

# **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE STANDING COMMITTEE**

## **INQUIRY INTO THE ARTS IN REGIONAL WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE TAKEN  
AT PERTH  
WEDNESDAY, 10 MARCH 2004**

### **Members**

**Mr D.A. Templeman (Chairman)  
Mr L. Graham (Deputy Chairman)  
Mr J.N. Hyde  
Mr A.P. O’Gorman  
Ms S.E. Walker**

**Committee met at 9.32 am**

**FARRANT, MR ANDREW GRAHAM,**  
**General Manager, Country Arts WA,**  
**PO Box 7012, Cloisters Square,**  
**Perth, examined:**

**BROWN, MS ROSALIND GLAYDE RUTH**  
**Arts Worker, Country Arts WA,**  
**PO Box 7012, Cloisters Square,**  
**Perth, examined:**

**The CHAIRMAN:** I call to order this hearing of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee on Wednesday, 10 March 2004. I welcome the witnesses who are appearing before us this morning. I have a little preamble that I need to go through. I ask the witnesses to respond where appropriate. This committee hearing is a proceeding of Parliament and warrants the same respect that proceedings in the House itself demand. Even though you are not required to give evidence on oath, any deliberate misleading of the committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. Have you completed the details of witness form?

**Mr Farrant:** I have, Mr Chairman.

**Ms Brown:** I have.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Did you understand the notes attached to it?

**Mr Farrant:** Yes.

**Ms Brown:** Yes, I did.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Did you receive and read an information for witnesses briefing sheet regarding giving evidence before parliamentary committees?

**Mr Farrant:** I did.

**Ms Brown:** Yes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you very much. The committee has received your submission, and I thank you very much for providing that. You have provided a very detailed submission to this inquiry. Are there any amendments that you propose to make?

**Mr Farrant:** No, but there are probably a couple of points of extension that I would like to talk about.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We will go through those. Is it your wish that the submission be incorporated as part of the transcript of evidence?

**Mr Farrant:** That would be fine.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you. As you are both aware, the committee has been involved in this inquiry into arts in regional Western Australia. I know you are aware of the terms of reference that have been presented. I understand that you are also aware that, as part of our activity, the committee has been visiting the regions in Western Australia. What I would like you to do first is give us a very brief overview or general opening statement highlighting to us the key issues that you consider are impacting and will impact on arts delivery and arts outcomes in regional communities.

**Mr Farrant:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. First, I commend the committee having travelled the length and breadth of the State in doing this work. I also acknowledge that this meeting is being held on traditional land and I acknowledge the traditional owners, the Nyoongah people. I have prepared an overview in more detail than the general briefing I was able to give the committee of the work of Country Arts WA. I will then perhaps step into the issues and outcomes you have requested.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That is fine. I am just conscious of time. We are looking at concluding at around 11 o'clock, if not before.

**Mr Farrant:** Very good. That is terrific. I will start by looking at the five key values of the organisation. These are instructive of the way in which Country Arts WA and its board and staff undertakes its work. This is what we call in the office the SIDRA mantra. SIDRA stands for sustainability, integration, deep connections, reconciliation and art in daily life. At every point in our operations, be it in a long-term planning and strategy meeting or whether it is just me or one of my colleagues sitting at a desk undertaking a particular task, we can measure our work against these five core values. With the sustainability issue, we must really ask the question: is what we are doing creating models for sustainability through regional organisations? With integration, we ask the question: is the work that we are doing strongly integrated across the operations of the organisation, and does it offer the community the opportunity for integration of networks and ideas? The third point, deeper connections, involves our fieldwork in particular, and we must ask whether we are making deeper connections with communities. It involves looking for the sometimes hidden groups. Are we helping country communities to make connections of their own? Often it is very easy to go to the organisations that are the shopfronts of a town without actually looking behind those facades. Our use of the definition of reconciliation goes more broadly than the general use, which tends to be about indigenous and non-indigenous interaction. The arts are a great tool for bringing people together to create activities of common interest and contact. Is our work providing opportunities for people to reconcile their differences and work towards discovering where their common interests lie? Finally, there is art in daily life. It is certainly our view that the arts are an absolutely integral part of the lives of all Australians. We ask the question: is our work promoting the role that the arts play in the everyday life of regional people across Australia and, most particularly, Western Australia? Those five core values help us set the tone of the work of the board as well as the staff.

Country Arts WA plays a strategic role in its work. It is a facilitator. It is an advocate for arts in regional Western Australia. It plays a supportive role to organisations, groups, individuals and artists who want to undertake the arts in their communities. It plays a leadership role within regional arts. We have and are run by an end-user driven philosophy. We are very conscious that we are a city-based organisation. Eighty per cent of our board members are regionally based and help keep us to the mark and meet those regional services. However, we respond to requests and indirect input from regional people all over the State in towns and communities large and small. Our approach is unbureaucratic. It is flexible, responsive and direct. I can give the committee an example. We were asked by the State Government to take over the devolved funding role of a number of programs and the funding of small projects. At the time of the handover the decision-making process around those projects took between three and four months from the closing date. We have narrowed that down to four weeks. An applicant for a program that has a closing date on the first of the month can know by the end of that month whether the application has been successful.

[9.40 am]

I say quite proudly that there are many, many regional success stories of arts programs and projects that have been delivered in regional towns by communities working with artists from across the State. One of the core reasons for that is the passion that regional people have for the arts. It may

be instructive for the committee to see a map that we created for the Commonwealth Government. The map was originally in colour, but unfortunately we do not have a colour photocopier. It is a map of Western Australia, and it shows the travel by one of our regional arts fund officers - that is a commonwealth-supported program - in the space of about 14 months. The continuous lines on the map show the air and land travel that that officer undertook, and the dots represent opportunities at which other staff members of Country Arts WA have presented information on our general work and have worked locally with groups but have also presented information about the regional arts fund. This is fairly illustrative of the time that we are able to spend, and work hard to spend, in regional communities.

A couple of committee members were able to attend our Horizons conference. I hope that conference gave the committee and the research officer a very good look into the real everyday life of community arts people. The conference was hugely successful. On the Sunday morning of our conference we held a forum, which was an opportunity for regional delegates to tell us what they thought and about their priorities - not just how we were going, but where they were finding the biggest challenges. A lot of things came from that forum, but I think - Michael Baker would agree with me on this, I am sure - that the number one priority was the need for a network of regionally based support officers who could play a direct role in project assistance as well as a more strategic role. That was something that I suppose we already knew from our work, but it was very rewarding and instructive to have that view read out to us in such a detailed way during that forum. The notes of that forum are on the web site, and I believe Michael has already downloaded them.

At the moment there are five regionally based positions that Country Arts WA supports through the commonwealth regional arts fund. They are based in Port Hedland, at the Courthouse Gallery; in Esperance there is a youth field officer; in Geraldton there is a young people's program; at the Ngaanyatjarra Shire in Warburton there is an arts officer; and in Bunbury a regional arts development officer works across the south west region. Although each of these is delivering a successful program and a number of activities in their respective towns, this group is not networked. Therefore, it is not sustainable in the long-term. Many have limited or non-existent travel budgets and limited training and other support budgets. Each has a different role and management structure and is modelled on the different needs and stage of development of the host community and region. The diversity of this group was witnessed by your research officer, Michael Baker, during the Horizons conference when he attended the breakfast. Hopefully that was instructive for Michael. This small group of five adds to what is a particularly low level of human infrastructure in the regions in Western Australia. Last week Ros Brown and I gave a presentation to regionally based librarians. I had always had the mental picture that there were many regionally based qualified librarians. I was astonished to discover that the number is less than 25 - a figure that I found quite breathtaking.

I do not know whether it will be useful for the committee, but contained in my submission is the sport and recreation model for regional arts officers. Would the committee like me to put up the overhead?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes, please.

**Mr Farrant:** I obtained this overhead when I was preparing the full submission to the committee from the Department of Sport and Recreation. That department has what I believe is a very workable structure of staff members. As you can see, it separates the western desert from the other regions that are generally accepted as development commission regions, and there is no sports and development officer there. There is a manager in all of the other regions. In the majority of the regions, there is also a regional officer and administrative support. In addition, there are focus programs: one on active work programs; one on coaching, which is a professional development program for regional sports coaches; and one on indigenous sporting activities. Finally, there are a number of sports development officers, who focus their work over the year on cricket, football and

the like. This is a particularly instructive model, and one that the culture and the arts sector could well make use of. This model is managed through the state government Department of Sport and Recreation. I am not today planning to make any real statements about our hope that there will be a regional network of arts officers. There will need to be some long conversations about how that network might be managed and delivered, and I will leave it to the committee to ask questions about that if it wishes. This model really reflects the Department of Sport and Recreation's determination to have a strong interaction between its regional clients and the next generation of sportspeople, and regional Western Australia's engagement with the Department of Sport and Recreation. It is a very useful model for resources. What I find most instructive about this is that we are not talking about just one person in a region. There is an office of sport and recreation officers, not just an officer. I think that is an absolutely vital point.

In considering that kind of model for the arts there needs to be local ownership of these positions. They should not become gatekeepers. I note from reading a number of the transcripts of evidence already given that that point has been raised. The officers can either be strategic in their work or they can actually deliver project and program-focused work. The examples I gave earlier are a good working model of the diversity of approach there. Local government and volunteer groups need to be involved. There is a need for training and resourcing of the staff members, and also for those people to be able to be networked and meet regularly so that they can share their successes and failures and work as a statewide network themselves.

I will now reiterate the other key recommendations in our submission to the committee. The cultural capital fund, when it is established, needs to be strategically placed for cultural infrastructure so that projects are designed and built with strong consultation from the relevant people and so that they have direct input into the new infrastructure, including the upgrade of existing facilities. There should be a strategic link with sporting and education facilities, to name just two, in the creation of collocation partnerships so that there are improved local services and, of course, savings.

[9.50 am]

Another one of our recommendations is to allocate new support for the creation of an arts federation for the State Government so that the State Government can gain direct industry advice. The creation of this federation will have the effect of drawing together the arts sector in one united voice. Some committee members will be aware that that has not necessarily been the case in the past. The Sports Federation of Australia and the Western Australian Council of Social Service have been two models. We have received much support from those two formal structures in the creation and preliminary work of setting up this new model. A business plan has been completed and the structure is that this will be a voice for - and the membership will be entirely of - peak organisations for the arts across the State.

Another recommendation is that there be increased allocation for the improvement of arts and education programs in each region for teachers and students in primary and high schools to extend the existing ArtsEdge program.

A further recommendation is that funds be allocated to the cultural statutory authorities, the Art Gallery of Western Australia and the Museum, to name two, so that they can meet current regional obligations. Finally a recommendation has been made to establish a research program to examine the extent of social and cultural sector in Western Australia and determine the areas of strength and weakness in arts activity and arts development in each region. This should include case studies on festivals, productions and infrastructure. On that last recommendation, I think it became apparent during my informal briefing of the committee last year that when the member for Pilbara asked me questions about the impact and the measurement of the arts in regional Western Australia, very little research had been done. I indicated again that it was fertile ground for further work.

It is a feature of the arts in regional Western Australia that an overwhelming majority of the activities are undertaken, managed and delivered by volunteers. It is important that their role, value and needs are met. Currently, they are not being met in a diverse manner. It must be understood that the use of volunteers has an effect on arts activity, its quality, its quantity and its diversity.

I would like to briefly talk about a program that we are delivering with commonwealth assistance and will be extending with assistance from the Department of Local Government and Regional Development later this year. It is called "Creative Volunteering - No Limits." and is a volunteer training program of six units of one-day in length. Those six units include "Making the Most of What Your Community Has". The training sector uses very dry and uninteresting language so we have renamed some of them. The formal name is "Networking in Your Community." The others are: "Useful Tools For Long-term Success" the business-planning, one day unit; "Making People Aware of What You've got to Offer" the marketing unit based on not only getting more members into regional volunteer networks but also to the events held by those organisations; "Money and Help - How to Get It, How to Keep It", focusing on resources and funding; "Creating Tomorrow's History - What is Valuable, What is Interesting", a one-day workshop in working with collections - I note, for instance, in the sport and recreation area that there are very uneven collections of the history and materials from past sporting areas - and "Making Your Event Work" a one-day unit on planning and programming events.

I am happy to table examples of the work books that participants use in these workshops on a daily basis. I have four of the six workshops, including the one for development, funding and resources.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Where will you hold them?

**Mr Farrant:** Phase 1 has been rolled out from last year. Phase 2 is about to be rolled out. We work in double-day workshops, usually on a Thursday and Friday or Monday and Tuesday. The first ones will be held in Denmark and others will be held in Esperance, Exmouth, Bunbury, Margaret River. I cannot recall where the final two will be held. I will forward that information to the committee.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Are they in regional areas?

**Mr Farrant:** They are all being held in the regions. The only one held in the city was the Museums Australia National Conference held in Perth in May. It attracted hundreds of museum representatives from around the country. The one-day workshop "Working with Collections" was held during that conference here in Perth. It was a great way of killing many birds with one stone.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Are you tapping into the resources of the volunteer resource centres?

**Mr Farrant:** Absolutely. They are a major partner of ours. We are also working closely with local Government, TAFE campuses, adult education networks and, of course, volunteer networks. In Esperance, for instance, there is a web site that lists all the volunteer networks, ranging from bird watchers, sporting clubs, motorcar racing groups and the like. People can make direct contact with those groups using that resource. Resources on a town-by-town basis are uneven, but we tap into those wherever possible. These training sessions are managed by Regional Arts Australia, our national body, and there is a contract between Regional Arts Australia and the service provider for the training. In Western Australia that service provider is the Western Australian Council of Social Service, in partnership with Community Arts Network, the registered training organisation - it is nationally accredited training - and Edith Cowan University, which also plays a role in the delivery of the training.

**The CHAIRMAN:** How successful was last year's roll out of these modules?

**Mr Farrant:** They were very successful. We are continuing to focus on delivering them in towns that are often not serviced. For instance, one of the early towns to which we delivered the training programs was the booming metropolis of Lake King. People from the great southern area drove to Lake King and undertook the training along with local people. We have been scientific about our

approach. At the end of 2002 we sent out a detailed questionnaire to a number of sport and recreation networks and museums, arts, cultural and indigenous networks and asked them to respond. We rolled out our training program based on those responses.

To indicate how the program has been received, a number of participants, who undertook two-day training in Port Hedland discovered during that training that the next two units in the program were being delivered in Broome in the following 10 days. They filled up the car's petrol tank with fuel and drove to Broome and spent two days there to undertake that training. This is the tip of the iceberg of the training of volunteers.

In addition to the recommendations in the submission I would also like to add a further recommendation that again, using another model, a regional arts scholarship program be introduced for young and emerging artists and arts workers. This could be modelled on a similar sports development scholarship program that offers travel, networking, on the job training and study to recipients. I will round off with two short stories about regional communities and how they are working hard at building new audiences. It is very easy to assume that the arts have a steady and dedicated audience. However, the sector is working hard at building new audiences. I understand the committee has taken evidence from Pamela Toster from the Ballidu Contemporary Arts Society. I will relate one story that I am sure she did not tell, because it is typical of the society's everyday work. Some two years ago they discovered to their horror that an art exhibition opening was to be held on the same day as the AFL grand final. They realised that the competition between an AFL grand final and an arts exhibition would be a lay-down misere that the sporting interest would win. Rather than follow the existing model of an arts exhibition opening during the evening over a glass of wine and something delicate to eat, they opened it late morning, prelunch. It was timed so that children's sporting activities were finished. The community came together at the Art Gallery. People of all ages attended the exhibition and the whole town as one repaired to the local hotel to watch the football broadcast on a large screen. It was a great coming together of a town that I think has only about 80 residents. It is a very small community but with an arts society that has an extraordinarily powerful and potent program.

The second event relates to the Albany Town Hall Theatre, which is owned and managed by the City of Albany. Three years ago Country Arts WA coordinated a statewide tour of a show called *Road Train*, which was hugely successful. We also coordinated a national tour of this production. *Road Train* was a hugely successful celebration of life in the trucking industry, the rough and ready blokes, their somewhat misogynistic attitude to women, the women, the songs, the music and the poetry of the road. To market that to a new audience and develop a new audience in Albany, a central and very successful part of the marketing program for *Road Train* in Albany was that, if people turned up to the town hall booking office and were carrying a driver's licence that had either a B-class or C-class rating, which meant they were truck drivers, they were given two tickets for the price of one. The venue manager told me that that night his theatre was filled with people who had never been inside the theatre before. He said it was a lively and riotous night and they loved their opportunity to see some trucking stories told on the stage. Clearly, for him, although there was an opportunity cost in reduced income from ticket sales, he felt he had achieved his objective of getting a new audience into his theatre.

[10.00 am]

Perhaps I can throw open the proceedings now to questions, Mr Chairman.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you. I would like to explore this concept in your submission about developing a network of arts officers similar to the model that the Department of Sport and Recreation use. Can you tell us who you see as the appropriate overseer of that network?

**Mr Farrant:** As I said before, I have purposely not recommended any one model because I think it needs some work. There are examples at the moment of regionally based arts officers who are working inside staffing structures of local government, and in some instances they are hugely

successful. In other instances, those officers working in the arts are being hamstrung by having to do a huge amount of other work that is related to local government work. For instance, I know one arts officer who is taking part in a bin audit, which is to do with monitoring the council's recycle rates. Recycled waste may be something that can be used for an arts project, but I would argue that it is hardly directly relevant to the operation of a successful arts program.

We have seen success in places where there is local ownership of the position. I go back to the five positions that we are supporting through the regional arts fund. The officer in Port Hedland is employed by the Town of Port Hedland. The position is managed by a local committee and has a reporting structure to the Town of Port Hedland, but it is supported by a local reference committee. The committee runs a program at the Courthouse Arts Centre and Art Gallery. I do not know whether members of this committee have visited it, but the old courthouse is a building that was in the public domain. Due to some very concerted work by local government and the community, the courthouse nearly became a Chinese takeaway, but it was actually kept in the public domain through an award-winning partnership between the town and a local Aboriginal organisation. The courthouse program is diverse. It has launched a number of successful artists' careers, including Jilalga Murray, a young and emerging indigenous artist. I received an e-mail yesterday, which I am happy to table. It is a handbill for an exhibition of works called "Eye Candy" by Michael Brand, who is a local artist. At the bottom of the handbill are a number of logos, which I think illustrates the way in which support for these structures is knitted together - the area consultative committee is there, which is the DOTARS program; BHP Iron Ore is a supporter; the regional arts fund; the Town of Port Hedland. It gives full acknowledgment of DOTARS support and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission support. That at the moment is how the courthouse is surviving - with a sort of knitted-together support structure. To a degree that is to be encouraged, but I also think that you can have too many legs to a stool before it becomes unstable. Does that answer your question, Mr Chairman?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes, it does. We have heard in evidence that there have been some quite unsuccessful examples of arts officers, including the goldfields-Esperance experiment. That is not a reflection on the officer, but the position. I think that officer had only two and a half days to work and there was no travel budget, as you mentioned.

**Mr Farrant:** That is not strictly true, but there was certainly a limited travel budget in a big region. I can respond to that. That was a position in a partnership with Country Arts WA and, again, we received money via the State, but it was actually commonwealth money for that position. It was a case of making a silk purse out of a sow's ear. I note that in some evidence given that one person described it as disastrous. I would say that was not the case at all, but it did suffer. One of the key things that we have learnt is the high rate of burnout in those positions in which a part-time officer has a huge region to cover. We focused an awful lot of that officer's work on specific subregions. She played a broad strategic role across the region in which she was very successful. Frankly, also, that region's interaction with the arts and its access to arts programs available through the State and Commonwealth increased substantially during the period of that officer's work. It was only half successful because the officer had only half a week in which to work. I think the burnout factor also points to an issue that I raised in my comments today: these officers need their own support network and need to know that they have peers on whom they can call for support. I do not know whether Ros Brown has anything she would like to add to that.

**Ms Brown:** There would be enormous value in setting up and basing a network within each of the development commissions. Have other comments been made to that effect?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Various examples have been given. One person talked about a model attached to the development commissions. Another option was for local government to play a key role in those areas of Western Australia where councils have been regionalised. The committee was in Bunbury two or three weeks ago and was told that the Bunbury position is yet to be filled.



**Mr Farrant:** That is vacant at the moment. The officer who was in the position is currently working for the Department of Culture and the Arts. I believe the position will be filled and it will complete the work until December 2004, but the core of that work is continuing under the Bunbury Regional Art Galleries program.

**Ms Brown:** If we can jump back to what I was saying, I will continue. There is an advantage to officers being based in development commissions so that they will have independence from particular local arts bodies and from specific local government bodies. I think some sort of a centralised coordination of that network should be carried out by either Country Arts WA or ArtsWA and there needs to be a lot more discussion about how those mechanisms would work.

**Mr Farrant:** A very strategic decision was made to base the Kalgoorlie position in the development commission. It would be fair to say that at that stage the development commission had a limited understanding of the impact of culture and the arts. Many development commissions are very keenly focused on economic and infrastructure outcomes. A lot of the strategic plan in each development commission refers to social and cultural matters, but they are given an uneven delivery at the moment. Going back to the way in which the regional arts fund positions are managed and run, I think the answer would be different for each centre and for each region. For instance, there is a diversity of approach that responds to the development of arts in the south west region and in a town such as Bunbury, which has the greatest concentration of regional arts in the State. There are some extremely skilled people living in the city of Bunbury and there is an awful lot of infrastructure there. The need of the people there are very different. I emphasise that the kind of meaningful support that such a statewide model would be able to deliver is different from that in a town the size of Port Hedland or even Kununurra. I would therefore argue for a diverse approach that responds to the different needs of those towns in those regions, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. However, I agree that local government has a key role to play and the development commissions are absolutely vital as part of that mix. Other informal networks, through volunteer groups, arts groups and cultural groups, and more formal ones, through the state government infrastructure in libraries, museums and art galleries, also have a role to play so that those officers and their offices do not become a pimple on a pumpkin, but are part of a much bigger matrix and can actually see the big picture.

[10.10 am]

Certainly, going back to the Horizons conference, when 250 people from around the State's regions gathered in Karratha, time and again delegates said to me that they felt that their sense of isolation had been hugely reduced by their attendance at the conference, that they felt they were actually part of something much bigger, and that they had not realised that they were part of something much bigger. With that, I suppose, underlying energy and direction, they were able to go home and realise that what they were doing was having a local impact, a positive impact, and that the work was worth carrying on. Therefore, I think there are some principles there that can be carried on into how a management structure might be delivered if this proposal was successful.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Where would this lead if we were to go down the track of increasing the infrastructure in the regions? What about Country Arts WA? As you mentioned in your preliminary comments, at the moment it is a Perth-centred organisation, or is located in the city. What was the rationale behind locating Country Arts WA in Perth? Also, has any consideration been given to what is done in New South Wales, which has a smaller presence in Sydney of its country or regional arts equivalent, if you like, and the rest has been devolved to the regions? What are your comments on those matters?

**Mr Farrant:** In terms of the comments on location, it really goes back to our membership, and being able to best serve our membership, that keeps our office in Perth. As I said at the outset, eight of our 10 board members are regionally based, and I can assure the inquiry that if we stray from delivering and focusing on regional service delivery, they are very, very quick to respond and

remind us where our responsibilities lie. I think the five-point value check list that I presented at the outset helps reinforce that. Secondly, in terms of the staff of Country Arts WA, to give an example, almost all the nine staff of Country Arts WA have extensive regional experience. To illustrate that, our regional youth arts development officer, who has just been employed - her name is Rachel McKenzie and she is from Manjimup - has just completed two years work with Mangkaja Arts in Fitzroy Crossing as its youth officer. They are the calibre of people, with absolute immediate regional experience.

Being based in Perth is actually making sure that regional arts is also not considered a fringe activity. I think one of the great success stories for us is that our advocacy role has meant that we have been able to argue - and argue successfully - that arts in regional Western Australia is as much of a priority as arts activity in the capital city. That is largely because we have been able to attend meetings, we have been able to lobby politicians, we have been able to meet with sponsors and other key stakeholders who are city based and we are also accessible, so that our colleagues in the arts sector have a chance to interact and see the work that we are doing. I have to say the location of the King Street Arts Centre, and the seemingly informal corridor conversations that happen in King Street, are also extremely useful in our making sure that those organisations are considering the regions in their work. I think we have been very successful in that.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** Your report is excellent. It gives a really good understanding of what is happening with the arts. It might be bleeding obvious to some people, but it is a fact that, for a variety of reasons - and part of the reason we are doing this report is to put it out there - sports are more valued in our society. In WA the historical perspective has been that, through the CSRFF, government funds massive amounts and local communities devote enormous resources through their council and their volunteers to football, hockey or whatever, even if there are only 20 people in the town. The level of participation, on some readings, is high for some areas of the arts, which is fine. The moment we bring in film, TV and other things, we can fiddle figures. However, if we look at the amount of government money and the amount of private money that has gone into sport compared with what has gone into the arts, it is probably reflective of the value that the community places on the arts. I say that as a preamble. I guess it is a concept that I disagree with. When you try to sit down and talk to people one on one on the value of the arts, we find that we give a tiny amount of money for a painting that should have been in the new convention centre as part of the per cent for arts policy that this State is supposed to have had, and that was ignored for that building; the Government gets hit over the head. We have massive sports functions, and nobody bats an eyelid.

You have spoken about the role of advocacy. In here you are addressing the issue of the federation, which seems to be a bit of a buzz at the moment, and people are talking about a federation. You and I have both been around long enough to know that when ArtsVoice became a concept, that was a buzz and everybody said, "United voice for the arts. This is the way to go." Is the fact that we are now looking at a federation, or trying to copy the sports model of having a federation, an indication that our advocacy for the arts has failed? It may be about devoting resources to advocacy, be it Country Arts or it whoever else is involved in the arts or funded in the arts. Is it the case that we have failed with advocacy, and perhaps we really should not be involved in advocacy?

**Mr Farrant:** I do not think we have failed, but I also think that the sports sector does it a whole lot better than we do. We are not copying the sports sector. We have actually taken a lot of good advice from WACOSS and from a number of other peak organisations as well. However, I think there has also been a maturation of approach. In the arts sector, from volunteers through to professionals, I think there is a real focus on actually doing the work, as opposed to telling the story about the work that you have done. I have always maintained that you do the work 80 per cent of the time and you talk about the work that you have done, the successes and the challenges 20 per cent of the time. I think many arts organisations focus entirely on doing the work rather than actually telling the story. I think the arts sector can and must improve its advocacy role. I think that

a sports-like federation will help do that because of the change of structure. At the moment ArtsVoice does not, for instance, embrace at all the volunteer, sort of not-for-profit, community level of arts, nor is it engaged with the commercial gallery network and other commercial arts operations as an organisation of peak arts bodies. It is not going to happen overnight, but a far more sophisticated, determined and strategic approach is being taken to not only form the federation, but also actually make sure the federation speaks for those three tiers: the commercial, the subsidised and the community level of arts program. I think, too, that in any endeavour, no matter what you do, you need to be able to talk about it, and I think that the arts sector is pretty passionate about its work. I have always maintained that I do not think you can talk about your work too much. Therefore, I cannot agree with the notion that we should pull away from the advocacy. I think we actually need to be more strategic about our advocacy, and I think you are also trying to change the minds of 20 million people. I think Australia is slowly realising that statistically there are twice the number of people engaged in the arts and cultural sector nationally each year than are engaged in the sporting sector, but you have all Australians believing that sports is number one because of the newspaper metreage on a daily basis and so on.

[10.20 am]

**Ms Brown:** I have to say that I think it is chicken-and-egg stuff. There is an appalling lack of infrastructure in the arts in Western Australia at the moment, both built infrastructure and professional people on the ground making things happen. People do not have the opportunity to experience arts activities and events - that sort of thing. It is very difficult to build an awareness and understanding of what the arts have to offer. My mission is to grow cultural appetites but it is very difficult because we oftentimes have very few on-the-ground tools to do that with.

**Mr Farrant:** I think that it is people's understanding of what the arts is. If you stop most people in the street, they will tell you that the arts is going to the opera, attending an arts exhibition or going to an orchestra or ballet. It is about being in uncomfortable clothes and tight shoes and being on your best behaviour. That would be the general Australian's view of what the arts is. The diversity of the arts is much beyond that - through to circus and dance. People are engaging in the arts on a daily basis but they do not think of it as an arts activity. If I can illustrate that: about 18 months ago I was invited to the regional council meeting of the great southern, where there were about 50 shire presidents and their CEOs. I was asked to talk to them about the arts and the great southern. I began by reading out a list of about 15 or so arts activities. I explained to the gathered local government people that I was an ex-primary school teacher and I asked them to bear with me. I got them to put up their hands when, on the list, they had actually undertaken one of the activities in the last 12 months. I read through the list and there was a sea of hands. I looked them all in the eye and said it was terrific because I had not realised that I was in a room full of arts consumers. They laughed at that. I then got them to turn to each other and tell the person next to them at what stage on the list they put up their hand. There was general conversation and then it quietened down. I explained to them that things were getting better and better because I was now in a room full of confessed arts consumers. Afterwards, one of the councillors came and slapped me on the back and said that he had learned something today and that he had to go home and tell his wife that he was a far more cultured man than he ever thought he was. I think that illustrates that Australians understand what are sporting activities but that, generally, they do not understand what we do as a daily thing that is an arts activity. We need to address that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Although the ABS figures have consistently - especially recently - shown that people are indicating participation in a whole range of arts activities more than they ever were.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** Our inquiry has shown that people do know they are involved in the arts. People know that they are doing those activities. They also know they value sport; they have more interest in sport. They love sport. There is more passion about sport than there is about arts activities. Maybe who are involved in the arts should, instead of trying to lecture communities or tell them

why they are not valuing us, ask why our artists - our Bunbury ballet dancers and so on - are not on the front page just as our footballers are every time they hurt their knees.

**Ms Brown:** I guess I would still like to ask them what access they have to sporting opportunities and what access they have to arts opportunities.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** That is what I would like to bring up. Look at the wheatbelt in WA. There are no watered footy grounds and no hockey grounds. People trained in the 40s and 50s with footies stuffed with newspapers. We produced world-beating Australian footballers and we produced four Australian and world hockey captains with no infrastructure.

**Mr Farrant:** And Gladys Moncrieff.

**Ms Brown:** And conversely, some of this country's leading visual artists. It was a different era.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** Yes, and without the infrastructure. The Liberal Court Government wasted all our mineral royalties on massive theatres in Geraldton, Karratha and other places. That infrastructure was put in and I think there are examples at Karratha, in the collocation with TAFE and so on, which have engendered a lot of community activity. I was in Geraldton when it was launched in 1982 by Sir Charles Court.

**Ms Brown:** I will tell you why. It is because Karratha has a terrific theatre manager. She is one of the few theatre managers in this State who understands development issues.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** Yes. And it gets down to personality.

**Ms Brown:** It gets down to trained professionals.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** No; does it not get down to the person involved, regardless of the infrastructure? The development commission in Geraldton funds the arts person. The leader of the development commission sees that the arts are an integral part of regional development - economic, cultural and social; therefore, that person's job is valued. Elsewhere people are telling us to not let an arts person anywhere near the development commission.

**Mr Farrant:** Is that not the case at all levels? Under the leadership of the current Government, are there not passions that Dr Gallop has that are not necessarily reflected in any future Governments or past Governments?

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** Yes.

**Mr Farrant:** The passions, values and so on of the people involved are actually central to what drives them. If we do not have the infrastructure to let them do that work, none of that will come to the fore.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** Conversely, as a Government, we cannot put in structures that people do not want, do not use and cannot make use of when what we need is for people to be given the structure. You have probably articulated what I have said in a number of the hearings so far because Western Australia needs a diverse structure. It will work with a development commission or local government, but it will not work with other things. My great fear is that where it will work will be determined purely by personalities. We could put as much infrastructure and support in, but if we do not -

**Ms Brown:** Personalities and skills.

**Mr Farrant:** Can I come at this from a slightly different perspective? We are arguing - I do not think our voice is alone - for people working in the regions. We are also arguing for the response to that to not be a one size fits all but a structure that allows for local involvement and the best way forward. The best way forward for us in Kalgoorlie, both strategically and operationally, was through the development commission at the time. Two years later the best way forward was with the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder, although a regional position was involved. In future, it may well be based at the Miners Hall of Fame, the museum or the performing arts centre. I do not think you can

put these structures away in concrete and say that, in this time and for the future, there is only one way of delivering the support structures. Country Arts WA, as an independent, non-government organisation, has the advantage over government, in that we are able to move flexibly and be very responsive and fast moving. That is because we are not constrained by some of the things demanded of State or federal Governments. That is certainly why the Commonwealth Government has devolved those funds to us for the regional arts fund. I believe that is why the State Government has devolved management of state government funds as well. It is because there is more bang for the buck. A flexible approach and an approach that allows for diversity of response is the best way to deliver the regional infrastructure.

**Ms Brown:** I have to say though that when I think of the actual work carried out by a position, such as a cultural development officer, the long-range view should be that the development commission should be more accountable for the cultural development and take responsibility for the cultural development in the regions they service. If a particular development commission is not very supportive of culture, a person should not necessarily be put in the local government authority. In a way, that seems a bit like letting them -

[10.30 am]

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** Does that not contradict local empowerment? The further one goes in politics, the less strident or the less confident one is of one's own views and one's passions. Local communities want and value sport. We seem to be telling them that the arts are a really good thing and that they do not understand it. The people who are pushing to get the Fremantle Dockers and Essendon to have a scratch game in their town are being told that the West Australian Ballet should put on a performance three times a year. They are being told that they must be educated and trained into believing that that is just as valuable. If we are dinkum about empowerment and listening to regional communities, at some point in the chain, do we not have to devolve the money and let the people make the decisions and allocate the priorities?

**Ms Brown:** I guess so. However, is it not partly our job to feed and bring about development? If we did not do that, plenty of parts of the country that I have been to in country Western Australia and New South Wales would not see any change or development. It might be that the few people employed at a development commission do not reflect the views of the people living in the region.

**Mr Farrant:** We have never taken what I call the "muesli approach" to the arts, which is telling people that they must eat it because it will be good for them, even though it might not be very palatable. The approach we have taken -

**The CHAIRMAN:** The muesli approach! I have learnt two new terms on this committee recently: glocal and the muesli approach.

**Mr Farrant:** Please feel free to use it. Our position has always been to present art events that are happening. The committee has already received the cards that we put together as part of the documentation for the regional arts fund. We use those a lot. We advertise events in regional communities, and ask them whether they have thought about organising arts events. One-on-one conversations are really important, as you said, John. Some people have not necessarily thought about the arts because it is not on their radar. However, when it is put to them, their responses are positive and they want to become involved. Sometimes they are not able to follow through on that growing energy. It is a bit like a pinprick in a balloon because they have nowhere to go with it. One of the great challenges for regional communities is to meet other arts groups in the community. We introduce different arts groups to each other. People do their own thing. It is a strange feature that humans focus on what they do and do not look above the horizon. A benefit of a proper staffing structure is that a community can make far better use of its available local resources rather than spend more money. That is the focus of our work with the youth program, which is supported by the Australia Council for the Arts. At the moment that program is focused on Northam and Port Hedland. Already major steps have been taken to make better use of local resources.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I refer to the point that was made in your submission and which has been mentioned before: no substantial studies or longitudinal research has been conducted on the benefits of the arts. Your submission said that the development commission always tries to ascertain the value of the arts to a local community. I will ask you to answer this question, Rosalind, because you work in the regions for Country Arts WA. How can the Government make sure that people who live in the smallest and the larger communities in rural and regional Western Australia have access to arts? As an arts officer with Country Arts WA, how does that organisation measure that? How does it measure its reach to people in regional and rural communities?

**Ms Brown:** That access is not being measured at the moment. At the beginning of each year we send mail extensively to every regional contact we have on our database, which amounts to some 300-odd regional contacts. They are a combination of community-based arts organisations, community development officers in local government and Aboriginal arts organisations. Our contacts are quite broad. Sometimes a progress association that is in town is keen to conduct arts activities. Other times a telecentre might be active in the town. It is quite broad and it is constantly growing.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Does Country Arts WA have a map to show where all its contacts are located? Is it possible to identify where there are gaps?

**Ms Brown:** That is a great question. In part, the mail-out gives our contacts information about the services they can access through Country Arts WA. This year it also included a complete directory listing of all service and grant bodies in culture and the arts that people have access to at a local, state and federal level. My approach is to then throw all the information over to those people and to empower them with that information. It is up to them how they choose to pursue that. I hope that they contact us and ask us for information and advice or even ask us to visit them. An important part of my role is to work closely with people who put funding applications together, whether they are applying for one of our grant programs or to the Australia Council for the Arts or another organisation.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The issue of funding applications and the structure of the funding submission has been raised in evidence to the committee over the past few months. What support can you offer to applicants? One witness said that although she had three university degrees she found that submitting an application was difficult. What has been done to improve and streamline that process? You said that Country Arts WA had tightened the turnaround of its funding to about four weeks. What has been done to make it easier for a small, remote groups to apply quickly and effectively for funding which satisfies the criteria but which does not take weeks and weeks of agonising time for it to be processed? Some small organisations apply for only \$1 000 or less.

**Mr Farrant:** I maintain that the person who had three degrees but could not make a funding application was not making an application to Country Arts WA.

**Ms Brown:** It is very important to us that our funding applications be pretty straightforward. We have some copies here that members can look at. In addition, an important part of what we do is to provide one-on-one support. It does not matter whether it takes half an hour or three hours with the applicant. Usually if the person is applying for funding for the first time, it takes quite a while. My job is to make sure that by the time the application goes to the assessment panel, it has the best possible chance to receive funding. I work closely with people on their funding applications. The draft might go between the applicant and me two or three times before it is eventually submitted to the assessment panel. Those forms are evolving. Every year we take a good look at them and try to make them better.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** Are you liaising with ArtsWA, Community Arts Network WA, Healthway and Lotterywest, for example? That is a key issue. The different groups have different budget years. Surely all the bureaucracies could get together and have a common budget in acquittals. Volunteers

who are paid only a small amount of money must deal with different budgets and different applications.

**Mr Farrant:** Country Arts WA is outside the bureaucracy. That comes down to the objective of the organisation. Healthway is a sponsor of arts activities not because it loves the arts but because it recognises that the arts is a way of getting audiences to receive the message Healthway wants to deliver.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** Government legislation requires it to do that.

**Mr Farrant:** Yes, but Healthway's corporate objective is to get a number of health messages across to as many Western Australians as possible. Its objective is not about arts or culture; that is our objective. For Healthway the arts are a means to an end. The Australia Council for the Arts and ArtsWA have streamlined and continue to streamline their reporting processes so that one report will suffice for both organisations. That is a major step and one that has been asked for and discussed. It is probably one of the recent things to come out of the Cultural Ministers Council, which has been terrific. We work closely with other organisations.

[10.40 am]

It is interesting to note that a couple of our staff assist with funding applications by our colleagues in other organisations. The feedback I have received is that our application forms continue to be the most user friendly, and we work quite hard at that. To be frank, our board members who sit on those panels make sure the applications are user friendly because there are times when they are the applicant. With the assistance of Ros, they make sure that the applications are as simple as possible so that when a person is applying for small project money through the community arts project scheme, which is a maximum of \$2 000, it is not that onerous. We have always called that an "entry level grant program". Even with annual funding, I notice that somebody who gave evidence talked about spending two weeks doing an acquittal report for us. I was horrified to read that. We have told arts organisations that in the past they have been over-reporting. We have given them a list of key points for doing a report and told them that we need to know certain things. There is a whole lot of information that we do not need to know, which is not useful for us. We are already conscious of that. As I said, we are an un-bureaucratic organisation because we are interested in making the art happen and increasing the community's opportunity for engaging with that art. Yes, there are accountabilities that we have to satisfy with our funders. However, we reject any paperwork for the sake of paperwork.

**Mr A.P. O'GORMAN:** I have a question on sport. It seems that there is a lot of support for sport and a lot less support for the arts. I was wondering if the reason sport gets its following - most towns have a footy or a soccer team or whatever - is because of competition and the town wants to win. In the arts, that is not necessarily always there.

**Ms Brown:** That is one of arts great assets. However, the arts is not always non-competitive. Plenty of towns run eisteddfods, art competitions and that sort of thing; it is cut-throat, let me tell you. However, one of the great assets of the arts is that often there is a whole other part of the community that values being able to tap into it because it is about their own development rather than a competitive experience, I guess.

**Mr A.P. O'GORMAN:** Some of the comments made were about getting newspaper coverage. The reason that sports coverage is there is because of the competition and the following. In the arts, that is not necessarily the case.

**Mr Farrant:** It would be difficult to perform an opera in which the ending was unknown and in which a person needs to read a book on the outcome. I suppose theatre sports at its extreme might get that following - Australian Idol might fall into that category. The other point is that people of all ages say to us that they value the arts because its not competitive. They are engaged and enlivened with the arts. Not everybody likes competition, whether it is one-on-one competition,

whether you are competing with yourself as you do when you play golf, or whether you are competing in a team sport. We work closely with the Department of Sport and Recreation in delivering training programs. We have a whole lot more in common with sport than we have different from sport. In fact, I have always had the dream - Ros will be bored with hearing me say this because I say it quite often - that we get an application from two football clubs who want to celebrate their joy of football. They want to put aside the rivalries of the two teams and just have a celebration of football through the arts; for me that would be a fantastic and highly plausible thing.

Let us also not forget that the sports sector cannot actually hold a major event, be it the Olympics or the Rugby World Cup, without having an arts celebration beforehand. Take, for instance, the opening ceremony of the Olympics using Australia's best artists and what that did for how Australians felt about themselves and how they were portrayed in a wonderful, positive and embracing way with the rest of the world. That did not happen through Cathy Freeman's 400-metre dash but through the opening ceremony of the Olympics. That clearly illustrates that both areas are powerful and both have a place side by side - not necessarily in competition with each other. The competition sometimes is found in the corridors of Treasury when people are allocating different funds in different columns. Does that answer your question?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes.

**Mr A.P. O'GORMAN:** I am not particularly competitive at all.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes, maybe the committee should have gone to Athens for some further deliberation!

One of our other terms of reference relates to festivals. I have this gut feeling that in many parts of regional WA some of our festivals that have either a longer or a shorter history are under a bit of stress because of sustainability. You mentioned in your submission a couple of examples. However, I notice that the festival seems to be the in thing that pops up - you have your wine and food and this and that festival. I have a query about the long-term sustainability of some of the ones that already exist. For example, we were in Esperance, where the Festival of the Wind is held. From my understanding that has been highly successful over a period of time, but there were issues. We had representation from those who have been driving the Festival of the Wind in Esperance for some time. There were concerns about the long-term sustainability of that festival, and - I have not heard the latest - the community was considering its future continuation. The same has happened with the Shinju Matsuri Festival in Broome. The people in Broome who are associated with that again highlighted issues or concerns about the sustainability of that festival. It has a history of people jumping through lots of hoops and finally getting the festival up and running, and, when they are planning for the next year, there are other problems. What is your view on this whole festival issue and are they sustainable?

**Ms Brown:** I am glad you brought up the issue of festivals. I think it is a classic example of a small number of key individuals driving a festival. When there is a changing of the guard, and very often there is not a succession plan in place, it may be that their input is only partly paid. I guess I am thinking of Heather Gee in Esperance and the Festival of the Wind; I am sure she put in a lot more hours than she was paid for. No-one is prepared to step into that capacity knowing what a huge volunteer commitment it is going to involve, and therefore it falls down. It again comes back to the fact that the arts in Western Australia is so dependent on volunteers and that there is a limit to the quantity of what can be generated, and, sometimes, the quality.

**Mr Farrant:** In the case of Esperance, it had been hard for the Festival of the Wind organisers from day one. Essentially, it involved a group of interested volunteers in Esperance who wanted to do something that fitted with their town. They came up with a planning process and the idea of holding a Festival of the Wind. The first problem they had was that nobody in town wanted to talk about the fact that it is windy in Esperance, so they had to sell that, and the first festival happened in 1998. I was at the launch of the festival in 1997 and although there was a buoyancy amongst



people, there was also a tentativeness of whether Esperance could pull this off; “Do we know what we are doing?” In 1998 the festival was a huge success.

**The CHAIRMAN:** It also coincided with the national conference -

**Mr Farrant:** That was in 2000, when the second festival was held. The decision to make it a biennial festival as opposed to an annual one was a smart decision at that time. People’s lives change and communities need change as well. If a festival has been going for 30 or 40 years, sometimes it is not a bad thing to let things die. There are life cycles to these things.

[10.50 am]

Festivals are interesting animals. In one way they are fantastic showcases of culture and the arts. For instance, they are very good forums to get contemporary dance onto a stage in front of an audience of several thousand people. If you did a quick straw poll around the audience, you would probably find that that is their first brush with contemporary dance for decades, but they enjoyed it and it was part of the festival program. However, the thinking behind festivals is being slightly misused nowadays because they are seen as ways of attracting visitors, and they become a tourist hook. As an arts organisation, you absolutely have to be really clear about what you are doing it for. Are you doing it as a local celebration for the people of the town, or are you doing it for the tourists, and making it a local chamber of commerce activity? Often people go into these things trying to do all of that. Often there is burnout of volunteers because of all the opportunities. In those cases, they have not said, “We are going to target this particular area and the rest will have to happen later on.” That is where burnout can occur as well. I also endorse Ros’s comments about creating the next generation, succession planning and so on. I do not think it is well done in many areas of our endeavour.

**The CHAIRMAN:** When a little group in a small town comes to you and says “we want to hold a festival” -

**Ms Brown:** As happens frequently.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Do you have a rough set of criteria that asks these sorts of questions? Are you using something that is unique to the community, such as the Nameless Festival in Tom Price, which focuses on the name of a mountain there? Do you have a rough set of criteria that you run through with them? Some of them might come to you and say they want to hold, for instance, a fruit festival in the middle of the desert. Do you actually pick them up and say “sorry, fruit is not unique to your environment, have a go at something else”?

**Ms Brown:** I find that everyone with whom I have contact are planning festivals that are totally linked to a local industry or some aspect of the local identity - although, there is a town in the wheatbelt that has an aqua festival every year. It is nowhere near any major body of water.

**Mr Farrant:** Is that Broomehill?

**Ms Brown:** Yes - Broomehill. That is totally up to them, as far as I am concerned.

**Mr Farrant:** The reason it happens in Broomehill is that all the farmers around Broomehill have boats, and wherever possible they disappear out to the coast, but they have an Aquafest in that landlocked shire.

**Ms Brown:** They come into contact with me because they all want to introduce some sort of arts component to the festival program. They will come to me to talk about possible acts, or visual or performing artists who might do a series of workshops in the lead-up to some public showcase that usually involves local people.

**Mr Farrant:** Festivals also excel in the residencies leading up to the actual event because of the time an artist spends in that town working - it may also be a local artist - working on particular activities. That is a sustained time during which that community - of whatever age group or network - is engaging with the arts. The festival, in a way, is the focus event for that work and

development. People are engaging in those activities across the State and across the country. They probably do not think of it as an arts activity, but nevertheless the enjoyment level in the community is incredibly high.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I want to ask a question on arts education. You mention that in your submission. How closely does Country Arts WA liaise or work with the educational sector, and what is your view of the promotion of arts in the education system, given that arts is one of the eight learning areas in the curriculum framework? Having also been a teacher, my gut feeling is that school is where we may be facing a problem with the promotion of arts in the future.

**Mr Farrant:** ArtsEdge, the link between the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Culture and the Arts, is a really useful model. One of the reasons the arts is one of the eight curriculum areas with the lowest focus at the moment is that there are fewer teachers with have the training to be arts literate than are needed. Part of that comes back to teacher education, which is what ArtsEdge is focused on. In the regions, ArtsEdge has had a year-long project at Broome and across the Kimberley. They have also run other outreach programs. With the ArtsEdge officer at Broome, there was a huge amount of activity and a great deal of support and professional development for teachers was delivered. The ball was rolling incredibly well and very smoothly; people were wanting more and discovering that the arts was not that hard. In some instances the teachers with existing passion were fired up and were doing more things and other people were introduced to the arts for the first time. Then the funding ran out. One of the clear messages I get from country people time and again is the business of the funding suddenly running out and not reaching people's expectations. People treat it like a slap in the face. There are certain parts in regional Western Australia, where people become punch-drunk from formal structures coming into their town and getting all the information and then find that it disappears and nothing happens. Expectations are increased and then nothing happens. Whether that happens with water services and Western Power is a bit of an issue at the moment. However, a lot of other things are also affected; it is across the board, and not just an arts thing. We always talk with a degree of enthusiasm but caution, because we do not have the ability to deliver long term, and people need to know that from the outset so that they are not being set up.

**Ms Brown:** Our resources are spread across the whole State, so we do not have the opportunity to work very closely with anyone. However, in our fieldwork we frequently meet with schools, particularly in remote communities, where there are not a lot of other bodies or a focus for community life. It is very important.

**Mr Farrant:** I will give one final example. We have run a contemporary music tour program called Louder! In the past two years Louder! has done a limited number of all-ages gigs in regional communities. A number of those are now happening on school campuses. Often the bands then run songwriting workshops with students in English classes or students in different streaming from the mainstream. People are also doing musician master classes. There is a strong link. It cannot be argued that the net is entirely made, but the ArtsEdge program is a really useful model with a proven track record that needs to be supported.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Do members have any further questions?

**Ms Brown:** I have a couple of things to come back to. Before, you were asking me about that mapping - whether we map where the resources and funding are going. That sort of thing could be done a lot more. I have done it with annual funding, which is support that goes to community-based organisations for an annual program of activities. I am very aware that there are regions where no funding is going, because there are no applications. That is something that needs to be addressed.

I will go back to what we were saying before. I could not bear to walk out of this room today with the committee thinking that we go out there and shove culture down the throats of anyone who will listen to us. That is certainly not our approach, but people have limited access to exciting and stimulating arts opportunities. Did any of you attend the cultural tourism conference recently?

There was a fantastic speaker, Lyndon Terracini, from the Queensland Biennial Festival of Music, who spoke so well about the fantastic original commissions they have been doing in 17 towns in Queensland. I thought that was very inspirational.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** The amazing thing is that there have been some incredible successes. The growth of, say indigenous bands, through the work of WAAMA, your group and others seems to be really working. I keep going back to the idea that the sports industry seemed to understand community sport and packaged it as “Life. Be in it”. It seemed that for very little bang for your buck you had a general understanding of the community, particularly in regional Western Australia, about community involvement in sport. It was not elite. “Life. Be in it.” really encapsulated that. In the arts, we keep pussyfooting around. We keep wanting to do it, and talking about packaging and advocacy and everything, but nothing has been successful in that same way. In terms of bang for your buck, the Government, community and consumers do not have to do a lot of work with sport, but in the arts we do. There must be a magic bullet somewhere, and we are trying to find it.

[11.00 am]

**Mr Farrant:** There is a chicken-and-egg reaction. That is one of the things that came out of “Don’t Give Up Your Day Job”, the Australia Council’s inquiry into arts wages. It said that Australia has almost twice as many professional artists today as it did 20 years ago, and each year that number grows by two to three per cent. It then went on to say that there are nearly three times as many visual artists in Australia and more than twice as many writers.

**Ms Brown:** How many of them are living below the poverty line?

**Mr Farrant:** That is interesting. One in three artists earns less than what is considered to be on the poverty line. You will find the same in sporting. There are whole lot of young athletes who are kayakers or whatever out there, who are struggling hard, training hard and earning very little money as well. People do it because they are passionate. The elitist side of things involves the winners of art prizes and so on and the Mel Gibsons of the world. Our focus is on giving regional communities an opportunity to engage with artists in a meaningful way; in a way that gives them a chance to tell their own stories and celebrate why they stay living where they live. That is the focus of our work. Again, we are strategic, we are focused. We are not trying to change the whole world. We cannot do that, but we are working very hard in our area and very happy to tell that story whenever possible.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Andy and Rosalind, thank you very much for your attendance at today’s hearing of our committee. The transcript of today’s hearing, prepared by Hansard, will be available for you to peruse. Once again, I thank you for your attendance, and also your detailed submission. It is appreciated.

**Mr Farrant:** Thank you.

**Ms Brown:** If any other questions arise, please get in touch with us.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We will be happy to.

**Committee adjourned at 11.05 am**

