

MEDIA RELEASE

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Improving lives and building hope and skills in Laverton

Grassroots arts funding is improving the lives, education and wellbeing of people in the remote community of Laverton and its surrounds, particularly its young Aboriginal kids.

An innovative and hands-on music project, made possible by \$33,300 in State Government arts funding, is successfully delivering significant and positive change for the Laverton community.

The grant to the Laverton Leonora Cross Cultural Association in 2017 was managed by leading regional arts organisation Country Arts WA as part of its 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, under the State Government's \$24 million Creative Regions investment into arts and culture across WA.

Laverton Leonora Cross Cultural Association (LLCCA)

The Laverton Leonora Cross Cultural Association received a RALG grant of \$33,300 to engage a music facilitator to develop and deliver music projects in Laverton and the surrounding communities.

LLCCA board member and project partner Christine Boase said the initiative had been very effective. "It has resulted in people from Laverton and surrounding communities coming in and enthusiastically taking part. Community members from Mount Margaret are now thinking about how to develop their own music program."

Ms Boase said a key part of the initiative was bringing together people from around the region to work together. "The music programs have brought people from different backgrounds, different family groups and people with different skills together. Recordings made of songs are in several languages including Aboriginal languages, English and even one in French!"

"It's been a real community building exercise. The younger community members have had the chance to learn new music, new songs, new instruments and for some, new language, which is great as some of them did not have traditional language. We are now hoping to extend the program into the school."

"The older members of the community have also benefited. They are particularly keen on gospel music and being able to record themselves was something many have said they have wanted to do for years but not had the opportunity. It's wonderful!"

Ms Boase said music also provided a vehicle for people within the community to help them deal with grief, stress and trauma.

“There have been a number of challenging issues in Laverton recently and a lot of people, including younger children, are traumatised by these incidents. We have seen many of them coming along after school and it’s great to be able to give them a safe and good place to be where they can do positive things and be well and fulfilled.”

“There are also some seriously talented musicians in the Northern Goldfields and being able to give them the ability to record their music including original songs, has been incredible for their development. It’s not only helped them build their skills as musicians, but also their personal skills and for some, to strengthen self-confidence and esteem.

“Over the past year the music activities initiated from this funding have provided a space where people have come, shared and celebrated their personal stories and ideas through their music. The musical activity has also generated a space for valuable discussion to take place. Some discussions have been completely unrelated, but are about broader concerns of community life in the region. These important conversations happen where people feel supported and comfortable which is what music can bring to a community.”

Regional Arts Legacy Grants

Country Arts WA Executive Director Paul MacPhail said since its inception in 2015, the RALG program had injected more than \$2 million dollars into regional organisations and projects, creating employment opportunities and building capacity and vibrancy across regional WA.

“This initiative has had a significant and very positive impact on life in the regions, contributing to community vibrancy, liveability and cohesion as well as providing opportunities for involvement in local arts and cultural activities, employment and professional development for regional artists.”

Mr MacPhail said RALG had benefited every region of WA with grants awarded to more than 30 individuals, arts organisations and projects from the Kimberley to Great Southern regions.

“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.”

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.

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