



WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY



Institute for Culture
and Society

Recalibrating culture: production, consumption, policy

The project

Professors Deborah Stevenson and David Rowe from the Institute for Culture and Society and a research team are examining the changing modes of cultural activity and participation in Australia. This project is funded by the Australian Research Council through its Linkage Projects grant scheme in collaboration with seven industry partners.

'Over the last decade the number of Australians engaging in paid or unpaid cultural activities has increased by over 50%,' says Professor Stevenson. 'This is despite falling attendances at more traditional arts forms such as ballet, theatre and classical music. So what is happening in Australia's cultural sector? What now counts as a cultural activity and how can reconceptualising it help us to develop better cultural policy and planning?' This research is focused on artists and cultural practitioners, exploring how they work and survive. It advances knowledge and understanding of contemporary cultural employment and activity and the findings have the potential to provide the basis for a new approach to Australian cultural policy that reflects rapidly changing conditions.

The researchers are using a case study analysis of the cultural economy of Australia's most dynamic urban area – Greater Western Sydney – in the context of metropolitan Sydney.

Databases of cultural practitioners, productions and audiences are being examined along with the results of an online survey, interviews and field research. The project adds a deeper quality and value to 'broader-brush' national cultural statistics and current cultural mapping approaches, and will contribute to strategic cultural policy development and the active engagement with contemporary cultural production.

RESEARCHERS

Professor Deborah Stevenson,
Institute for Culture and Society
Professor David Rowe,
Institute for Culture and Society
Ms Cecelia Cmielewski,
Institute for Culture and Society
Dr Josephine Caust,
Jo Caust Arts
Ms Jenny Cheeseman,
Auburn City Council
Ms Karen Harris,
Penrith City Council
Mr John Kirkman,
Information and Cultural Exchange Inc.
Ms Tiffany Lee-Shoy,
Fairfield City Council
Mr George Mannix,
Parramatta City Council
Mr Khaled Sabsabi,
Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre
Ms Augusta Supple,
Arts NSW
Mr Ianto Ware,
City of Sydney Council

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Arts NSW

SUPPORTERS

City of Sydney Council
Fairfield City Council
Penrith City Council
Liverpool City Council
Parramatta City Council
Auburn City Council
Information and Cultural Exchange Inc.

Additional Industry Participant:
Arts NSW

CONTACT

Professor Deborah Stevenson
d.stevenson@westernsydney.edu.au

CONNECT WITH US

Institute for Culture and Society
Western Sydney University

Locked Bag 1797
Penrith NSW 2751 Australia

Building EM
Parramatta South campus
Corner of Victoria Road
and James Ruse Drive
Rydalmere NSW 2151 Australia

P: +61 2 9685 9600
E: ics@westernsydney.edu.au
W: westernsydney.edu.au/ics
facebook.com/westsyduics
twitter.com/westsyduics

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It champions collaborative engaged research in the humanities and social sciences for a globalising digital age, and is the largest dedicated research concentration of its kind in Australia.

The Institute encourages collaboration from Australian and international institutions, and students interested in postgraduate studies.