CREATIVE COMMUNITIES, CULTURAL VITALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS: A PARADIGM SHIFT FOR COMMUNITY CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

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KEY WORDS

Vision, Ideas, Imagination, Community Arts, Community Cultural Development, Culture, Community, Creativity, Communities of Interest.

ABSTRACT

The Australia Council's and the Victorian College of the Arts' [VCA] Community Cultural Development [CCD] model and its practice have long been accepted as the most effective way to "enable" existing "communities of interest" to become creatively empowered and culturally vital. The model is hierarchical whereby an artist and or artists act as facilitators and or catalysts to bring about CCD change. The VCA's current website describes CCD as "a community-based practice which engages artists/animateurs and communities in a process of participation, transformation and self determination"[1]. The key assumption in this model is that in some form or other a "community of interest" already exists and that it is the role of the arts and artists who have usually been funded at local, state and federal government levels to work with the existing communities of interest to assist them to express their own culture in a creative and artistically nurtured environment.

This paper will challenge the accepted CCD premise that in order to bring about creatively empowered and culturally vital communities that a "community of interest" must already exist, and that within the Arts and Cultural industries the currently accepted CCD practice of artists working with a community in the development of their culture is the best and only means to that end. It will suggest shortcomings within the current hierarchical CCD model whereby outcomes could be short lived, static, or at worst, if expectations are unmet, even detrimental. The paper will challenge three aspects of the current model: firstly that for CCD to occur a "community of interest" must already exist; secondly that artists are the best and only facilitators who can bring about CCD change and thirdly that the currently accepted hierarchical model is the most effective methodology to facilitate and implement short and or long term CCD goals.

Through the use of two case studies, [Australia and Italy] the paper will demonstrate how in each case one person's visionary idea [Australia in 1999 and Italy in 2000] became a contagious tool persuasive enough to bring together and form a "community of interest" made up of individuals from disparate cultural, geographic, social and professional backgrounds. In each case the "visionary idea" was based on a "greater community good" but had it not been for the original "idea", a new community of interest would not have emerged nor would it continue to this

day to engage in and actively participate in the ownership of the "idea", its aims and the ongoing momentum of its CCD outcomes.

For the purpose of the comparison between the two CCD models within this paper from hereon we will refer to the Australia Council's and the Victorian College of the Arts' CCD model as Community Cultural Development Art [CCDArt] and the CCD model under discussion and which challenges the [CCDArt] model as Community Cultural Development Community [CCDCom]. Through the examples of the two case studies [Australia and Italy] the paper will examine the trajectory of the creative process, and how the individuals who became involved in the process, evolved into a "community of interest" capable of bringing about significant cultural, social, environmental and political change. Furthermore the paper will suggest that creative and visionary people from any walk of life who operate with passion, faith, integrity and commitment, can affect a more compelling CCD outcome than an individual artist or artists who work with existing communities as transitory facilitators in the effective expression of their own values, meanings and aspirations [that is culture].[2]

Although there is not enough substantive evidence to examine in it in detail within this paper, the two case studies do suggest qualitative evidence that the effectiveness of the CCDCom processes and outcomes are in some way proportional to "the visionary idea" and its goals and outcomes being based on a philosophical perspective of a "greater community good".

The paper will conclude that there is a yet to be proved proportional relationship between cultural vitality and human rights and the effectiveness of developing innovative CCD processes and procedures that philosophically and structurally work towards a "greater community good" and that if we are serious about establishing, living and working in Creative Communities that foster cultural vitality and human rights we must also be serious about creating organisational and social paradigm shifts whereby "imagination" per se is valued, "creative and visionary" individuals are recognised and strategies and the trajectories to implement "innovative CCD ideas" are embraced and nurtured within mainstream educative, governmental, industry and funding institutions.

INTRODUCTION

The premise of this argument is based on the questions that arose during the CCD evaluation of the two case studies and the notion that the current hierarchical CCDArt model and its use of artists and arts projects to bring about CCD change is philosophically limiting. The examination will raise the question that to create a broader CCD paradigm shift in fostering "Creative Communities, Cultural Vitality and Human Rights" there is a need to develop educative and work practice strategies and funding resources that foster the growth of individuals and existing and emerging communities through the facilitation and implementation of the visionary ideas of creative individuals within society. [CCDCom model]

To support the premise it is important to reflect on creative individuals at arms length from "the arts" whose ideas have been catalysts to the formation of "communities of interest" where none had previously existed. This is evidenced by people such as Al Gore[3] and Ian Kiernan of "Clean up Australia"[4] who could be described as being "ahead of their time" and who have straddled and overcome bureaucratic hurdles of mammoth proportions to turn an imaginative idea into a reality with far reaching social, cultural, aesthetic and community ramifications.

As a method of research Ethnography "seeks to answer central anthropological questions concerning the ways of life of living human beings. Ethnographic questions generally concern the link between culture and behavior and/or how cultural processes develop over time. The data base for ethnographies is usually extensive description of the details of social life or cultural phenomena in a small number of cases."[5] The two case studies in this paper will suggest a new interface within and between culture, place, art and heritage and community cultural development and explore the short and long term development of new and emerging communities of interest towards a greater understanding and ownership of a hitherto undiscovered and or unexplored culture. In each case the seeded idea involved the "ownership of the idea" by those who participated and their active and ongoing engagement was and is an integral component of the CCD momentum that emerged and continues to evolve.

BACKGROUND

The early party of the 1970s is sometimes described as marking Australia's cultural awakening at a time when we came of age both culturally and creatively; a period when people, creative ideas and the arts began to flourish across the country.

In discussing the topic of Creative Communities, Cultural Vitality and Human Rights it would be negligent not to consider the Whitlam Government's imaginative vision for the Arts and the flow-on effect upon today's Arts and Cultural industries and the careers of many individuals involved.

Once elected in 1972 the Government quickly moved to reconstitute the Australian Council for the Arts and rationalise the disparate collection of Commonwealth administrative arrangements that had been set up by its Federal and State Government predecessors. [6]

From a “creative community” perspective democratisation of the arts, however, really came about with the setting up of the Community Arts Committee of the Australia Council for the Arts in 1973 – a Committee that became a full Board of the Council in1978. At that time their aim was to bring the arts to people who were seen as disadvantaged either materially, culturally or by geographic, economic, or social circumstances. Funding was awarded to community groups that were aligned with an organisational structure, social welfare agency or similar, and so started the early movement of “art” for communities.

This was period that saw the beginnings of the trend towards making art for and with identified or existing communities of interest, a strategy which initially involved formal and or informal engagement in and with communities as a means of “investing” in them, even if only as a transient exercise.

Although the Community Arts Committee had begun by funding community “artists” to work in communities, over a period of time the Committee gradually shifted towards the term “community artsworker.” This new title implied a redefinition of the artist’s role to something more akin to a tradesperson whose artistic skills were employed in the catalytic service of a community.

The development of these more participatory models meant that “communities” were no longer considered as audiences or consumers but instead became makers of their own culture. Historically this involved a theoretical move from “the democratisation of culture” to the more radical thinking of “cultural democracy”, which presupposes the existence of a plurality of cultures and the democratic right that each should be able to be enjoyed, practiced and even supported by funding. [7]

This represented a new way of thinking so that by the mid 1980s another funding policy shift had taken place and the Community Arts Board became known as the Community Cultural Development Board.[8]

The role and skill of the artist as artsworker were now seen as the catalyst or fundamental tools to help “strengthen relationships between and within communities and recognise that differences are fundamental to our identity.”[9] The changes in thinking, terminology and practice now meant that the focus was more on cultural action and the development of dynamic communities rather than the production of the “art”. The process became less about the product and more about the goal. It encompassed collaborations between communities and artists which could be undertaken in any art form and which resulted in a wide range of artistic and developmental outcomes. The integrity of the finished art and the artists’ imaginative ideas were often sublimated for the greater good or perceived needs of the “community.”

Behind this thinking is the current view that “Community Cultural Development practice offers a ‘community’ the opportunity for creative expression and the means to create and manage the projects in which it participates.” And that the [CCD] “practice is a highly effective means by which communities can: develop new skills and address issues which affect them, interact and increase communication and networking, foster community building and community strengthening, address social justice issues, represent themselves to their own and to other communities and respond to cultural diversity.”[10] Underpinning this view is the premise that “the community” in fact already exists and that the role of the CCD practitioners are to support and enhance the community’s opportunities for creative expression via a range of artistic and or cultural activities, and or, events.

The last quarter of a century or so has seen mixed financial and political fortunes for the creative industries, the Australia Council has managed to somehow survive as the Federal Government’s arms-length arts funding body

and despite the demise of the Community Cultural Development Board [CCDB] under the Howard Government to the credit of CCD aficionados and practitioners the practice is still alive and well albeit in various guises.

In 1994 the Keating Government published policy document entitled *Creative Nation*, which was hailed as another new era for the arts. "The concept of the 'cultural industries' that started to take shape during the late 1980s reached its apotheosis in the Keating Government's grand vision for a cultural policy, but this document was much more than a blueprint for industry development. It represented the first serious effort to put together a comprehensive national cultural policy, springing from the very roots of what could be described as indigenous and non-indigenous Australian culture. As such, it represented a decisive shift away from the narrowness of earlier policy statements concerned primarily or exclusively with support for the arts. For its time, *Creative Nation* was an exceptionally forward-looking document, anticipating several lines of cultural policy development, which have since found expression in other countries, if not here in Australia."[11]

CREATIVE COMMUNITIES AND CULTURAL VITALITY: A PARADIGM SHIFT FOR COMMUNITY CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

In 'The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability' John Hawkes refers to *Cultural Vitality* as "wellbeing, creativity, diversity and innovation" and furthermore recapitulates that "community wellbeing is built on a shared sense of purpose, and values that 'inform action' "[12]. Cate Blanchett and Julianne Schultz in the Age online article *Reviving a Creative Nation* assert that "to flourish, society depends on a strong cultural heritage as well as innovation. Creativity is at the heart of every successful nation." ... and that "giving form to our innate human creativity is what defines us to ourselves and the world."[13]

With respect to this paper the Compact Oxford Dictionary Thesaurus and Wordpower Guide describes the "key word terminologies" used as follows: *creative* as "involving the use of the imagination or original ideas in order to create something**"**[14]**;** *imagination* as "the ability to form ideas or images in the mind" and or "the ability of the mind to be creative"[15]; *community* as "a group of people living together in one place", a "society", a "group of people with a common religion, race or profession" or as "the holding of attitudes or interests in common"[16]; *idea* as "a thought or suggestion about a possible course of action" [17]; *cultural* as "relating to the culture of a society" and or "relating to the arts and to intellectual achievement"[18] and *vitality* as "the state of being strong and active"[19]

So what is meant by *Creative Communities* and *Cultural Vitality* and is the community cultural development process the most effective means to achieving these ends? If we accept that the CCD process is the most effective means to achieving culturally vital and creative communities then the questions arise: Are there shortcomings within the current hierarchical CCD model whereby for community cultural development to take place a "community of interest" must already exist? Are artists and or animateurs the best and only facilitators able to bring about CCD change? Is the currently accepted hierarchical CCDArt model the most effective methodology to facilitate and implement short and or long term CCD goals?

To support the [CCDCom] case within this paper I draw on the definition of "artist" in the Compact Oxford Dictionary Thesaurus and Wordpower Guide as: "a person who paints or draws" or "a person who practises or performs any of the creative arts"[20] and through the example of the two case studies I will suggest that the current hierarchical CCDArt model which assumes at the outset of a project that the "community" is already in

existence and that a person who paints or draws or who practises or performs is the ideal and or most effective catalyst or facilitator to affect short and long term CCD change.

In her *Imagining a Creative Nation 2006 Elizabeth Jolley Lecture* in August 2006, Katharine Brisbane reminds us that "exercise of the imagination is the first step to making a change or solving a problem", and that "so often in her writing Jolley shows us the limitations we place on the imagination and how powerful a motivator the fear of change can be. Yet imaginative ideas … are, or should be, about vision, about change, about mirroring to us new ways of seeing and expressing ourselves and the world, about gazing into the future to view the consequences of our present actions and about re-examining the past and imagining the future." [21] It is suggested here that it is within this broader context of "change" that the limitations and shortcomings of the current CCDArt hierarchical model lie. If, as Jolley asserts, "change" is about mirroring new ways of seeing and expressing ourselves and the world, about gazing into the future to view the consequences of our present actions, about re-examining the past and imagining the future, then it could be argued that this way of addressing the CCD topic is both visionary and broad in its thinking. This would suggest therefore that the current CCDArt outcomes of an artist or artists working in a transitory or temporary way with existing communities are limiting, short-lived and, if not managed well, static or possibly even detrimental.

Joanna Moreland for Common Ground postulates that "rarely is attention paid to the commonplace and familiar aspects of local surroundings" and that "they are often overlooked or taken for granted but have great emotional value for the people who know them well" and by learning to recognise and share "their feelings about their place it is hoped that communities will be encouraged to take an active part in caring for their locality." [22] This premise suggests that once it is understood, embraced and owned by individuals "place" and the emotional connection to "place" is or can become a prime motivator to bring together and empower new communities of interest to work collectively towards the greater good. But, "the idea" must start somewhere, and herein lies the seeds of the CCDCom model as set out in this paper. To support this hypothesis it is argued here, that the ongoing development of the "seeded idea" brings about a raised awareness of a new "sense of place" creates a forum for continued dialogue between and among individuals. Whereby the process of transforming the "original idea" from something hitherto inert, unknown and passive, can then become actions that gather momentum as the new "community of interest" with collective common goals and or objectives evolves.

IMAGINATION, CREATIVE COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITY CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

If, as is stated above, we accept that "imagination" is "the ability to form ideas or images in the mind" and or "the ability of the mind to be creative" and *community* as "a group of people … holding attitudes or interests in common", then in order to assess the potential effectiveness of the CDCom model under discussion it is pertinent to look at the relationships between "imagination", "creative communities" and innovative CCD change and ask the questions: what do we really mean by Creative Communities; how can and do they come about; and how and where in the continuum does a community become a creative community? It is suggested here that Creative Communities are made up of people with creative ideas and the passion and drive [often against great odds] to see those ideas become a reality, and that the strength and flow-on effect of this is pivotal in bringing about the CCDCom change referred to under discussion in this paper.

So what might this innovative CCD change look like? How would living in a Creative Community be different from life as we know it today? Imagine for a moment what living in a Creative Community might be like if our decision makers and funding bodies determined that Australia was to become a *Creative Nation* – a nation where right-brain thinkers are as accepted and mainstream within bureaucracies and organisations as left-brain thinkers. A nation where the cross fertilisation of ideas, ethnicities, cultures and skills are truly understood, appreciated and valued. A nation where high culture lives in harmony with and influences community culture, and vice versa. A nation where in all aspects of life, "creativity" holds as much influence and prestige as "competitiveness." Imagine an Australia where highly creative individuals are as applauded and nurtured as our sporting heroes. Where science and the arts walk hand in hand and where creative thinking is encouraged, fostered and nurtured. Imagine what the Creativity Games might look like, a celebration where our most creative projects and individuals are rewarded, applauded and held up as heroes for others to emulate.

We might see an Australia where there is a Minister and Portfolio for Ideas [imagination], Governments and Corporations might have Ideas Departments. We might be visionary enough to bring together disparate bureaucratic instrumentalities, universities and corporations and develop policies whereby funding streams and other support structures can encourage, enable and facilitate the cross fertilisation of imaginary ideas and projects. We might see "imagination" taught as a curriculum subject in schools. An Australia where people with creative skills are employed by decision makers to work as "Imaginators" within and across the disciplines of art, architecture, heritage, landscape, environment, climate change, tourism, development, infrastructure and the like.

Special interest communities would be made up of creative people whose vision and mission is to foster the greater good. People from all walks of life: professionals, volunteers, old, young, rich, poor, urban and rural all working towards the realisation of a dream. Their dream!

In discussing the differences between the CCDArt and CCDCom models and as mentioned previously, the CCDArt model assumes at the outset that a "community of interest" already exists and that the CCDArt process "offers a 'community' the opportunity for creative expression and the means to create and manage the projects in which it participates" [23]. Within this model the artists' and or animateurs' roles could be said to be the "doing" part of a community cultural development process whereby artists work with a "community in the development of their culture" and, as is stated in the VCA's 2007 Course Brochure – "it is important to remember that many [of these] communities have highly sophisticated and or traditional community cultures, and therefore development is about building on and strengthening those positive aspects which already exist"[24]. In other words the CCDArt model is top-down theory based whereby decision makers choose artists as facilitators to work with existing communities to bring about CCD change. It is suggested here that this top down, artist as facilitator methodology approach, imposes limitations to the empowerment of the individuals and or "existing community" involved and contains the possibility of watering down the creative processes thereby reducing the CCD effectiveness of producing a culturally vital and creative community who embrace and own the idea and or ideas for the longer term.

To argue the case for the CCDCom model, and if as is also mentioned above, we accept the notion that an emotional connection to "place" is or can become a prime motivator to bring together and empower new communities of interest to work collectively towards the greater good, then within this context it is "the idea about connection to place" rather than the artist or animateur that becomes the catalyst to create that emotional connection and therein lies the seeds for the individuals involved to become far more creatively involved in the process.

To support this theory, presented below are two case studies, one in Australia, the other in Northern Italy. Each set of circumstances started with an “idea” which brought together a group of disparate individuals to form a “community of creative people” which in turn has influenced government decision- making and achieved social, cultural, environmental change. In both cases, in conjunction with other pursuits, artists, art works and artistic endeavours have been powerful catalysts for fostering the vision and providing tangible and exciting ways of taking “the idea” to the broader community.

TWO CASE STUDIES

- **The Formation and Achievements of the EcoMuseo dei Terrazzamenti e della Vite (Terraces and Landscapes) in Cortemilia Italy**

  The EcoMuseo for the celebration and protection of Terraces and Grapevines[25] was created to make the people of Cortemilia in the Piedmont area in northern Italy, aware of the historical importance of the extensive stone-walled terraced hillsides and to ensure their continued existence and role both now and into the future. Until a few years ago this important part of their cultural landscape had either been ignored, or at best viewed with an admiring nostalgia, which had relegated it to an era of hard labour that had passed.

  The EcoMuseo in Cortemilia “idea” belongs to one person, Donatella Murtas, who is now the Director. Donatella has been the visionary driver, who with the eventual support of the Piedmont area government over a period of seven short years has grown her idea into an amazing enterprise. Today people from near and far come to there to celebrate the characteristics of the rural area and learn about these wonderful structures through new eyes. The EcoMuseo development has influenced the revival of Cortemilia the town in which the headquarters are located, the town square has been re-cobbled and is alive with people markets and local produce.

  Along the way artists have been involved in signage, public art, community arts projects; children and adults have participated in workshops; gathering stories and story telling the local farming communities have been actively involved in researching and reviving a range of agricultural techniques and plantings of past times. Displays, exhibitions, talks and publications are all aimed at maintaining the time-valued traditions of an area and a culture that still offers space, places and tastes of an intriguing variety. An ancient chestnut drying kiln has been lovingly restored; a new chestnut plantation and local wine vineyards have been established – and are now working and viable enterprises – ; original seed sources of herbs, fruits and vegetables have been sourced and tested and are now organically produced for sale at the EcoMuseo headquarters and elsewhere.

- **The Formation and Achievements of the of the Dry Stone Walls Association of Australia**

  The second “idea” example is one in which I have been personally involved and which originally came about as a result of my time working in the management of Community Arts and Community Cultural Development projects at the City of Keilor [now Brimbank]. At the time there was a need to develop the historic Overnewton Gatehouse and site as a cultural, environmental and tourist facility for the growing Arts community. Whilst working with the Architect historian it emerged that the original dry-stone walls still

survived on the remaining land of the original Overnewton Castle pastoral estate, now known as Overnewton Receptions.

Indeed further personal research over many years revealed that dry-stone walls, these simple agrarian structures and remnants of our early settlement history, were iconic reminders of that history right across the western suburbs and the western district. For me, long before we put public art on street corners, here we had before our very eyes the first public art in the landscape – well worthy of protection for future generations.

An Australia Council Professional Development Grant researching the influence of dry-stone sculptures in the Grizedale Forest in the English Lake District served only to reinforce "the idea" even further. Located within a National Park, Grizedale is known internationally for its pioneering approach to bringing the arts to the general recreating public and the home of Andy Goldsworthy's famous sculpture *Taking a Wall for a Walk*. Now, almost a cult figure, Goldsworthy has not only influenced the dry-stone craft in a contemporary context but has also had a major influence on the emergence of environmental art worldwide.

But the real breakthrough towards "the idea's" realisation came about when I was awarded two Federal Government, Department of Communication Information Technology and the Arts, Visions of Australia Cultural Program Grants to develop and tour an exhibition about the history and heritage of Australia's dry-stone walls. The exhibition A Stone Upon A Stone[26] [ASUAS] was developed and born, and toured for four years in both Victoria and NSW.

During the consultation and touring period people from all walks of life came forward to assist and participate. Farmers, architects, artists, historians, landscape designers, wallers, planners and just ordinary people who have a love for dry-stone walls and the craft in general. Many of these are now key advocates and active participants in the activities of the Dry Stone Walls Association of Australia[27] [DSWAA], a groundswell "community of interest" that emerged as an outcome.

The DSWAA is now an active volunteer not-for-profit organisation that has a website[28], runs regular local and national tours and other events and has active branches interstate and advocates at Local, State and Federal Government levels. I have represented them at two International DSW Congresses and a Stone Symposium in Spain and today we have reciprocal relationships and representation with other like International DSW organisations. Over a period of six years new and young wallers have emerged and the craft is seeing a resurgence in both agricultural and contemporary sculpture settings. There are now a handful of wallers in Australia with DSWA U.K [29] qualifications who are all contributing to the revival and profile of the craft.

Most recently I and two other DSWAA members were successful in collaborating with and undertaking an intensive assessment study for the Shire of Melton. Funded by the Department of Infrastructure's Pride of Place Programme, the study has resulted in a high profile public artwork, a heritage driving trail and a "research and assessment study model" which can be used for similar studies in other Shires. Most importantly though, as a tangible outcome, Heritage Victoria have recently made recommendations to the Planning Minister and policies are now in place to protect Victoria's dry-stone walls for future generations.

The exhibition *A Stone Upon A Stone* was awarded the best exhibit at the 2003 Victorian Community History Awards and the website [30] was selected for archival by the National Library as a site of national significance. The DSWAA produces a regular newsletter, conducts regular field trips and other activities and generally acts as an advocate at local, state, and federal government levels. The growing momentum and community ownership of "the idea" has become a contagious "creative community" motivator, which has raised and continues to raise the profile of dry-stone walls and the craft.

CONCLUSION

The two examples demonstrate the establishment of a "creative and culturally vital community of interest" where one did not, and would not, have previously existed before and establish how a seeded idea has brought to the individuals who became involved in the CCD trajectory a raised awareness and new sense of "their place". In each case the CCD process provided and continues to provide a forum for ongoing dialogue and active participation between and among the participants. It also demonstrates how the transformation of the "original idea" from something latent and unknown became actions that gathered momentum as the new "community of interest" with collective common goals and or objectives evolved.

In the Lure of the Local, Lucy Lippard refers to culture as being "usually understood to be what defines place and its meaning to people"[31]. John Hawkes refers to place as equally defining "culture" and that "our concepts of place affect how we identify the living processes within them."[32] It could therefore be argued that it is the "creative process" rather than the "artistic skill" of facilitating artists per se that in the two case studies are the means to the end and that imaginative individuals from all walks of life are capable of CCD projects and pursuits hitherto not considered as "artistic" within mainstream arts and cultural industries.

Here in Australia however the current funding and bureaucratic structural climate of a bottom-up approach to the development of 'culturally vital and creative communities' has considerable limitations. Despite the obvious success of the DSWAA, and because its Statement of Purposes straddles history, heritage, planning, the arts and the dry stone craft, behind the scenes the Association constantly struggles to find a visionary support niche. In government bureaucratic circles the Association is now seen as the authority, yet in the absence of relevant funding streams, funds are dependent on membership and generous benefactors. As the profile continues to rise and community and government and expectations continue to grow the potential danger for the dedicated group of volunteers is burn out work overload and lack of resources to continue.

The situation in Italy has been far more visionary and flexible. The Piedmont regional government could see the benefits to the area for the development of the EcoMuseo and has supported it with a building to call home, staff, ongoing day to day funding and funds to purchase land and a working farm. Today the idea prospers in a climate of knowing they can expand and move forward creatively and collectively.

In terms of the development of 'culturally vital and creative communities' and the 'creative process' needed to realise that end, the definition of an EcoMuseum is almost the archetypal model. Here in Australia by changing

just a few words of that definition we could have a real starting point for how to define and go about developing creative communities.

The EcoMuseo dei Terrazzamenti e della Vite describes an EcoMuseum as “a museum that it has no fixed boundaries. Rather it is a dynamic process whereby people and communities gather, conserve, interpret and evaluate their unique characteristics and seek ways of sustainable development for future generations. It does not cover a fixed geographical area but is rather a way of sharing knowledge and telling stories of tangible and intangible heritage. It is not constrained by rooms but is about people, places and landscapes. It is not about precious objects and artifacts but about gathering the humble and everyday and collections of the cultural and social aspects of days gone by. Not simply as the agricultural and functional aspects of the landscape of a past era but as something that can provide the people and the area with an opportunity to discover the hidden meanings and possibilities of a different world that is fascinating and full of life.”[33]

In setting up the 2008 ‘Ideas Summit’ the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd set the stage for a climate of serious lateral and bottom-up thinking, however even that process limited community cultural development to the currently accepted artists’ facilitated top down hierarchical methodology. If, within and across the CCD industry, we are truly committed to the task of becoming advocates for the development of ‘culturally vital’ and ‘creative communities’ it is also now our task to create a climate whereby new ‘ideas’ can flourish, where we can use our imaginations to ensure good ideas and dreams can become reality. It will however need to be underpinned by appropriate thinking, strategies, support structures and community participation and at all levels of governmental and educative institutions.

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