmond River catchment. Biodiversity in the catchment is one of the highest in Australia, surpassed only by Far North Queensland and its wetlands are listed in the Directory of Important Wetlands in Australia.

The day-long festival included the visual and performing arts to heighten the experience of visitors to the site. The organising committee hoped that the arts components would assist in attracting visitors (particularly farmers) to the wetlands, would help to celebrate the wetlands, move the emotions, create awareness, and assist

in helping people to have fun on the day. The festival occurred on a site near riverine and wetland environments and surrounded by bushland. The time of year that was selected was reliably dry to maximise people’s access to the area, although the dryness limited people’s exposure to some wetland species.

In a welcoming ceremony speeches were made by the Catchment Management Coordinator, a representative of the traditional owners, the previous owner of the site, and an officer from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) who had recently taken over management of the reserve. Local indigenous children did a play and dance about the wetlands. The play expressed their emotions about being cut off from the wetlands and the hope for reconciliation and looking after the land. They sang a song to ‘sing back’ the various animals of the wetlands.

The group received a grant of \$1,000 from the NSW Arts Council to commission community artist Pamela Denise to make a sculpture of two brolgas at the event. Brolgas are a charismatic water bird of the wetlands and are the logo of the Bungawalbin Catchment Committee. Pamela visited three local primary schools beforehand and conducted workshops with the students who made “feathers” for the sculpture. On the day of the festival a frame made from PVC pipe was constructed and the feathers pinned to it. Music was provided by “Kildare”, a duo consisting of guitar/violin and flute, concentrating around lunchtime. There was also a poetry competition with a wetland theme.

Drawings, colouring-in projects, small sculptures, and poems were done by four local primary schools, most featuring water birds and animals, and were hung in small marquees. Four projects done by year 11 students from Casino High School were displayed. These dealt with wetland vegetation, water quality tests, macro-invertebrate survey, sources of water and changing faces of wetlands. Displays by Wetlands Australia, the NPWS, and the Bungawalbin Catchment Committee, included brochures, photographs, charts and posters. Material focussed on wetlands and riverine ecosystems and how to manage them to sustain their conservation value.

There were several talks by experts on various aspects of wetland ecology, including catchment management, birds, wetlands, flora, agriculture, and fish, and there were guided walks of wetlands with interpreters from the NPWS and other experts. People could go on self-guided walks or bicycle rides, or on guided boat rides up Bungawalbin Creek with the Coraki State Emergency Services. The NPWS also organised children’s wetland activities.

Nine people were surveyed (about 4% of the people attending). Four of those interviewed were participants. Seven women and two men were interviewed, with an average age of 47. Four were in a Landcare group; seven were in a conservation group. About 60% were rural landholders, although none were in a farmer organisation⁴.

Table 2: What people did at the Bungawalbin Wetlands Festival

	No. adults	No. children	Total No.	Liked best by those surveyed

Watch welcoming ceremony	90	30	120	
Participate in welcoming ceremony	4		4	
Participate in Bora Ridge play/acting	1	9	10	
Watch indigenous play/dancing	90	30	120	****
Participate in poetry competition			4	
Listen to poetry entries	90	30	120	
Listen to music	Most attendees			*
Assist build wetland sculpture	20	330	350	
See wetlands sculpture	Most attendees			*
Participate in wetland art displays	0	215	215	
Look at wetland art displays	Approx. 50			
Participate in Senior Science wetlands projects	0	4	4	
Look at Senior Science projects on wetlands	Approx. 50			
Look at other displays	Approx. 50			
Listen to wetlands talks	20-25	A few	30	
Participate in face painting		Approx 30	30	
Activities in the wetlands				
Guided walks of wetlands				
Wetland Waddle in afternoon (1hr)	5	0	5	
Wetlands/birds walk	11	2	13	
Lagoon walk (2hr)	6	3	9	
Wetland waddle (1hr)	18	6	24	
<i>Total participation in guided walks</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>**</i>
Self-guided walks and self-guided bike rides	Large proportion of attendees			***
Guided boat rides up Bungawalbin Creek	Approx. 60			*
Children's wetland activities (2hr)	4	8	12	
Total number of attendees	135	93	228	

The arts introduced an affirmatory and celebratory component into the occasion. The activities which were the most popular were the music, the indigenous dancing, and the sculpture (Table 2). The other popular activities were the guided and self-guided walks and boat rides.

While few people appeared to come to the festival just for the art, rather coming because they were interested in the wetlands, many were attracted because it was a festival and a special occasion (44% of those surveyed). Most people surveyed (about 80%) said they would have come regardless of whether or not the arts component was present. Organisers said that a normal farmer field day on catchment related issues attracted only 6-20 people in the Bungawalbin district. Sixty attendees would have been considered a successful field day and more than 20 farmers would have been considered as 'increasing the audience size'. About 250 people came to the festival, over a half of whom were adults. The Catchment Management Coordinator felt that a high proportion of attendees were rural landholders and this accords with the survey results. The art displays and sculpture activities expanded the audience beyond those

who came on the day, with a further 300 school children participating. Therefore the arts components appeared to elevate what could have been a normal field day into a special event that increased the audience considerably.

The dance and song by the indigenous children provided a vehicle to express sentiments and to build bridges between the black and white communities. It also helped to build confidence for the children who were nervous about performing. It was rare for them to perform outside their school and to a white audience. Their dance was successful in engaging people's emotions. For the children the dance was not just token but an opportunity for them to reinforce cultural practice and to expand that to a non-aboriginal audience. Other arts activities engaged the emotions (made people feel happy, moved etc.), in particular the poetry, face painting, and music.

The arts assisted in creating an atmosphere, which enhanced the experience of the wetlands. The music and performance in particular helped achieve this. The arts also assisted in providing an atmosphere that was conducive for learning, which helped people to take in information and made them feel more involved in the day.

Some aspects aided in the communication of scientific information and helped increase some people's understanding of the wetlands. The artworks done by the school children enabled them to learn about the importance of the wetlands. Although the arts component may not have increased knowledge much, the event itself did. All of those surveyed had heard about the Bungawalbin Wetlands before they came but about 80% could highlight something new that they had learnt about wetlands.

All of those surveyed appeared to be committed to conserving the wetlands and the event simply reinforced those feelings rather than changed attitudes. Seven out of the nine surveyed did the Environment Protection Agency test for environmental behaviour. The average over all questions was 3.73 out of a possible average of 4, which meant those interviewed were already displaying behaviour fairly sympathetic with environmental sustainability. All of those interviewed felt that the wetlands should be managed sustainably and most of them said they did not feel any differently about the wetlands because of the field day which is indicative that they were 'already converted' before they came.

All of those surveyed thought that the arts components made a positive contribution to the event by fostering community interaction and involvement, raising awareness, providing a medium for children to express what they saw or felt about the wetlands, creating a nice ambience for the event (particularly the music), and in the case of the sculpture visually highlighting aspects of the wetlands. When asked which activities should be excluded if the event was repeated none were suggested.

In this setting the main effect of the arts was probably to reinforce people's pre-existing convictions. The experiential aspects of the event probably had the greatest effect - opening peoples' eyes to the richness of the wetlands. The arts enriched the atmosphere, turning the event into a special occasion and thus possibly allowing it to create a more lasting impression and helping attract a larger level of participation.

PLAGUE AND THE MOONFLOWER: AN ECOLOGICAL CHORALE

The Plague and the Moonflower is a composition for choir, solo guitar and orchestra by Ralph Steadman and Richard Harvey. It explores the dark side of humanity through the character of Plague. Its theme is the struggle for the survival of our planet in the face of apathy, pollution and greed. It is, however, celebratory when Plague is transformed through his encounter with the Moonflower, and through his transformation pledges to provide a future for the child (and hence future generations). It is the discovery of the rare Moonflower by the botanical artist Margaret Mee that provides the inspirational aspects of the work. The Moonflower is a rare epiphytic cactus that grows in the Amazon rainforest. It is very rare and only flowers under a full moon for a few hours, emitting a beautiful perfume while it flowers.

The city of Armidale boasts a strong tradition of the arts, having been the state's Third City for the Arts, and supports and nurtures a strong music and theatre culture. In 2002 local medical practitioner (and part-time French horn player and conductor) Bruce Menzies put together a production team and 170 performers and crew to perform *The Plague and the Moonflower* in Armidale in October 2002 (Curtis, 2003a). It had never before been performed outside Britain and the production was hailed locally as "possibly the most significant musical/theatrical event of Armidale's past two decades" (Bill Driscoll, *Armidale Express*, 1 November 2002, p.8).

A year later the production was transported by bus to the Woodford Folk Festival to appear twice as one of the main amphitheatre acts (Curtis, 2004). The production team had been expanded and the cast had grown to over 250 people, including an adult choir, children's choir, orchestra, a group of about two dozen dancers and jugglers, indigenous dancers, several actors, and a large support crew. The production had been redesigned, major props and theatrical elements had been built, costumes redesigned and made for the entire cast and crew, and an efficient organisation established to administer and organise the transport and campsite accommodation of over 300 people. To add to the complexity another performance was held in Armidale before transporting the production to Woodford (www.moonflower.org.au; Curtis (2004)).

The first Armidale production added strong theatrical elements, projections, dancers, jugglers, acrobats and enormous puppetry to the original English production and these elements were greatly expanded for the Woodford production. The incorporation of the didgeridoo into the orchestra and the cleansing and farewell ritual performed by indigenous dancers provided the work with special significance for an Australian audience.

The concerts were a great success artistically and financially. Both concerts in the original Armidale production were virtually full houses, with about 1,000 attending. The subsequent Armidale performance attracted an audience of over 700 and the Woodford audiences over the two shows totalled about 10,000. The festival attracted over 100,000 people over several days and over 500 acts, and the production was hailed by the festival director as that year's highlight.

Interviews with about two dozen participants and audience members were conducted within a few weeks of the 2002 concerts and a few were conducted about six months after the concerts. Audience members appeared to be strongly moved by the experience and strongly identified with the message of the work. The musicians and

choir members seemed to be similarly exhilarated by the performances. These interviews indicated that such art-environment performances could:

- Strongly move people and engender a strong feeling for the environment;
- Have a strong capacity for engendering appreciation and pride of community and could act to strengthen those bonds;
- Have a great capacity for involving a wide range of people and therefore expand the audience for environmental awareness-raising (many in the audience were normal concert goers and not people necessarily attracted to the environmental content); and
- Allow participants to develop their own ideas, to learn about issues and to express their own feelings for those issues, suggesting that the actual process of being involved in events such as these is important in learning and consolidating one's ideas and knowledge.

In the second set of performances these initial hypotheses were tested using a survey of 100 participants, and 70 audience members. An analysis of these surveys found:

- About 80 % of the participants and about 65% of the audience said that the performance moved them emotionally;
- Over 70% of participants and audience said that it made them reflect on people's relationship with the natural environment;
- About 66% of participants and 50% of the audience said that it made them feel strongly towards the natural environment;
- About 85% of the participants and 70% of the audience said that it made them feel an appreciation and pride in community;
- About 36 % of the participants and 20% of the audience said that it exposed them to ideas that they may not have thought much about before;
- About 57% both participants and audience said that it affirmed their beliefs about people's relationship with the natural environment;
- About 50% of the participants said the work allowed them to express their feelings for people's relationship with the natural environment, and said the work allowed them to strengthen their beliefs about certain issues;
- About 40% % of the participants said the work allowed them to learn about some environmental issues;
- Over 90% of the participants said they enjoyed being part of a large team working together.

The Plague and the Moonflower is not a work that lays out a program for action. Instead it seeks to engender respect and appreciation of the natural environment and is critical of the destruction of nature by modern industrialized societies. It operates mostly on the heart, attempting to move the emotions into a love of the natural environment and expressing repugnance at what industrialized societies are doing to it. Primarily it is asking us to ponder what legacy we are leaving for our children. Because of this it could be expected that it might not lead to an immediate behavioural change. Even so about 70% of the participants and 60% of the audience said that the work did make them feel like doing something different to a greater or lesser extent.

Responses from some participants indicated that the event was a pivotal moment in their lives. In others I suspect that that the event will open their minds to information

that they receive at a later time. After the event, viola player and lecturer in urban design Chris Cunningham wrote about the effects that the event may have had in terms of changing people's environmental behaviour and said that the real value of the production was that it galvanised a community (close to 5% of the town) in an act of genuine altruism which was an important counter to the materialistic message of industry: "It is not therefore particularly important whether the show turned the audience 'on' to responsible environmental care ... The real point is that the show demonstrated, through and by the Armidale community that there ARE alternatives to the passive acceptance of the message of consumerism that industry would like to rule our lives" (letter to the author 3 January 2004).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The capacity of the arts to foster cooperation indicates an important potential role of community arts in fostering environmental sustainability. Many communities are hampered in their capacity to work together due to internal divisions and philosophic differences. Involvement by families in musical or theatrical activities, however, can be unthreatening and can often help heal social divisions or at least 'soften' resistance to the idea of communities working together. Such involvement, then, can potentially foster an improved social climate from which community-based environmental work may more readily emerge.

There are many examples where citizens and groups have promoted nature conservation and environmental protection through the arts, e.g. (Downfall Creek Bushland Centre, ca. 2002). The visual and performing arts appear to have great potential in encouraging people to reflect on the consequences of their actions and the nature of the environment itself, to influence our values, to show us ways to change our behaviour to lessen our impact on the environment and to enhance the environment through our activities (Clifford, 2000; Grant, 2001; Green, 2002; Kastner & Wallis, 2001; Norman, 2001). Various forms are used effectively by different groups in society to affirm pro-environmental belief systems (Gold & Reville, 2004). The arts (or particular artists) are often at the forefront in challenging dominant paradigms and are often active participants in attempts to change society (Cembalest, 1991; Goldberg, 1991). The ability of artists to synthesise complex ideas into powerful symbolic images, songs or performances can be important in influencing individuals and even the greater community, and has been used affectively in environmental education programs in schools and in community education and extension (Andrew & Eastburn, 1997; Evergreen Theatre, 2002). The celebratory aspects of the visual and performing arts also make them a useful tool in affirming ecological restoration and environmental repair activities. The association between artists and those who attempt to conserve the natural environment has a long history (Bonyhady, 2000) and many artists use their work to communicate important insights into human relationships with the natural environment (Pollak & MacNabb, 2000).

Our relationship with the environment is determined by our entire culture. Since the arts are integral with the culture, a society that is living sustainably within the environment will reflect it in its arts. Cultural vitality is as essential to a healthy and sustainable society as social equity, environmental responsibility and economic viability (Hawkes, 2003).

The case studies presented here are examples where arts based events have aided participation by a broad cross section of the community, have strengthened a community's abilities to promote inclusion, and have been vehicles for community mobilisation, empowerment, and information transfer. They also show how arts-based activities might be able to effect environmental behaviour at the individual and community level. It is hoped that community development workers, group organisers and extension agents might draw ideas from these examples to better utilise the arts in creating changes in environmental behaviour in the rural context.

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¹ For a fuller description of the methods used in the overall study refer to Curtis (2003b).

² 2001 Census data for Armidale-Dumaresq Local Government Area: total population 24,134. Some people attended from neighbouring shires.

³ These results are based largely on my own 'participant observations'.

⁴ Surveys conducted at the festival were treated as a pilot and provided a model which were modified for surveys at other case study events. For full description of survey techniques refer directly to the author. The interview sheet proved to be too long. Some questions were cut out on the day, and the survey form was simplified for surveys in the third of these case studies based on the experience at the Bungawalbin festival.