



New Leadership.



FRESH IDEAS FOR THE ARTS

\$10 million for Creative Communities

A Rudd Labor Government will invest \$10 million over four years in a *Creative Communities* program to improve opportunities for Australians to participate in arts and cultural activities in the places where they live.

Funding will be allocated by the Australia Council for high quality participatory arts programs that enhance community wellbeing, encourage innovation and assist communities to find creative solutions to the issues they face.

Federal Labor's *Creative Communities* initiative will complement existing funding programs and infrastructure and responds to the Australia Council's *Community Partnerships Scoping Study Report* (2006) call for the implementation of a national Creative Communities Strategy. The report highlighted the growing demand around the country for locally made arts and cultural programs. Research commissioned by the Australia Council in 2000 found 86 per cent of Australians wanted greater access to arts programs.

It's clear that further investment in grassroots cultural resources significantly adds to the wellbeing of local neighbourhoods, builds social connections and encourages a lifelong affiliation with the arts.

Federal Labor's investment, through the Australia Council, will ensure more resources directly reach communities and the arts organisations that work with them, so as to enrich the lives of all Australians.

Examples of successful grassroots programs include:

- The national arts and community cultural development organisation Big hART Inc has demonstrated the benefits of community based work through projects such as Ngapartji Ngapartji in Central Australia, and GOLD - a project which explored the human stories of drought and climate change in the eastern wheat belt.
- Western Sydney's Information and Cultural Exchange runs programs such as Youth Digital Cultures for young people from diverse cultural backgrounds to work together to develop skills in digital art.
- Community groups and community organisations such as Nulsen Haven Association in Western Australia who have developed music and voice programs for people with disabilities.

Artistic practice within communities not only benefits the individuals involved and their immediate networks, but whole communities and regions, through cultural tourism, employment opportunities and community wellbeing.

A Rudd Labor Government will recognise the critical contribution of the arts to our identity, community and economy.