

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Recalibrating culture

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 focuses on artists and cultural practitioners, exploring how they work and survive. It advances knowledge and understanding of contemporary cultural employment and activity. The findings will provide the basis for a new approach to Australian cultural policy that reflects rapidly changing conditions, including new technologies.

The researchers will use a case study analysis of the cultural economy of Australia’s most dynamic urban area – Greater Western Sydney – in the context of metropolitan Sydney. It adds a deeper quality and value to ‘broader-brush’ national cultural statistics and current cultural mapping approaches.

Databases of cultural practitioners, productions and audiences will be examined along with the results of an online survey, interviews and field research. A strategic cultural policy framework will be developed that more accurately reflects the patterns of today’s cultural production and consumption.



Project Title: Recalibrating culture: production, consumption, policy

Funding has been set at: \$189,000

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