

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Connecting people and improving lives across WA**

A safe and positive after-school haven for kids in Laverton and performing and recording opportunities for young musicians are some of the grass roots results being delivered via arts projects, programs and funding across regional WA.

Since its inception in 2015, the Regional Arts Legacy Grants (RALG) program, made possible by the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and the Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development, has injected more than \$2 million dollars into the regions and significantly improved the lives of and opportunities for many West Australians living in country and remote areas.

Managed by leading regional arts body Country Arts WA, the grants have provided vital funds to run music and visual arts programs, camps and cultural trips and community festivals and events which have provided so much more than cultural opportunities and experiences.

Country Arts WA Executive Director Paul MacPhail said the success of the RALG initiative was outstanding, delivering positive change to country and remote communities in all nine regions.

“Since its inception, through the RALG program we have been able to support more than 2,500 projects run by individuals and arts organisations from the Kimberley to Great Southern with a total audience reach in excess of 476,600.”

“This has contributed to over 1,900 paid work opportunities, a direct investment into WA’s regional economy, and the active participation of more than 55,000 community members.

“The real success of the RALG program and other funding initiatives, however, shouldn’t just be measured by statistics and KPIs.

“These community-based programs have the ability to directly touch the lives of people of all ages through music, visual arts, drama, dance and performance and are often the catalyst for positive change in their lives.”

Mr MacPhail said the music program run by the Laverton Leonora Cross Cultural Association with RALG funding support of \$33,300 had made a significant and positive difference to the town of Laverton, particularly the younger members of the community.

“Kids in Laverton have had some big challenges in recent times, but they’ve been able to come along to the program after school to make music and learn new skills in a safe and positive place where they can build their self-esteem, confidence and be fulfilled.

“In addition, the funding has also supported the introduction of traditional language and music to primary school children, a women’s choir for women at risk and new recording and promotional opportunities for local talented, young musicians seeking to expand their horizons.”

Mr MacPhail said similar success stories of the positive results delivered by the RALG initiative could be found in regional communities in the Kimberley such as Halls Creek, Kalumburu and the very remote Tjurabalan, and all the way through WA to the more populated South West.

“This funding has allowed communities like Halls Creek to put on central concerts in the town which not only give local bands the opportunity to perform live and record and film their music, they bring together people of all ages and backgrounds to share a positive experience.

“RALG funding allows communities through the arts organisations and individuals it supports, to create and deliver tailor-made, locally inspired programs and events with multiple benefits.

“They create jobs, enhance skills and knowledge, increase goodwill and community confidence, cultural identity and self-esteem. They also open communications between people and bring them together. Regional communities become better places to live.

Mr MacPhail said initiatives like RALG were made possible through the Royalties for Regions funded Creative Regions program of which Country Arts WA delivers Scheme Four on behalf of State Government, through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development.

“There is a demonstrable need for continued and ongoing funding so we can continue to build on the great results achieved so far and further nurture the wealth of creativity within our regions.”

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