



Dubbo City Council
CULTURAL PLAN
 2008 2012



Prepared in partnership with:



Orana Arts Inc — working to develop vibrant and sustainable communities in the arts across the Dubbo, Gilgandra, Narromine and Warrumbungle Council areas.

Special thanks to:

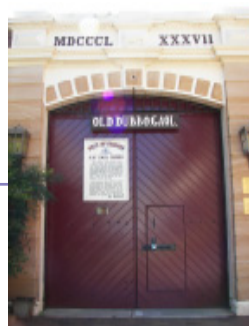
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Cover: Cultural events and facilities in Dubbo. Images courtesy Dubbo City Council staff, Kent Buchanan and Melissa Ryan.

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Message from the Mayor

Culture is a vital part of Dubbo's development and growth. Council is committed to developing artistic and cultural pursuits, organisations and festivals in our communities. A special thanks must be extended to all those who had input into these directions and the resulting document which will formulate the next four years of cultural planning in Dubbo City. Council looks forward to achieving solid outcomes for arts and culture in future years.

Councillor Greg Mathews

Mayor
City of Dubbo



Message from the General Manager

The Cultural Plan is a useful tool for staff and Councillors to make sound decisions on relevant issues and needs within the Dubbo community. In addition the document supports and complements existing management documents in our organisation. The formulation of the third Cultural Plan for Dubbo involved key consultation with community, Council staff and Councillors.

Dubbo City Council in partnership with Orana Arts Inc present this document as a means of achieving Council's vision: *the vibrant City on the Plains meeting service and lifestyle needs.*

Mark Riley

General Manager

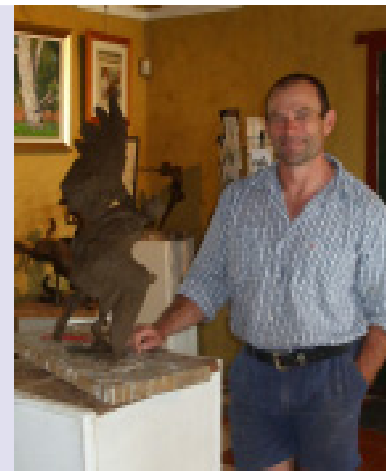


Above: Shoyoen Gardens Celebrations. Image courtesy Melissa Ryan.

“Culture is about a way of life, connections between people and between places and people. Along with the experiences of its inhabitants, the culture of an area is strongly shaped by its history, its geography, its character (land use, settlement patterns, demographics, and the built environment). Our culture encompasses the ways in which we belong in and to a place. Local cultural planning helps us to understand the unique character of our communities and to assist communities to express pride in their place. Cultural places are those with importance or symbolic significance to people, often with an important role in collective memory, identity and spirituality. These places can include landmark buildings and sites such as lookouts, meeting places, both traditional and contemporary like the town hall steps – significant streetscapes, monuments and public art.” *Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government, Department of Local Government and Arts NSW.*

Brett 'Mon' Garling

With over forty group and solo exhibitions to his name, self taught artist Brett Garling is known for his stunning landscapes and elaborate bronze sculptures. Originally pursuing a career teaching in Sydney, he found his passion lay in creating sculptures, pen and ink drawings. Garling left the hectic lifestyle of Sydney with his family and returned to the Western Plains (he spent his formative years in Dubbo, Lightning Ridge and Narrabri) and opened a studio / gallery in Wongarbron. Garling considers his artistry as "inspired by the environment and where I live and everything that I do." His landscapes feature the picturesque Macquarie River and the mountains of the region. "It's such a diverse countryside living where I am, here you can travel and within three hours be in completely different country," he comments. "As the old saying goes, it's more about the journey rather than the destination." In 2006 Garling was awarded a Fellowship by the Australian Institute of History and Arts (FAIHA) and is listed in *Kevin Hill's Top Ten Australian Artists* (Third edition, 2005). Garling Gallery is located at 32 Railway Street, Wongarbron and online: www.garlinggallery.com.au.



Above: Brett Garling. Image courtesy April Betts

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the third Cultural Plan prepared for Dubbo City Council. The first Dubbo Cultural Plan was produced in March 1998 (Aurora Practical Solutions) and the second in November 2001 (Byrne Simpson Partners). This latest Cultural Plan has been prepared by Orana Arts Inc in partnership with Dubbo City Council in May 2008.

Orana Arts Inc is the Regional Arts Board servicing the Councils of Dubbo, Gilgandra, Narromine and Warrumbungle. Aiming to develop vibrant and sustainable communities in the arts, Orana Arts is well positioned to write and guide the Cultural Plan. The organisation is one of 13 Regional Arts Boards across NSW, providing specialist arts assistance and advice to artists, writers, history groups and arts organisations across the region. Orana Arts Inc also has an extensive marketing program including a website, cultural directory, e-bulletin and weekly calendar.

Such is the importance of Cultural Planning that in 2002 NSW Ministry for the Arts (now Arts NSW) drafted a set of 'Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government'. These Guidelines provided Councils

with the practical tools to embark upon cultural planning through one formula or checklist. The Guidelines were developed because it is thought local government is best placed to deliver and take a leadership role in local cultural planning and development. The benefits to community include the sustainable outcomes, a tangible strategy and the integration of the planning process with all areas of council. The benefits to community is a commitment by council to assist in the creation of artistic expression plus the value of flow on effects to social, economic and environmental indicators.

Due to competing priorities for financial and staffing resources, resources were not allocated by Council to carry out the 1998 or 2001 Plans in their original form. Orana Arts together with Dubbo City Council has taken this into account and maintained a focus to ensure the Plan does not require resources beyond those currently available to enact the recommendations. To do otherwise would produce the same results as for the two previous plans.

Following extensive community consultation through forums, survey feedback and one-on one interviews conducted by the team at Orana Arts, specific themes of the Cultural Plan emerged.

Those themes became the focus of the Cultural Plan and were developed into ten key recommendations which appear on pages 13 to 20 inclusive.

The focus areas are summarised as follows:

1. Activation of community spaces through public art;
2. Building an urban landscape inclusive of cultural activities;
3. Developing outdoor performance spaces or facilities;
4. Branding Dubbo through the arts;
5. Exchange between the community and Council's cultural services;
6. Young people engaging with the arts;
7. Creation of new cultural services to enhance the arts in Dubbo;
8. Promotion and respect of Aboriginal culture;
9. Opportunities for audience development;
10. Utilisation of Dubbo's heritage strengths.



DUBBO PROFILE

Courtesy Dubbo City Development Corporation (Grow Dubbo)

Dubbo is situated in the Central West of NSW and draws much of its strength from its position as the major service centre for the Orana and Far Western regions of New South Wales, expanding its population from 39,787 local residents to 130,000 regionally. Dubbo is recognised as being the Capital of Western New South Wales. Dubbo is located in the heart of New South Wales and is easily accessed by road, rail and air. Situated at the meeting point of the Newell, Mitchell and Golden Highways, Dubbo is an easy five hours drive to Sydney, four hours from Newcastle and Canberra and a ten-hour drive from Melbourne and Brisbane. Dubbo is less than an hour's commute from Sydney by commercial aircraft. Regional Express Airlines (REX), Airlink and QantasLink offer regular daily flights, to and from Dubbo, seven days a week. A fleet of light aircraft also offers ancillary commuter

services to western and northwestern centres, and are available for charter. Dubbo's significant road links provide ease of access to deep-sea ports in Sydney, Newcastle and Brisbane, giving local producers and manufacturers reliable exporting ability. Dubbo is the eastern termination centre for road trains that, along with the B-Doubles, provide efficient transport throughout the region and interstate. The Inland Container Terminal and other road and rail transport developments make Dubbo an ideal place to establish a freight forwarding industry. Dubbo offers industries looking to expand or relocate to a regional centre the combined incentive of prime location and low establishment costs. Where else in Australia would you find a region which promotes agriculture, industry and then goes on to sustain an endless demand for lifestyle activities. This is no secret, but the fact remains that Dubbo and the Orana Region has unlimited and

untapped potential to provide a secure base for investment and economic development at every level. There are a number of large developments recently completed in Dubbo, these include:

- Dubbo City Council - Civic Administration Building
- Dubbo City Airport Terminal
- Apex Oval Grandstand / grounds
- Western Plains Cultural Centre
- John Gilbert water treatment plant.

Tourism attracts 580,000 visitors annually to the City. It is a significant local industry that creates jobs, generates private and public sector investment, enhances local community facilities and provides a contribution and motivation to conserve our natural environment. Dubbo is a major tourist destination and home of the world famous Taronga Western Plains Zoo, Australia's largest open range Zoo, with animals from all over the globe. More than just a home to the Zoo, there are a multitude of other great attractions to visit and activities to enjoy whilst in Dubbo. Dubbo City is a well-established member of the global village. Home to multiple internet service providers and situated on the path of three major fibre optic cables, businesses and residents are well-placed to take advantage of the speed and variety of today's latest information technologies. The City offers a range of ADSL, satellite, wireless and conventional dial up internet service provisions. Dubbo is serviced by our fast growing and innovative IT sector. Dubbo City has state-of-the-art video-conferencing facilities available to cater for long distance meetings.

Cultural Infrastructure Snapshot

Based on the Orana Arts Cultural Directory 2008, Dubbo has the following:

- 58 professional artists and designers,
- 17 arts and cultural groups,
- 8 exhibition spaces / galleries,
- 38 music studios, clubs and ensembles,
- 10 dance studios / groups,
- 40 venues.

Dubbo's Vital Statistics:

Population: 39,787 (ABS June 2007)
 9.1% Aboriginal population
 Median age: 35
 Area: 3,425 square kilometres
 Main industries: Retail, Health, Manufacturing, Transport, Tourism, Education, Construction, Business Services, Agriculture, Government Services (Source: 2006 Census Data)

Dubbo hosts an extensive and diverse educational sector and is serviced by a total of 19 schools including; six high schools, ten primary schools, both public and private, three private infant schools, and the Dubbo School of Distance Education, all offering choice and diversity for students.

Dubbo was one of the first Cities to create a multi campus secondary college, one college with three campuses. Junior Students (Year 7-9) are located in two separate campuses and the third campus, Dubbo Senior Campus (Year 10-12) has access to the latest learning technologies, including enhanced opportunities to integrate TAFE and university studies into the senior school program. These campuses are supported by the Charles Sturt University (CSU) which opened in 1998 offering study using state-of-the-art communication technologies across all CSU faculties: Arts, Commerce, Education, Health Studies & Science and Agriculture. The TAFE College offers courses from a wide range of study areas including the arts, business, computing, fashion, general education, hospitality, pre-trade, trades and rural. There are also two adult and community education centres: Orana Education Centre and Western College. Dubbo City's

importance as the centre of medical facilities for the Orana and Far Western Regions of New South Wales is reflected by its position as our second largest employer. 11.5% of the local workforce is employed in the Health and Community Services sector. Dubbo has been over the past 30 years one of Australia's fastest growing inland cities. The prospects of employment opportunities, cheaper land and housing and it's central position have made Dubbo an attractive prospect for those people seeking new opportunities. The City has a wide range of affordable, comfortable homes for both sale

and rental and is serviced by multiple local and national Real Estate companies. One of the State's largest inland cities, Dubbo is emerging as a dynamic regional centre with an abundance of talent boasting a county lifestyle supported by infrastructure and development, yet has all the services you would expect of a metropolitan centre. Dubbo symbolises the resilience and vitality of the bush and the City of Dubbo and the Orana Region of New South Wales is all about progress, diversity and opportunity.



Above: Dubbo Regional Museum, Western Plains Cultural Centre. Image courtesy Dubbo City Council. Top left: Artists Impression - Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre. Design: Perumal Pedavoli Architects. Image by Australian Illustration and Modelling Company.



Above: first anniversary Western Plains Cultural Centre. Image courtesy Melissa Ryan.

WHAT IS CULTURE?

Culture has been broadly described in many circles as activities and planning which a community does, contributing to a greater quality of life. In their publication *“The Cultural Planning Handbook – An essential Australian Guide”*, David Grogan, Colin Mercer and David Engwicht describe culture in more detail:

“Something of the breadth of culture can be appreciated by considering just three of the major elements of culture. Firstly, there is the invisible mind set which shapes every culture – the mythologies, beliefs, and values which determine people’s way of life: their social customs; methods and content of communications; their architecture, streetscapes, and public buildings; and their forms of art. Secondly, there are the mediums used to express culture – for example; art, literature, newspapers, television, architecture, urban design, informal conversation, and formal meetings. Thirdly, there are the artifacts produced by a culture – houses, streetscapes, cooking utensils, books, institutions, sculptures, public buildings. All three elements are intimately interconnected and are part of what we refer to as ‘culture’.”

There are differing interpretations of culture – it does not simply mean ‘arts’ and includes a much wider

range of human activities. *The Australian Book of Leisure Studies* (Rob Lynch and AJ Veal) refers to culture as being at the centre of the Australian national identity. This definition refers to a broad range of activities including (but not limited to) fishing, going bush, being at the beach or pool, travel, tourism or other activities highlighted in the spectrum of leisure choices that are available.

WHY A CULTURAL PLAN?

The Local Government Act was amended in 2002 recognising the need for Councils to plan for community, cultural and social issues. Other policies informing cultural matters include the *Cultural Accord Document* which is due to be revised at the conclusion of 2008.

“The cultural life of a community is not just about a few people going to the opera. It is about participation, celebration, identity, belonging to a community and having a sense of place.” (The Cultural Planning Handbook, Grogan, Mercer and Engwicht, 1995)

The quality of life of a community is directed related to the level, depth and breadth of cultural activity within that community. This reflects the ability of people to participate in and enjoy these activities – whether as a direct participant or spectator. A plan produced in partnership by Council and Orana Arts Inc will preserve, enhance and develop culture and the quality of life. It will also provide positive steps in ensuring Dubbo maintains a profile as a City to which people are attracted as residents and visitors. This plan contributes to Dubbo’s prosperity and continued sustainable growth – the key to Council’s Vision Statement and Mission Statement. Tourism, economic prosperity, city profile, employment, social cohesion and interaction, community involvement and participation can be positively impacted by the progression of cultural development. A Cultural Plan can ensure that cultural activities, events, infrastructure and so on are planned and developed in a proactive, co-coordinated and strategic manner rather than by chance and impulsively or reactively. The level of community consultation is essential to this process to ensure a well rounded, tangible and dynamic Cultural Plan.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research undertaken to construct this plan included the following engagement techniques with community and Council:

- Open forums for community conducted in February and March of 2008
- Surveys sent to targeted groups and organisations plus individuals in Dubbo
- One-on-one interviews with key community groups, artists and industry professionals
- Cultural audit undertaken through the Orana Arts Cultural Directory (2008)

The current plans and documents which already incorporate aspects of Dubbo's culture and inform the Cultural Plan include:

- Dubbo Showground and 1893 Grandstand and Impact Statement (May 2007)
 - MOU between Dubbo City Council and the Aboriginal Community Working Party
 - Civic Centre Function Plan
 - Western Plains Cultural Centre Function Plan
 - Orana Arts Cultural Directory (2004-2008)
 - A 2020 Vision For the City of Dubbo Strategic Directions 2007-2020 (2007)
 - Outline for Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre (2008)
 - Management Plan (2007-2008)
- Timeframe for the Plan was six months which is less than the 13-20 months as recommended in the Cultural Planning Guidelines for Local Government.

Over the last decade and although not officially endorsed, research and recommendations of the previous cultural plans have created the underlying framework for some exciting initiatives that have been planned and implemented by Dubbo City Council. These strategies have had a significant impact in moving towards improved community cohesion, and the addition of new cultural facilities and resources. These achievements dictate a bright and positive cultural outlook for Dubbo in the future.

The following is a summary of the significant cultural outcomes achieved and those currently in progress:

Infrastructure

- The Planning and Development of the Western Plains Cultural Centre (WPCC) which includes Regional Gallery, Museum and Community Arts Centre. Building completed and now a fully functioning facility. Total cost \$8.2 million (opened September 2006)
- 15 Community Arts Centre rooms within the Western Plains Cultural Centre available for use including specifically designed rooms to benefit target groups ie photography, family history, ceramics, wet and dry studios
- Negotiations currently in place between the Western Plains Cultural Centre and Indigenous Community for a Research Room
- Planning and development of the Regional Theatre and Convention

Centre (DRTCC) to be fully operational in 2010 (total cost \$14 million)

Financial support

- Financial support to many groups eg Macquarie Philharmonic Orchestra, Dubbo Jazz Festival
- Increased funding for library resources

Staffing

- Employment of Youth Development Officer
- Staffing for the Western Plains Cultural Centre including Manager, Curator, Education Officer, Exhibitions Assistant, Collections Officer, Centre Coordinator and Administration Assistant.

Regional Initiatives

- The creation of new regional arts board Orana Arts Inc (previously a member of Arts OutWest)
- Orana Arts – providing education programs to schools within Dubbo City Council and other Council areas. This provides opportunities for staff development and promotion of the WPCC and forming links to the wider region
- Orana Arts Staff supporting local community groups with advice as required
- The development of regional tours such as ArtStart (2005 and 2007)

Heritage

- Development of a Draft Heritage Conservation Plan including CBD Heritage Walk
- Development of walk commencing



Above: Western Plains Cultural Centre interior. Image courtesy Dubbo City Council. Below: This Business Called Art 2007. Image courtesy Kent Buchanan

from Macquarie Street – Church Street – Rotunda, Park – WPCC – Showground. Will include themed planting and pathway and link river.

Festival/Event Support

- Development of Council supported committee for annual Multicultural and Red Ochre Festivals
- Support to Farmers Markets in the form of location assistance and grounds maintenance

Professional Development

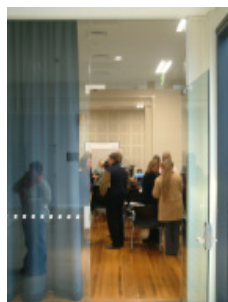
- Orana Arts – providing programs to local artists and cultural community for example “This Business Called Art” workshops
- Orana Arts – providing Country Arts Support Program Funding for professional development opportunities

Aboriginal Heritage and Culture

- MOU developed between Dubbo City Council and the Aboriginal Community Working Party focusing on Heritage and Culture
- Employment of an Aboriginal Liaison Officer,
- Negotiations underway for research and display room for Aboriginal Community at Western Plains Cultural Centre

Promotions

- Dubbo Visitors Centre and Events Bureau development of “What’s on” Calendars
- SBS Radio in Dubbo



The following projects have been previously identified as a need.

This plan has addressed these priorities during consultations to determine their relevance.

Outcomes may be found in recommendations.

- Employment of Cultural Development Officer
- Festival support – Signature Festival
- Purpose built outdoor venue
- Recording studio
- Arts Foundation
- Employment of Regional Museum Officer
- Public Art program
- Cultural Tourism

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Dubbo City Council together with Orana Arts provided surveys to 285 individual artists, general community members, schools, venues and arts related businesses in the Local Government Area. 107 were returned, indicating a 37.5% return rate on this survey. Detailed one-on-one interviews were also conducted with persons representing key arts and cultural organisations in the Local Government Area.

The following is a sample from the surveys conducted:

- 49.51 % of survey respondents were involved in the support of a community arts organisation through attending meetings or providing assistance.
- 40.78% had engaged with community markets at least 6 times in the past year.
- 43.69% of respondents had visited art galleries at least 6 times in the past year.
- 40.78% had engaged with library services at least 6 times in the past year.
- 20.39% of those surveyed had been involved as a creator in art exhibitions at least 6 times in the past year.
- 15.53% had been involved as a creator in festival events at least once in the past year.
- 71% indicated they would like to see increased use of public spaces in the form of coordinated, regular outdoor activities, festivals or art market events.
- 60% wanted improved services within the City's existing cultural facilities.
- 48% would like Dubbo City Council to employ a Cultural Development Officer.
- 48% saw the need for a youth component of the new Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre.
- The three largest factors which determined participation included interest in the activity 29%, value for money 23% and venue suitability / promotion equal at 12%.

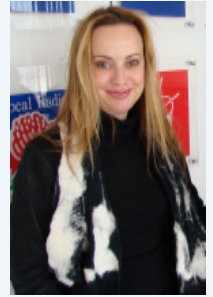
Other feedback:

"The Western Plains Cultural Centre is a fabulous addition to cultural life in Dubbo. Dubbo needs to provide more contemporary theatre/ performance opportunities and facilities for the community, encompassing the greater surrounding districts in a cultural plan. More public art would be fantastic." *"Dubbo has a huge resource amongst its people – the challenge is to mobilize them, and empower them to use their gifts, skills,*

talents and passions to contribute to the community. Many people acknowledge the need for Dubbo to mature culturally, however they don't always know how to take that idea forward and actually do something about it. If the council can support local groups who are already doing something -- help them to broaden their vision, and make running events simpler then there is potential for a wider involvement across the community."

Lizzy Gardiner

Gardiner rose to critical acclaim at age 24 in the mid-nineties, winning an Oscar for Best Costume



Design in *The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert*. Her rise to fame was further enhanced by the spectacular dress she wore on the Oscars awards night, created entirely from gold American Express cards. Each was individually marked with her name and an invalid authorisation number. A copy is now housed in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria. In a frank interview with ABC Western Plains in 2008, Gardiner strongly identified herself as a child of regional NSW, growing up in Dubbo creating her down-to-earth approach. "People are actually quite interested when I say I'm from Dubbo," she said. "I loved growing up there. I spent a lot of time at the zoo because that was being formed when I was growing up. I did a lot of typical kid stuff like riding bikes and swimming in the river - it was great." Previously Gardiner split her time between Sydney and LA, and in 2007 she and design partner Tim Chappel returned to the *Priscilla* concept for the stage show in Melbourne, this time overseeing a costume budget of \$1.5 million, compared to the original movie costume budget of \$15,000. The Gardiner and Chappel partnership began on the set of *E Street* between 1989 and 1992. More recently Gardiner has become a mother and designed for numerous films including *Welcome to Woop Woop*, *Eye of the Beholder*, *Mission: Impossible II* and *The Great Raid*. Interview text and image courtesy Justin Huntsdale, ABC Western Plains www.abc.net.au/westernplains

Other feedback continued.....

“Good to see Council continuing to support ‘culture’ in these difficult early stages by establishing a climate of participation.”

"A Cultural Development Officer is vital to the city's cultural growth. It would provide assistance and direction to so many groups."

"Please continue to support the arts in Dubbo. The arts are an integral part of life."

"I believe Dubbo City Council has to consider subsidising and or involving sponsors, the building of a cultural reputation - at all levels to consolidate the future of Dubbo's standing in art & cultural scene."

"We really lack new and exciting ideas for our use of outdoor activities and a venue for outdoor festivals. Dubbo can go beyond face painting and jumping castles."

'More could be done to make use of Dubbo's great climate and weather by having more outdoor and twilight events, concerts, festivals, performances.'

“Compliments to all arts and music groups (including Council) in our area, there are constant improvements.”



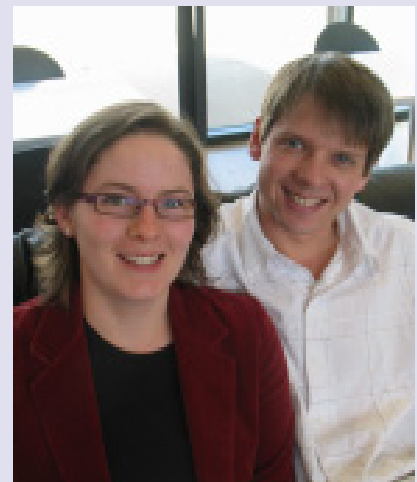
Above: Dubbo Region Farmers Markets. Image courtesy Melissa Ryan.

Megan and Stephen Smith

Sydney Conservatorium of Music graduates Megan (Babicci) and her husband Stephen Smith relocated to Dubbo at the beginning of 2008. As young music teachers specialising in woodwind and brass, this formidable partnership are positioned to inspire a whole new generation of musicians in Dubbo. Megan is on home ground; she grew up on a property near Dubbo and Stephen is the 'treechanger' from Sydney. "Having grown up and lived in Sydney for the majority of my life, I would never have considered coming out to a regional area," Stephen admits, adding that through visits with Megan he saw the benefits of a regional lifestyle. "In Sydney it would take me an hour each way to travel to each of my schools that I teach at, in Dubbo it takes me less then 10 minutes! The air is cleaner, there's hardly any traffic and it's not a rat race, need I say more?"

Students are a constant source of inspiration, Megan comments. "I see kids gain confidence in themselves, and satisfaction when they achieve something.

Learning to play a musical instrument teaches children about commitment and dedication." Stephen is just as keen to provide regional students with the same opportunities as their urban counterparts. "My goal is to encourage as many kids as possible to take an interest in music and give them the same opportunities that I had growing up in the city. If I can make an impact with them, it will be a rewarding experience." Megan says they are delighted with the very real sense of community here. "People are willing to help, and look after one another. I like the fact that Steve and I are part of the musical future of this community, and developing a stronger cultural scene in Dubbo."



Above: Megan and Stephen Smith. Image courtesy Merryn Spencer.

SWOTIN ANALYSIS

The cultural vision for Dubbo, based on community consultation, explores the following areas which are listed below in the SWOTIN analysis.

Strengths

- Existence of Dubbo Artz – a peak body for Dubbo's artistic groups and institutions
- Formation of Orana Arts – a Regional Arts Board
- Existence of Dubbo Arts and Crafts Society and the Society's Cottage
- Establishment of the Western Plains Cultural Centre (2006)
- Development of Regional Theatre and Convention Centre (2010)
- A diverse range of arts and cultural activities
- Fostering positive attitude to culture increasing as new infrastructure is developed
- Strength of 'hub city' servicing 25% of NSW
- Growth in population
- Existing strong event known as the Dubbo Jazz Festival (18 years in operation)
- Creation of City Image Branch under Corporate Development Division of Dubbo City Council
- New cultural facilities create employment and attract arts professionals to the region
- New cultural facilities open up opportunities in education and artistic expression.



Weaknesses

- No Cultural Development Officer employed by Council
- No public art program
- Deficiency of funding and resources for local festivals and cultural activities
- Lack of a full time Grants Officer (currently p/t basis contract position)
- Limited access for community volunteer groups to advertise / promote events
- Minimal creative industry development
- Non-communication between community groups
- Youth population (18-24) are not retained in regional areas in substantial numbers
- Need for up-skilling organisations and individuals
- Volunteer burnout – limited opportunities to replace committee members
- Lack of defined cultural identity

Opportunities

- Government grant funding
- Schools use Council's cultural facilities
- Opportunity to set direction of Dubbo's cultural activity and identity for next four-ten years
- Growing interest in the 'arts scene' by general community.
- Increased tertiary sector providing an injection of new ideas and new residents
- Cross utilisation of resources ie Western Plains Cultural Centre with Charles Sturt University to develop arts based courses
- Larger population of pensioners and self-funded retirees whom have ability to choose leisure activities
- Climate friendly for outdoor events
- Development of Indigenous tourism with diverse Aboriginal community
- Active multicultural population
- Opportunity for synergies between Council's cultural facilities including Old Dubbo Jail, Western Plains Cultural Centre, Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre
- Possibility of linking community groups together
- Signature arts event for Dubbo

Above: 'Macquarie Philharmonia performing conducted by Maestro Leonard Camplin CD with Peter Winkler, Eric Ellis and Mark Atkins performing 'The Kookaburra who stole the Moon' a REM Theatre production at Taronga Western Plains Zoo, 2007 Season'. Image courtesy Sarah Conolan.



“A society’s values are the basis upon which all else is built. These values and the way they are expressed are a society’s culture. The way a society governs itself cannot be fully democratic without there being clear avenues for the expression of community values, and unless these expressions directly affect the directions society takes. These processes are culture at work.” (Hawkes, 2001)

Threats

- Continuing drought increasing financial hardship
- Lack of funding for artistic pursuits and people’s financial capacity to participate in cultural activities and events
- Competing priorities for Council funding
- Competing choice of leisure activities – trend to create ‘home theatres’ rather than creating real-life experiences
- Rising fuel prices contributing to increased transport costs and consumer competition
- High cost of touring arts product (visiting productions and exhibitions)
- Sport and arts seen as competing rather than complementary interests
- View of ‘culture’ as being inaccessible, or limited to ‘high’ forms of art

Top right: Kite at Dubbo Show Society Markets. Image courtesy Melissa Ryan. Bottom right: The Sydney Metro Big Band perform at Dubbo Jazz Festival. Image courtesy Steve Pearson.

Issues

- Audience development opportunities for facilities
- Cultural tourism
- Cultural branding
- Opportunities for utilisation of technologies increasing. Remote access and ‘decentralization’ or hubs contributing to changing nature of some cultural services such as the library
- People fearful of the word ‘culture’ or the concepts surrounding ‘culture’

Needs

- Cultural Development Officer position
- Grants Officer position
- Signature or combined event for Dubbo
- Valuing creative industries
- Marketing arts and culture to wider community.

Dubbo Jazz Festival is an outstanding example of a signature event coordinated by a non-profit organisation, the Dubbo Jazz Club. Scheduled annually across the second weekend in August, the Festival has evolved significantly over 18 years with an original budget of \$2,000, now reaching over \$63,000. Numbers have also swelled to 1,500 people and upwards. Secretary Ross Tighe comments their recent survey data shows the number of visitor nights during the Festival makes a significant impact on the local economy. It’s not only the economic benefits to the city, but the program is also top quality and his determination with the committee to make the event possible is simple. “My inspiration comes from being part of a Club that continues to promote live Jazz by producing a more professional festival each year with quality local and international bands who perform in first class venues. Our happy, smiling clientele keep coming back.” Tighe comments it’s not only the performances, but the workshops which make the program. “Jazz Workshops for young music students of the region are the key to keeping the genre of Jazz alive. To this end we direct a lot of our efforts on them by providing first class tuition over two days of the festival and the opportunity for them to perform in front of their peers. The Dubbo Jazz Festival engages approximately 24 top quality bands including International and Australian acts,” Tighe comments. “The program includes a variety of styles in locations across the city including traditional, swing, blues, mainstream, modern through to be-bop.” In 2007 was awarded a grant under the Regional Flagship Events Program, through Tourism NSW. It’s now positioned as one of the key jazz events in regional NSW.



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Activate and develop community spaces through a public art program for the city of Dubbo.

Action

Creation of a bi-annual public art exhibition for emerging and established visual artists eg 'sculpture by the river'

Consult, develop and commission a representative piece of public art work for the City of Dubbo on a rolling program

2. Build a vibrant urban landscape where cultural activities are incorporated into the city planning process.

Action

That investigations be undertaken on the feasibility of establishing a sculpture garden in Dubbo

Design, develop and complete the Church Street Corridor between the showground and the river as per Civic Precinct Plan

Encourage the use of native plants in all main cultural precinct areas.

Complete Outdoor Regional Recreational Zone Plan in Victoria Park

Libby Gleeson

Libby Gleeson is the much loved Australian writer of children's fiction. Libby moved to Dubbo in 1960 at the age of 10 with her family and remained until the end of her school years. She went on to Sydney University in 1969 but her family stayed in Dubbo and so her connection to the region was maintained. Of her childhood years spent in Dubbo Libby recalls; "I loved my life there. Sport was a huge focus – swimming at the baths in the summer and tennis at the Paramount courts and hockey in the winter. We did go to the movies a lot but there wasn't a lot of other cultural activity so my spare time was often spent reading which impacted hugely on my decision to be a writer. In fact my first book, *Eleanor, Elizabeth* is based very strongly on the move to Dubbo as well as memories of family stories of my grandparents' life on the land."

As a writer Libby has been awarded the Lady Cutler Award for Services to Children's Literature in 1997, won the Children's Literature Peace Prize in 1992 for *Dodger*, received the Young Australian Readers Award in 2002 for *Dear Writer*, and over her illustrious career has achieved numerous awards in the Children's Book Council of Australia Prize. As for the future cultural direction of Dubbo, Libby remarked, "I see the Western Plains Cultural Centre as hugely important to the life of Dubbo and the region. It is terrific to have the gallery to showcase the best of Australian art. It would be wonderful to see the Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre there in the near future too." In 2007 Libby received a Medal in the Order of Australia (OAM) for services to literature and literacy education.



Libby Gleeson. Image courtesy the artist.

3. Encourage the development and use of outdoor performance spaces or facilities.

Action

Design, develop and complete an outdoor soundshell / amphitheatre performance space. Encourage regular use in conjunction with existing festivals and events

Encourage the utilisation of the skatepark and environs for regular youth arts activities and events eg YouthWeek

Provide opportunities and incentives for artists and community groups to use resources through provision at discount rates including Western Plains Cultural Centre Community Arts Centre hire, equipment hire and resources for cultural activities.

4. Increase marketing and branding of Dubbo through arts and cultural activities.

Action

That investigations be undertaken on the means of appropriately recognising the significant cultural figures in Dubbo

Work closely with City Image Branch to ensure and encourage a climate within Dubbo that values culture

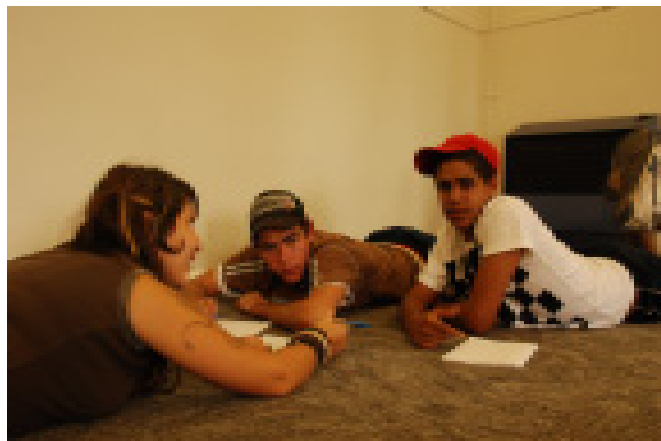
Encourage the development of billboard lifestyle or artistic signage on outskirts of city targeting different aspects of Dubbo in a sculptural manner eg animal sculptures, signage

Build cultural image bank, filing of cultural stories, promotion of cultural experiences for both internal and external clients (community and visitors)

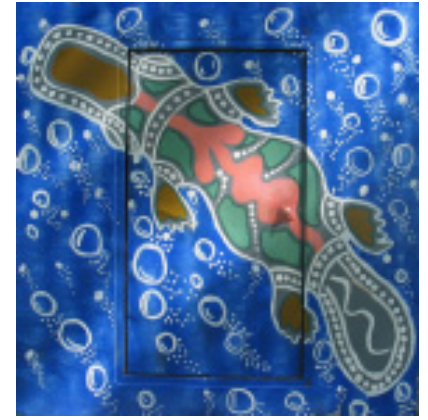
Promotion of Indigenous creative industry through Dubbo City Council promotional activities

Create packages between cultural facilities eg a "Cultural Season Ticket" similar to the Zoo Membership

Select cultural ambassador to represent the City



Above: Hip hop workshops with FreshRedEarth through the Songroom, part of ArtStart 2007, the Youth Arts and Skills Program funded by TAFE NSW, a joint partnership between Orana Arts and Arts OutWest. The program targets youth between 12 and 24, cultivating the skills of young people who find it hard to access education and training in the arts.



5. Encourage community interaction with cultural services.

Action

Develop strategy six (6) in the 2020 vision plan: Consciously develop Dubbo as a centre for culture and as a regional entertainment capital by coordinating cultural planning, developing or marketing cultural / entertainment centres

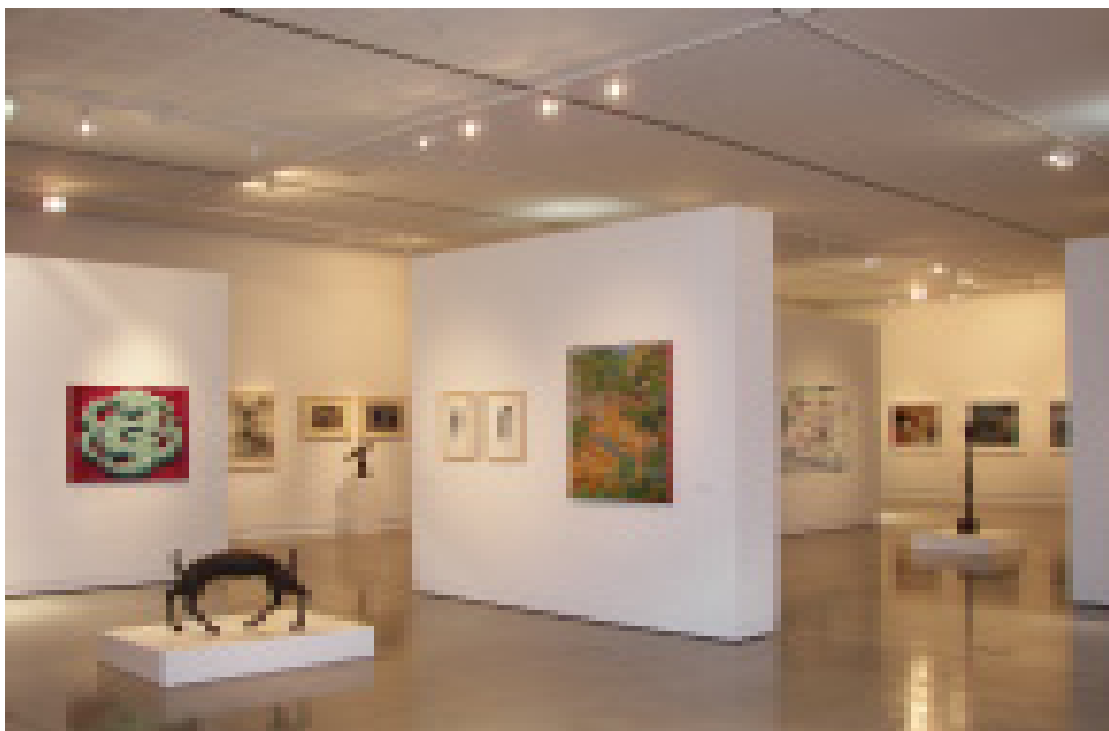
Encourage festival organisers to utilise Council’s cultural facilities for their events

That Council liaise with the Dubbo and District Concert Band on their facility requirements

Monitor and adjust venue hire fees at Dubbo City Council cultural facilities to attract community and commercial organisations

Encourage collaboration and cooperation between community organisations and groups

Local cultural groups to be showcased at conference events



Top of page: murals by Lewis Burns, community workshop, Dubbo. Above: Dubbo Regional Gallery The Armati Bequest, Western Plains Cultural Centre.

6. Create and facilitate opportunities for young people to engage with the arts.

Action

That Council investigate the opportunity of Dubbo becoming the home of the NSW Regional School Band Festival

Facilitate the formation of Youth Theatre and related program within the Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre.

Provide support to increase training opportunities for young people in the arts through links into existing cultural facilities, eg courses in technical theatre, directing, back of house, rigging

Continued support for 'Battle of the Bands' run by the Dubbo Rock Up Committee (section 6.3 of 2020 Vision Plan) and related activities

Encourage alternative, late night facilities aimed at young people which provide a safe alternative to pub culture.

Encourage Dubbo City Council cultural facilities to provide programs and services for the early childhood sector.

Council to advocate for the provision of specialised music and art teachers in Primary Schools.

7. Create new cultural services to enhance the 'arts scene' in Dubbo.

Artform Specific

Facilitate a community ensemble (symphonic orchestra)

Establish artist in residence program at the Western Plains Cultural Centre

Cultural Tourism

Create a focus on cultural tourism products and activities not directly related to artistic endeavours – canoeing on the river, fishing, outdoor pursuits.

Support and encourage Agritourism facilities (eg businesses, venues or wineries) to support the presentation of cultural product

Festival / Market Activities

Assist the development of a regular arts market showcasing local and regional arts product

Develop a signature multi-arts event in Dubbo with the starting point being the Dubbo Jazz Festival

Staffing

Establish full time Grants Officer position through the Community Services Division

Establish and maintain full time Cultural Development Officer under Community Services Division

Funding Program

Facilitate and assist with the development of an Arts Foundation for the City

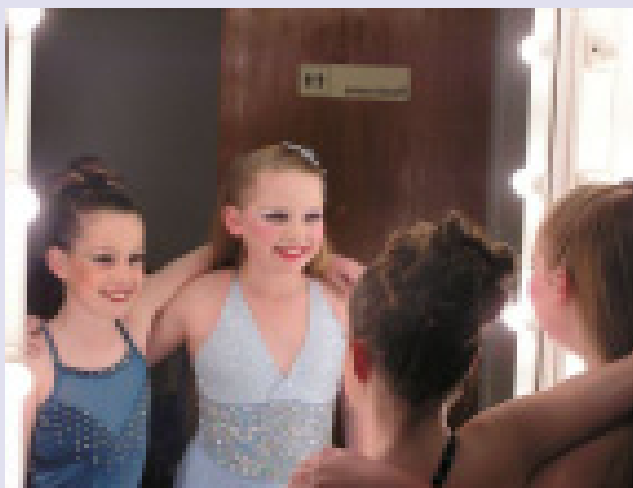
Coordinate and promote the discretionary financial assistance program with at least 50% allocated to cultural projects

Dubbo's Dazzling Dancers

Stepping Out Dance Studio is run by Leesa Berwick and Rikki Slack-Smith, vibrant individuals who share a love of dance with some 400 students with outreach studios in Dubbo, Trangie, Forbes, Narromine, and Orange. The studio has a policy of enabling regional children to access urban style and innovation through providing safe, educational and recreational environments for all ages. In 2007 Stepping Out applied to Disneyland to be a part of their 2008 performance program. Based on their audition application which included video of past concert performances, photos of the students, and documentation of the studio's resume and achievements

– the Studio was invited to perform at Disneyland in September 2008. The students will perform in two shows at Disneyland as well as attending an industry workshop with the Disney performers and choreographer – including an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the wardrobe department and floats for the parade, participation in theatre classes, dance classes and the opportunity to discuss life in the industry with professionals. The students will

also partake in classes at *The Edge* in Los Angeles (faculty from *The Edge* regularly appear on the American series of *So You Think You Can Dance?* as judges and choreographers). Web: www.steppingoutdance.com.au



Above: Dancers backstage. Image courtesy Rikki Slack-Smith

8. Assist with the development, promotion and respect of Aboriginal culture.

Actions

To encourage young Aboriginal people to understand and value their culture.(6.1 in the 2020 Vision Plan)

To retain Aboriginal Liaison Officer position as permanent within Council

To explore feasibility for development of Aboriginal Arts Centre

Encourage and support the development of Indigenous cultural tourism products or initiatives

Explore opportunities to incorporate Aboriginal art and performances within existing cultural facilities

Encourage and assist the development of Aboriginal arts and cultural product

Assist with Indigenous Cultural experience opportunities for residents and visitors

Encourage key festival events Red Ochre and Multicultural Festival and incorporation of Aboriginal art into other festivals and events throughout the year

Actively encourage use of dedicated performance and recording spaces such as the Yarradumurra Centre (5.1 in the 2020 Vision Plan)

Create 'safe' areas for young Aboriginal people to explore services in cultural facilities eg library, Western Plains Cultural Centre.

Create and develop Aboriginal specific section of Dubbo City Council website with relevant contacts listed in relation to Aboriginal issues and develop Cultural Protocols Document for use by community and Council.

The Midnite Café

The Café operates once a month and gives locals the opportunity to socialise, converse, and chill-out in a safe and groovy place. Once a month the 25 volunteers working to operate Midnite Café (sic) hire a truck and bring to the chosen venue tables, chairs, lounges, beanbags, kitchen necessities, light snacks and coffee machine! The venue is then transformed into an inviting space lit by candles where local artists' works hang on the walls and acoustic music is performed for your enjoyment. It is a place where people can connect with each other away from traditional night-spots in Dubbo where drinking alcohol and gambling are often the focus. Midnite Café is about giving other options to people who enjoy a night out in Dubbo. The aim of the Café is to build up the profile of art and music in Dubbo and

the committee supports local emerging artists and musicians by providing them a non-threatening space in which to display their talent. Naomi Nash from the Midnite Café Committee is excited by the potential: "we want Midnite Café to keep changing in response to community need." Local musicians are also encouraged to play with different styles of music showcased at every event from hip hop to jazz, blues and folk. They utilise creative marketing of their event through a new website and text messaging service. The project is underwritten by Cornerstone and also has support from the Uniting Church.

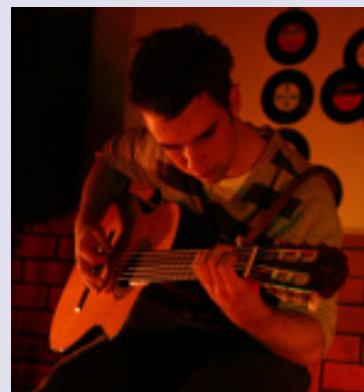


Image courtesy Midnite Cafe

9. Facilitate audience development opportunities.

Actions

Assist with the promotion of artists studios eg Orana Arts Cultural Directory available for sale at Dubbo Visitors Centre and Events Bureau and Council buildings

Provide advice regarding event management for community groups in areas such as public liability, promotional assistance or risk management in the form of fact sheets.

Recognition, assistance and increased profiling and promotion of Dubbo's arts and cultural groups.

Assist community groups to work closely with each other when planning events eg through use of what's on calendar

Encourage open days in Western Plains Cultural Centre and Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre to encourage wider community use and introduction to cultural facilities

Develop innovative marketing options for community groups and encourage engagement with these services eg 'What's on' calendar, notice board located in the city centre, arts page in newspaper.

Assist community groups with new strategies to engage new members and activity in the community.

Facilitate opportunities to create family-friendly arts events and activities in cultural facilities

Encourage visiting conferences or events to link up with existing community organisations when sourcing entertainment / activities for the program

Look for and encourage links between art and sport, participation in active art forms eg circus, hip hop

Encourage community groups to use 'what's on' calendar produced by Dubbo Visitors Centre and Events Bureau

Assist to bring touring performances and new art forms to Dubbo

Support key festivals and events: Multicultural Festival, Dubbo Jazz Festival, Red Ochre Festival, Dubbo City Eisteddfod, Seniors Week, Macquarie Philharmonia Orchestra and Carols by Candlelight.



Above: Flowers at the Macquarie Farmers markets. Image courtesy Melissa Ryan

10. Better utilise the heritage strengths which contribute to the identity of Dubbo.

Actions

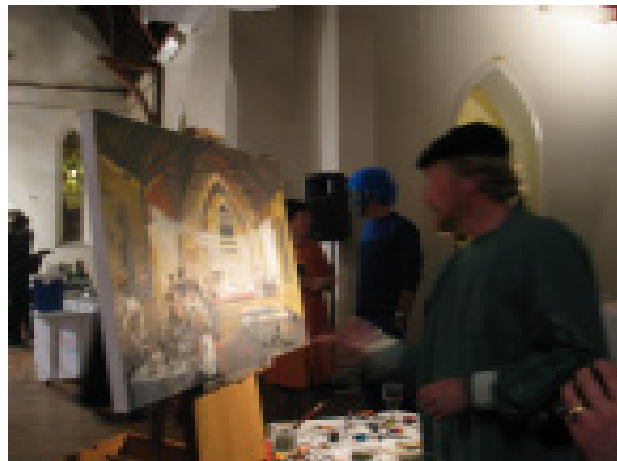
To encourage promotion of the heritage walk

To develop historical plaques to mark sites of significance

Encourage community arts events to be held at historic buildings such as Dundullimal Homestead

Install additional acknowledgement plaques with storylines for the Tracker Riley walkway

Investigate feasibility of Royal Flying Doctor Service travelling exhibition for acknowledgement of history of service



Above: Hues and Heroes fundraising event, Friends of the Western Plains Cultural Centre. Image courtesy Merryyn Spencer

Love 'n' Big Trucks

Transport starred in the Australian movie *Prime Movers* filmed in Dubbo in May 2008. This action-packed love story centres on a man, a woman – and his truck. The film stars Michael Dorman (*Daybreakers*), Emily Barclay (*In My Fathers Den, Suburban Mayhem*) and iconic Australian actor Ben Mendelsohn. Writer/Director David Caesar (director of *Dirty Deeds, Mullet*, and *Idiot Box*) drew inspiration for the movie from his past. Sydney-based independent production company Porchlight Films is committed to creating distinctive Australian film and television. A number of locals were employed as a direct result of this movie project during pre-production and filming. “We utilised local people, from builders and mechanics to qualified nurses and book-keepers, employed throughout the course of production,” Vincent said. “We really want to connect with the Dubbo and surrounding community. On a larger scale the film will be promoted internationally and Dubbo showcased to the world.”

Right: Image courtesy Melissa Ryan





Sharon 'Shaz' Lane won the Most Promising New Talent category at the 2007 Deadly Awards. Since then she has released a second album dubbed *Second Chance* with Herm Kovac. She recognises that the award is an acknowledgement of her talent and tenacity against adversity but knows that there is hard work ahead. "The award has certainly raised my profile, but to me I have to work harder now...there is still much hard work I have to do in order to get my music out there. Nothing comes to you easily," said Shaz. At The Deadly Awards Shaz was delighted to be accompanied by her husband and two boys. "The look on their faces said it all. It was awesome stuff!" Shaz said that receiving the title of Most Promising New Talent was "an absolute honour and I felt very proud", but is moving ahead to new things in her life surrounded by the support of her family. "You just have to believe in yourself!" **Web: www.shazlane.com**

Above: Shaz Lane receives her award. Image courtesy the artist.

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