



CREATIVE REGIONS

RESTORING REGIONAL & REMOTE ARTS

The Greens' plan for the arts to flourish in our regions

The arts inject meaning, thoughtfulness and reflection into our increasingly pressured daily lives. Just when it is most needed, regional arts missed out in the national funding package. The Greens will restore regional arts funding to its peak, create jobs and build community participation in the arts.

The Greens want our regional communities, who are rightly proud of their unique identities, to be able to express their talents, their values and their stories. Yet this tradition is at threat with declining government funding to support our Creative Regions. The Greens will turn all this around through our regional arts policy.

> PROMOTING ART, JOBS AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Regional Arts Fund is the central pool of money used to cultivate community projects and support regional artists. This money was cut in 2008 and has never regained its previous funding levels. The Greens are committed to restoring the fund, in real dollars to its 2004 peak and further expand its scope and funding. We will invest an additional \$10m in regional arts.

The Greens will expand the Regional Arts Fund so that:

- **Australia's 408 regional and remote local governments can apply for funding to establish cultural policy officers to drive local, tailored community art projects.**
- **Regional artists will have greater ability to develop artistic projects that directly involve their communities and use art as a vehicle to build social enterprises.**
- **There will be more money to go around, reaching more regions and more people through more touring.**
- **The accounting and allocation of grant money will be simplified so that individuals in remote areas are able to spend more time involved in their art projects and less time navigating complex management requirements.**

> MORE MONEY, MORE ART

Each dollar goes further when invested in regional areas because every project leverages a greater participation from the community, generates a higher circulation of income and brings local communities closer together.

The Regional Arts Fund distributes its money over four year cycles and in the peak of its popularity in 2008, was cut back by the Labor government. To bring the fund back to its 2004 funding levels in today's dollars requires an additional investment of \$6 million for the remainder of the current 2012-16 cycle.

The Greens will commit a further \$4 million for regional and remote local governments to establish ongoing employment positions whose job will be dedicated solely to developing and attracting artistic projects into their community, or taking their projects on the road.

Experience shows that when local governments have a dedicated cultural policy officer, that community sees an explosion in performances, exhibitions and tourism. Not only will these jobs help establish and manage projects, but these cultural officers will be able to dedicate quality time to attract public and philanthropic money to flow into their regions.

> LESS COMPLEXITY, MORE ART

While the Office of the Arts has struggled to do its job with staff cut-backs, it has retained its complex management requirements for grant recipients. The Greens are committed to simplify the grant allocation, distribution and accounting systems so that regional artists can spend more time devoted to their projects.



These changes in administrative requirements will particularly assist remote Indigenous artists and those individuals who are currently required to have an auspice manage even the smallest of grants on their behalf. We will consult with artists and administrators on the best ways to achieve these improvements.

> THE VALUE OF REGIONAL ARTS

Regional Arts Funding ensures that Australian culture in our regions is showcased not only locally but for the whole of Australia to enjoy. Local stories inspire and inform our nation. Here are just two of the many projects that speak a local story and influence our nation.



Smashed by Big hART

Not your regular short-film competition, *Smashed* was a project that offered high school students in the North-West of Tasmania the opportunity to make short films exploring the problems of youth binge drinking.

The project started off as a workshop for a peer-led discussion around the social attitudes and effects of binge drinking. As they developed their thoughts about the complex relationships between young people and alcohol, they could transform their ideas through the creative medium of film.

Just as these school students were trained with skills in screen production, they also shared their own stories and their own perspectives with their community. These young leaders could now set a different agenda for an open, honest and stripped back discussion of binge drinking with their friends, family and community as their audience.

Since 1992, Big hART have worked with over 6,500 people from 32 disadvantaged communities across Australia. They use a diverse range of artforms to develop community engagement, build resilience and share important stories.



Photo: Sarah Simmons

Murray Darlings by Lara van Raay and Sarah Simmons

This project mapped the lives of remarkable and inspirational women living along the remote stretches of the mighty Murray and Darling Rivers. Their histories, character and personal stories are delivered to the audience in a multimedia platform using photography and film and placed on the internet to be viewed by people from all corners of the country and around the world.

The tales of rugged, rural Australia have traditionally been told by, or about the pioneer men who made the most of the bush. But they would never have survived without the women and children whose voices are so rarely publicised.

Without a project like *Murray Darlings*, these stories of proud rural women might otherwise never be heard.

The producers of this project are keen for women along the Rivers to keep telling their stories and we are too. But with limited government funding available, they are now turning for support from local businesses.

To learn about the strength, integrity and humour of these women, visit:

<http://www.murraydarlings.com.au>

> OTHER PARTIES

Labor all but ignored regional arts in its recently released National Cultural Policy and the Coalition have yet to release any policies to support the arts in the 2013 election.