



REPORT TO FORBES SHIRE COUNCIL & PROJECT PARTNERS

KALARI-LACHLAN RIVER ARTS FESTIVAL

3-4 September 2011

celebrating country creativity and resilience



compiled by Merrill Findlay
for Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival Inc & The Kate Kelly Project
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

... the arts are like the river, both are essential to life lines

Gillian Sweetland, Jemalong Station, Forbes



The inaugural Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival in Forbes in 2011 was, by general consensus, “an absolute triumph”. A crowd estimated to be around 500-600 people attended the Welcome To Country Spectacular on Saturday evening, 3 September, and some 2,000 people visited the main Festival venue on Buck Bentick Way the following day. Around 300-400 people also braved the night chill to watch the premiere of The Kate Kelly Song Cycle after the Lantern Parade on Sunday night and gave it a standing ovation.

The Festival was conceived by Merrill Findlay as a community celebration of country creativity after a decade of drought. It was directed by Stefo Nantsou, resident director with Sydney Theatre Company, convened by Merrill through her Kate Kelly Project, and auspiced by Parkes & Districts Landcare (now Central West Lachlan Landcare) and

Forbes Shire Council, as the opening event to the 2011 NSW State Landcare Forum. The Festival emerged from a unique community consultation process involving a broad cross section of the community and was made possible through sponsorships, tax deductible donations, grants, in-kind support, the labour of dozens of volunteers, and substantial hidden subsidies. All events were free of charge to the public, in keeping with the Festival’s stated values and goals. And yet the Festival made a small profit.

The River Arts Festival has the potential to make significant contributions not only to the region’s cultural life, but also to Forbes Shire’s economic, social and environmental wellbeing. It will now become an independent biennial event which could become the major cultural event in Central Western New South Wales. With appropriate support, the River Arts Festival could help to transform Forbes into the cultural hub of the region. Future Festivals will require a much more professional and organised process than was possible in 2011. An upgrading of community capacities in areas such as event management, strategic and business planning, community mobilisation and philanthropic fund-raising will help to ensure the Festival’s future. Other issues which need to be addressed before the 2013 Festival include the installation of mains power to all Festival sites and the provision of an attractive, up to date and accessible pocket map of Forbes showing Festival venues.

COMMENTS

What an absolute triumph the inaugural Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival was, it was welcomingly inclusive of age, race, creed and ability. And Sunday's beautiful bush setting on the river itself was brilliant. The festival was jam packed with memorable moments from the welcome to country to the young talent to the lanterns and lotus lights and the chamber opera and the character sketches at the after-party. ... My heartfelt thanks to all for so ably showing that the arts are like the river, both are essential to life lines.

Gillian Sweetland, Jemalong
Festival Triumph, Forbes Advocate, 27 September 2011, p. 7.

The numbers on the day, as well as attending the Welcome the Country and the Mezzanine Cabaret on the Saturday evening were testament to the hard work everyone put in to make the inaugural festival a winner. And given the short lead time, it was extraordinary.

Stefo Nantsou, Festival Director
Letter to the Convener, 25 October, 2011. See Appendices.

Boy oh boy, what a weekend last weekend with the Kalari-Lachlan Arts Festival. Anyone that attended the weekend celebrations would have to say Merrill Findlay and her army of workers have done an amazing job and made us very proud of being a resident of Forbes. The location of the Arts Festival and the Kate Kelly Song [Cycle] down on the Lake was sensational ...

From the Mayor's desk, Phyllis Miller, Forbes Advocate, 10 September 2011.

What a show they put on, in a word 'fantastic'. From the opening on [Saturday] evening at the Wiradjuri Centre to the close with the Kate Kelly Song Cycle on 'Buck' Bentick Way at the rear of the Sports and Recreation Club on Sunday a packed programme had something for all. Support for the Festival came from many. No-one could disagree that the culture, colour, enthusiasm and participation exceeded expectations.

Barry Shine, Forbes Advocate, 6 September 2011, p. 1.

FESTIVAL OVERVIEW

The inaugural Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival was held in Forbes on the weekend of 3-4 September, 2011, as the opening event for the NSW State Landcare Forum in the neighbouring town of Parkes. Even though the River Arts Festival clashed with football and netball finals, various Eisteddfod events and the Show Ball, it nevertheless attracted substantial crowds. An audience estimated at around five to six hundred watched the Welcome To Country on the Saturday evening, and more than 2,000 people attended the main Festival site at Buck Bentick Way on the Sunday, including many visitors from Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra who travelled to Forbes especially for the Kate Kelly Song Cycle premiere.

*Womboyn the Kangaroo created by Light'nUp Lanterns in Lismore and carried by some of the Welcome To Country cast.
Photo by Steve Woodhall, 3 Sept. 2011.*



The feedback was universally positive from locals and visitors alike. Many commented that the Festival was the best thing they had ever experienced in Forbes, and are now telling friends and family not to miss the next one. As Festival Director Stefo Nantsou commented, "given the short lead time it was extraordinary." All events were free to the public, in keeping with the Festival's stated values, goals and objectives (see below), and involved, as far as possible, all sectors of the community, including residents of Jemalong Village, all Forbes schools including Red Bend Catholic College, all Forbes indigenous groups, sports groups, local businesses and service organisations, and, of course, a very broad cross-section of arts and crafts practitioners and enthusiasts. The only performers who were paid were the soprano, conductor and professional musicians in the Kate Kelly Song Cycle ensemble and the guitarist who performed the premiere of Ross Carey's *Lachlan Moods*. Anyone who registered to perform, exhibit, demonstrate or sell their work was given the opportunity to do so.

The feature events—the Welcome To Country Spectacular, the Kate Kelly Song Cycle and the Lantern Parade around Lake Forbes—broke new ground and left participants and audiences alike with indelible memories. Photographs by the Festival's official photographer, Steve Woodhall, were featured in Arts Sunday, a collaboration between Arts OutWest and the Bathurst Advocate, and were re-published on the websites Fairfax newspapers throughout regional Australia, from Margaret River in WA to Numbucca Heads in NSW, and from Katherine in the NT to the Eyre Peninsula in SA. Video footage of the lantern parade by ABC Open producer Luke Wong was available to a global audience on the ABC Central West's web site, which published a total of three multimedia features on the Festival and its lead-up. Interviews about the Festival were broadcast by ABC Radio National, ABC Central West, 2PK/ROK FM, 2EL Orange, and 97.9 Valley FM, the local community radio station. The Kate Kelly Song Cycle was professionally recorded for a DVD to be released soon, and television documentary which is now in production. Forbes Shire Council could never afford to buy this level of publicity.

The River Arts Festival was conceived as a very inclusive biennial event to enrich the cultural lives of all residents of Forbes Shire and beyond, and to contribute many other interconnected social, economic and environmental benefits. It has the potential to become *the* major cultural event in the entire Central West of New South Wales, and, with the addition of modern cultural amenities, could transform Forbes into the region's cultural hub, a status which could bring significant economic advantages and attract new settlers to the Shire to reverse the population decline.

The next River Arts Festival will be held in 2013. We have already secured a commitment from NorthParkes Mines to be a major sponsor of the next *three* festivals. We now seek a parallel commitment from Forbes Shire Council to support the Festival by contributing to the administration/project management, site management, advertising and promotion for the next three festivals, and to match NorthParkes' cash contribution. As Councillors may know, Coonamble Council has made a similar three-year commitment to the Moorambilla Festival in north-western NSW which won the NSW Events and Tourism Award at the 2011 Regional Achievement & Community Awards.¹

The 2011 River Arts Festival was convened by Merrill Findlay and organised by a dedicated community Cabinet of Ministers of the Kalari-Lachlan River Republic of the Arts. It was auspiced by Parkes & Districts Landcare (now Central West Lachlan Landcare), Forbes Shire Council and Lachlan Catchment Management Authority.

The second Festival in September 2013 will be convened and managed by an incorporated not-for-profit community association, the Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival Inc, as an independent regional arts festival. It will be directed by Stefo Nantsou, and organised by a dedicated Cabinet of volunteer Ministers, possibly with the support of a paid coordinator. This event will require a much more professional and organised process than was possible in 2011. An upgrading of community capacities is also necessary to ensure its success.

Communities within the Festival catchment include Forbes, Parkes, Orange, Cowra, Grenfell, West Wyalong, Borrowa, Dubbo, Condobolin, and Lake Cargelligo, for example, and all the towns, villages and localities in between. One day we hope to include communities along the full length and breadth of the Kalari-Lachlan River system, from Goulburn in the Southern Tablelands to Oxley in the Riverina, as well as neighbouring river systems.

FESTIVAL BENEFITS

The River Arts Festival benefits Forbes Shire in many interconnected ways:

- It highlights local talent across many different arts practices
- Brings together diverse sectors of the community, including marginalised groups
- Nurtures country people's sense of place, belonging and pride
- Gives rural people opportunities to tell their own stories and celebrate their creativity in new ways

¹ See Moorambilla Festival, Coonamble: www.moorambilla.com, last accessed 1 January 2012.

- Enhances community cohesion, resilience, wellbeing and sustainability
- Attracts many visitors, including travellers from other regional centres and capital cities (Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne), thus boosting economic activity in the Shire
- Introduces new skills (eg lantern making) and opens new possibilities for creative fulfilment
- Produces many thousands of dollars worth of local, regional, national and global media coverage and promotion for Forbes Shire and surrounding communities
- Gives sponsors, project partners, local businesses, service providers and arts works opportunities to promote and sell their products and to reach out to the broader community
- Gives sponsors and donors opportunities to give back to their communities in practical ways
- Opens up new venues and sites, such as Frogs Hollow and Buck Bentick Way
- Presents opportunities to launch new endeavours, such as the Forbes Dragon Boat Club
- Establishes new models for creative expression and community celebrations
- Expands the networks of supporters keen to help organise and participate in community events
- Offers new visions of what can be achieved when people “think differently”
- Enhances the Shire’s liveability and cultural/social sustainability

PROJECT PARTNERS

The inaugural Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival was made possible through the collaboration of the following project partners and the work of many unnamed volunteers and supporters.

Arts OutWest; Black Ink Design; Canberra University Faculty of Art & Design Advertising Studio (Antony Arena, Lucy Lovegrove, Josh Jessop-Smith and Jumpol Likitawong); Central West Arts Group; Central West Astronomical Society; Central West Libraries; Central West Rural Services Network; Forbes Arts Society; Forbes Central Primary School; Forbes College for Seniors; Forbes Country Music Club; Forbes High School; Forbes Learning Ladder; Forbes Lions Club; Forbes Netball; Forbes North Primary School; Forbes Pre-School; Forbes Primary School; Forbes Shire Choir; Forbes Shire Council; Forbes Sports & Recreation Club; Forbes Urban Landcare; Jemalong Retirement Village; Lachlan Catchment Management Authority; Lachlan Valley FM; Light’n Up Lanterns, Lismore; Matt Drane Steel Fabrication; Mezzanine Style Coffee House; Mitchell Conservatorium of Music; North Forbes Primary School; NSW Probation and Parole Service (Department of Corrective Services); Parkes & Districts Landcare Group (now Central West Lachlan Landcare); Photographers Steve Woodhall and Amy Whitfield; Red Bend Catholic College; Richmond Fellowship; Rural Adversity Mental Health Program; Salvation Army; St Lawrence Catholic Primary School; The Kate Kelly Project; Wilcannia/Forbes Catholic Education Service; Words Out West; Western NSW and Far West Local Health Networks; Yoorana Gunya Family Violence Healing Centre; and Zeal Theatre Company.

This remarkable event would not have been possible without the contributions of all these groups, and from many unnamed individuals. We gratefully acknowledge their support.

AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival is conceived as a community arts festival and celebration of country creativity for *all* residents of Forbes and the surrounding region. It embraces the values of inclusivity, diversity, pluralism, and social, economic, ecological and cultural sustainability.

The Festival's values are reflected in the following Aims and Objectives as defined in 2011

1. To celebrate country people's creativity through the arts, crafts and associated activities
2. To fill gaps in the region's cultural life through an arts festival featuring both professional and community performers and events
3. To affirm and enhance local peoples' sense of place, community belonging and resilience
4. To enable people of all ages and all backgrounds to celebrate their country identity, tell their own stories in their own ways, care for their local environments, and enrich their lives through the arts and crafts
5. To nurture and strengthen community resilience, social cohesion, wellbeing, and ecological and social sustainability in our regional communities
6. To be actively inclusive of marginalised groups in performances, exhibitions and other creative activities
7. To introduce new skills and open new opportunities for creative fulfilment, employment and sustainability
8. To boost local economic activity by attracting visitors and settlers to the region
9. To create opportunities for arts and crafts workers, project partners, sponsors, service providers and regional businesses to demonstrate and promote their products and causes, and engage with the general community
10. To establish a contemporary Community Cultural Centre in Forbes, with excellent performance, exhibition, studio and retail spaces, and other amenities
11. To do all this in ways which are creative, enriching, harmonious, future-oriented, ecologically sustainable, personally fulfilling and rewarding for organisers, participants and audiences alike ... and *FUN!*

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

The River Arts Festival was the outcome of a carefully planned community consultation process which included a community barbecue on 20 December 2010, a Brunch On The Bridge on Saturday 19 March 2011, and a community meeting on 13 May, all of which were sponsored by Forbes Shire Council and project partners. These well attended events were critical in assessing and generating support for the Festival and in creating a 'buzz' to keep the momentum going. This unique 'Forbes model' has been proven to work and may be worth replicating in other contexts.

Community barbecue

The first community consultation event, the barbecue on the deck of the Forbes Sports & Recreation Club overlooking Lake Forbes on Monday 20 December, 2010, was facilitated to assess community support for a river arts festival in Forbes. This meeting was convened by The Kate Kelly

Project, Mitchell Conservatorium of Music, Forbes Urban Landcare, Parkes & Districts Landcare (Central West Lachlan Landcare) and Forbes Sports & Recreation Club.

Stefo Nantsou, resident director with Sydney Theatre Company, was the guest facilitator of this event in his capacity as The Kate Kelly Project's dramaturg. The KK Project had already decided that the Kate Kelly Song Cycle, which was not then completed, could be used to 'kick-start' an arts festival in Forbes, if enough people supported the idea. The combination of these two events would facilitate fund funding.

Reporter Michael Bushell captured the importance of this gathering in an article headlined 'Inclusive vision for Kate Kelly Event', published in the Forbes Advocate of 4 Jan 2011.

Theatre director Stefo Nantsou has visions of an arts festival in Forbes which embraces ideas from the entire community.

Mr Nantsou, a resident director of the Sydney Theatre Company, visited Forbes last month at the invitation of the Kate Kelly Project creator, Merrill Findlay.

While in Forbes, Mr Nantsou hosted a workshop at Forbes Sports and Recreation Club, where he outlined plans for broad community input for the staging of the Kate Kelly Song Cycle.

The Song Cycle has been written by Merrill Findlay and composer Ross Carey and will feature a number of musical performers, including Mitchell Conservatorium violinist Martin Lee and local choirs.

Mr Nantsou said he was approached by Ms Findlay to direct the Song Cycle, but the event had now grown.

"The idea has just snowballed," Mr Nantsou said.

"We're now looking at turning [the Song Cycle] into a small arts festival and including as much of the community as we can," he said.

Mr Nantsou said his role was to bring the ideas of interested parties together.

"I'll just be gathering ideas today and trying to find a way of putting all those ideas into the same boat," he said during his visit just prior to Christmas.

Mr Nantsou said the Kate Kelly Song Cycle would be the 'focal point' of the festival.²

Michael Bushell, Forbes Advocate, 4 Jan 2011

In his follow-up report to The Kate Kelly Project Stefo Nantsou identified the Lake foreshore and Buck Bentick Way as "a perfect location to 'base' such a Festival." He pointed out that "This setting would not only provide a great location for performances and presentations, including a lantern parade, for example, but would also give the many stallholders and service providers and sponsors a great location to sell their food and wares, promote their industries and advertise products in a safe, comfortable and extremely beautiful location." See Appendices for the full report.

Brunch on the bridge

Following the positive response to the festival concept, project partners organised a second community event, a Brunch On The Bridge on Saturday 19 March 2011, to 'plot the program' for

² See <http://www.forbesadvocate.com.au/news/local/news/general/inclusive-vision-for-kate-kelly-event/2038925.aspx>, last accessed 16 November 2011.



the proposed Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival. The Brunch on historic Bates Bridge was proposed at the first consultation by Forbes artist Elaine Imrie. This event was sponsored by Forbes Shire Council and hosted by The Kate Kelly Project, Mitchell Conservatorium, Forbes Urban Landcare, Parkes & Districts Landcare (Central West Lachlan Landcare), Central West Arts Group, Forbes Arts Society, and Forbes College For Seniors.

Guest speaker Steve Baldwin, then Tourism Development Manager for Coonamble Shire Council, drew attention to the role the arts and arts festivals can have in revitalising rural communities and enriching the lives of country people. He cited a recent University of Wollongong report, *Reinventing Rural Places: the extent and impact of festivals in rural and regional Australia*,³ which found that festivals contribute to the cultural, social and economic wellbeing of country towns and villages in complex ways which cannot be assessed in purely financial terms.

The Brunch On The Bridge was attended by visual artists, musicians, singers, landcarers, welfare workers, local historians, tourism operators, teachers, politicians and arts administrators from Forbes, Parkes, Orange, Dubbo, Narromine and Bathurst. Many of the ideas proposed at this gathering, including dragon boating on the lake, came to fruition at the Festival in September.

Meeting to establish the Festival Cabinet

Having ascertained that there was sufficient community support for a River Arts Festival with a broad and very inclusive agenda in Forbes, and having obtained commitments to cash sponsorship and donations totalling \$30,000, the project partners called a more formal meeting at the Forbes Sports & Recreation Club on Friday 13 May, 2011, to establish the management team. Instead of a conventional committee we decided to take a more creative approach by instigating the informal Kalari-Lachlan River Republic of the Arts (modelled on the Enlightenment Republic of Letters concept)⁴, and establishing a Cabinet of Ministers, each of whom would be responsible for her/his own portfolio.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Festival was facilitated by a Cabinet of Ministers with individual portfolios of responsibilities, and each linking into different networks. This meant that the Festival could emerge more organically as a 'network of networks' rather than being organised in a traditional top-down hierarchical manner.

The Cabinet evolved over time, and by August 2011 had stabilised to the following positions.

Roving Minister for Everything: Festival director Stefo Nantsou

Chief Minister, Minister for Finance and Convener: Merrill Findlay

Minister for Arts & Crafts: Jane Bennie

Joint Ministers for Busking: Robert Hoswell, Reika Hoswell and Peter Clark

Minister of Cabaret and Opening Party: Janine Whitfield

Minister for Children's Activities: Melody Ruhrmund

³ Chris Gibson and Anna Stewart, 2009, University of Wollongong. See <http://www.uow.edu.au/content/groups/public/@web/@sci/@eesc/documents/doc/uow060229.pdf>, last accessed 16 November 2011.

⁴ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Letters, last accessed 1 January 2012.



Minister for Digital Communication: Denise Rutherford
Minister for Farmers Participation: Graham Falconer
Minister for the Festival Lounge: Lyn Ford
Minister for Indigenous Participation: Russell Hill
Minister for Landcare and Catchment Management: Margot Jolly
Minster for Lantern Parade: Ro Burns
Minister for Main Stage Performance: Anne Hodges
Minister for Mental Health: Di Gill
Non-minsters for Reading & Writing: Jasmine Vidler and Jan Richards
Non-minister for Stalls, Markets and Slow Foods: Sarah White

The success of portfolio outcomes depended on the Ministers' project management skills, time and talents. Most were very successful. All major decisions were made by the Director and/or 'Chief Minister', after discussion with the relevant Ministers. This model eliminated the need for endless committee meetings. In general, the Ministry model worked very well, as the outstanding success of, for example, the Welcome To Country, the Lantern Parade, the Arts Village and the Slow Food Lane demonstrated.

VENUES

The 2011 Festival was spread over four main venues: the Wiradjuri Dreaming Centre on Lake Forbes; Mezzanine Style Coffee House in the historic Forbes Arcade and adjacent Rankin Street; Forbes Sports & Recreation Club, which served as the Festival Lounge; and the Lake foreshore along Buck Bentick Way, between the Forbes Sports & Recreation Club/Bate Bridge and Frogs' Hollow, a beautiful woodland setting which hitherto had not been used for public events. Other venues included Jemalong Retirement Village (for a residents' art exhibition) and the Youth & Community Centre (for a film screening).

The Festival shopfront on Rankin Street, made available by the Bernadi family, provided an accessible work space for pre-Festival activities and general promotions for before the Festival.

FESTIVAL EVENTS: SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS

The Festival cast included hundreds of performers, exhibitors and stall holders, along with a small army of volunteers who kept everything moving. The Welcome To Country Spectacular, the Lantern Parade, and the premiere of the Kate Kelly Song Cycle were undoubtedly extraordinary events, but to name these as the 'highlights' is to do a great injustice to all those which we don't have space here to mention. People will certainly remember the wide range of visual art exhibitions and activities, poetry, dance and musical performances in all genres, and stalls along Buck Bentick Way and Frogs Hollow, and on the deck of the Festival Lounge located at the Sports & Recreation Club.

The Festival was officially opened with an informal party at Mezzanine Coffee House after the Welcome To Country. Festival convener Merrill Findlay introduced the official speakers, the Hon. John Cobb, Federal Member for Calare, Troy Grant, State Member for Dubbo, the Mayor of Forbes, Phyllis Miller, and Andrew Garrett of NorthParkes Mines, the Festival's major sponsor. Several hundred locals and visitors then settled back to enjoy musical performances, exhibitions and recitations, while appreciating Mezzanine's food and wine. Late in the evening the crowd witnessed some of the Festival's most thrilling impromptu performances, including Stefo Natsou's



localised rendition of Henry Lawson's The Loaded Dog, and an aria or two by the Kate Kelly Song Cycle's musical director, Bill Moxey.

Federal Member for Calare, John Cobb, enthusing about the arts at the Festival opening. Photo by Steve Woodhall, 3 Sept. 2011.

Mezzanine also hosted the Festival's Afters Party – which included more performances not included on the program, such as a haunting drama written and performed by Year 11 students from Red Bend Catholic College which, for those fortunate enough to have witnessed it, was truly one of the Festival highlights.

While the official speeches were proceeding, a group of teenagers was launching Spectacular Screenings in the Youth and Community Centre, with their first film for young viewers, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*. The youth group consisted of Rebecca Roach, Matt Todd, Daniel Ashcroft, Zak Mangelsdorf, Tyla Sellers, Mitchell Ashcroft, Lachlan McDaniel, Tahlia Parsons, Zoe Cook, Jayden Scott and Isacc Scott. They were supported by Council's youth worker Natalie Walker, and by all the schools in the Shire. Around one hundred young people and their parents attended this event, highlighting the great need for this kind of entertainment in Forbes.



The multi-faith ceremony on Bates Bridge. Photo by Merrill Findlay, 4 Sept. 2011.

The Salvation Army's Julie Layton conducted a Multi-faith gathering on Bates Bridge early on Sunday morning which may have been the first ceremony of this kind ever held in Forbes. This moving event included indigenous people, Christians, Muslims and non-believers, all of whom reflected upon the value of community diversity and on their shared spiritual bonds. The service program included texts from all major world faith traditions and the words of First Nation elders. Participants honoured all these ways of being in the world. The Multi-faith gathering will be repeated and enhanced in future River Arts Festivals.

(See below for the full Festival program. Please note that not all Festival activities or performers are listed on the program.)

Welcome to Country Spectacular

Saturday @ Sunset.

Nganyal Gawaymbanhadhi

I Welcome You To Wiradjuri Country

The pioneering hour-long Welcome To Country drama at the Wiradjuri Dreaming Centre was performed by more than 100 students from Forbes Pre-School, Forbes Learning Ladder, Forbes Central Primary School, Forbes North Primary School, St Lawrence Catholic Primary School, Forbes High School and Red Bend Catholic College. This event featured giant illuminated Ancestral Beings created by Light'nUp Lanterns of Lismore, which were "brought to life" by the students and volunteers.

The lantern walk at the Wiradjuri Dreaming Centre.

Photo by Steve Woodhall, 3 Sept, 2011.



This unique event was conceived and scripted by Wiradjuri descendant Russell Hill, the Festival's Minister for Indigenous Participation. (See the appendices for Russell's script, which is also now available at riverartsfestival.org.au.) The script was narrated by Festival Director Stefo Nantsou, and co-produced by a local committee representing indigenous community organisations and support institutions. This committee consisted of Anthony Towney, Amy Shine, Catherine Guise, Juley Clarke, Karen James, Kathy Wighton, Larry Towney, Merindah Wilson and Samantha Hanley. Stefo Nantsou, Tom Lycos and Larry Towney provided the live music.

The Welcome To Country cast was as follows.

Biaime: Taylo Hemming
 Rainbow Serpent: Forbes High School students
 Kangaroos (Womboyne): Forbes North Public School
 Goanna (Googar): Forbes Primary School
 Water and Fish: Forbes Learning Ladder
 Fire and Native Plants: Forbes Pre-School
 English Soldier: Georgia Woods
 Windradyne: Traie Merritt
 Aboriginal People: Red Bend College students
 Kevin Rudd: Aiden Clarke
 Wiradjuri Choir: Forbes North Public School

This performance was a social innovation of inestimable significance to both indigenous and non-indigenous communities. An example of Reconciliation in action and a very moving blueprint for all future Welcomes To Country.

Lantern Parade

Sunday @ Sunset

One hundred small pyramid lanterns and a flock of giant native fish, birds and animals lanterns moved slowly around the Lake Forbes at dusk, in tribute to the Shire's C19th Chinese settlers. The visual impact of this parade, including the reflections of the lanterns in the water, generated unforgettable memories.

*Lantern Parade on the Lake Forbes foreshore.
Photo by Steve Woodhall, 4 Sept. 2011.*



The Lantern Parade was led by Forbes Mayor Phyllis Miller and coordinated, directed and sponsored by artist Jyllie Jackson and her crew from Light'n Up Lanterns in Lismore. It was facilitated by the Festival's Minister for Lanterns, Ro Burns. Most of the lanterns were made by local people in Forbes through a series of lantern-making workshops conducted by Jyllie Jackson and Ro Burns, with funding from the Country Arts Support Scheme (CASP) and Forbes Shire Council. The giant lanterns were brought from Lismore for the Welcome To Country, with grant from the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) and Lachlan Catchment Management Authority.

Kate Kelly Song Cycle premiere: the headline act



*Melbourne soprano Sian Prior with community choirs
and clarinettist Justin Screen on stage.
Photo by Steve Woodhall, 4 September, 2011.*

The premiere of The Kate Kelly Song Cycle, a 60 minute New Music chamber opera by composer Ross Carey and writer Merrill Findlay, was performed before an audience of some 300-400, by Melbourne soprano Sian Prior with an ensemble of professional musicians and community choirs, beside the very lagoon in which Kate Kelly's body was found in 1898.

The musical ensemble consisted of accordionist Elizabeth Jones (Australian Institute of Music), cellist Rachel Whealy (Sydney), and Mitchell Conservatorium musicians Martin Lee on violin and Justin Screen on clarinet. The Forbes Shire Choir and Forbes Seniors Choir participated, under the baton of Musical director William Moxey from Orange.

The Song Cycle is a creative re-interpretation of the last decade of the life of Ned Kelly's sister Kate in and around Forbes in the late nineteenth century. It draws on original research by writer Merrill Findlay through her Kate Kelly Project.

Other historical characters evoked in this work include Kate Kelly's husband, Will Foster; Quong Lee, the Chinese grocer who narrates Kate's story in the aria *Harvest Moon*; and Ellen Palmer, a Wiradjuri woman who features in the aria *Poor Irish and Wiradjuri*. Kate Kelly's own Irish heritage is celebrated in the final aria *I Heard The Banshee Cry*.

*Conductor Bill Moxey, with cellist Rachel Whealy in the background.
Photo by Steve Woodhall, 4 September 2011.*

For the community choirs involved, the premiere presented a rare opportunity to work with professional performers, and to participate in a new musical work set in their own home town about characters who are part of their local folklore. Although the choristers found the music challenging they were very proud of what they achieved, as were the professional performers, including conductor Bill Moxey who drew the best out of everyone involved.



A television documentary and recording are now in production and will be used to promote this new work throughout Australia and beyond. The sheet music is available from the composer and will be published in time.

The Kate Kelly Song Cycle currently consists of five arias:

Bricky's Sorry Song: Kate's abusive husband 'Bricky' Foster reflects on his violence and abuse of alcohol and seeks forgiveness from his wife and family

Harvest Moon: Kate's story as told by Quong Lee, a local grocer at whose store Kate would have shopped

Poor Irish and Wiradjuri: Kate connects the circumstances of two Ellens in her life – her mother Ellen Kelly and Ellen Palmer, a Wiradjuri woman who lived on the river bank in Forbes – and the impacts of British imperialism on both

Ghosts of Glenrowan: Kate remembers her life on the family selection in Victoria before 1880

I Heard the Banshee Cry: Kate sings about her fears and forebodings, and her happy days with her children in Forbes.

Forbes Heat of the Australian Poetry Slam

by Jasmine Vidler, Central West Libraries and Central West Writers' Centre

Central West Libraries and Central West Writers' Centre were pleased to be involved in the inaugural Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival by hosting a Poetry Slam workshop and heat as part of the Australian Poetry Slam with host and spoken word artist Miles Merrill. It was also a timely event as the start to Poetry Week.

Five poets performed their works, each no longer than two minutes, on the Festival's Main Stage on the Lake Forbes Foreshore. Judges, selected at random from the audience during the afternoon, scored Keith Rawsthorne of Forbes first place, with Ted Webber of Young not far behind. Both presented their bush poetry inspired works. The scores were very close for the other three contestants, Glenn Couchman of Orange, Dulcie Mclean of Orange, and young Marisha Downey of Forbes.

Both winners had the opportunity to compete in the Australian Poetry Slam State Final to be held at the Sydney Theatre Company, Walsh Bay, Sydney on Friday 4th November, 2011.

Host Miles Merrill relished performing in front of the large crowd and was impressed by the poets and the enthusiastic audience. Ted did an encore performance of another bush poem about farm machinery which also entertained everyone.



Sydney poet Miles Merrill (left) conducts a Sunday morning workshop with Slam participants beside Lake Forbes. Photo by Merrill Findlay, 4 Sept, 2011.

Media releases sent out in the lead up to the event were well supported by newspapers in Forbes and Parkes, radio stations 2PK Parkes, Valley FM and Central West ABC Radio who interviewed Miles Merrill. The Poetry Slam was also promoted via Arts OutWest and well supported on the Australian Poetry Slam website, the Festival website, Central West Libraries and Central West Writers' websites. ABC Radio, Parkes Champion Post and Forbes

Advocate also followed up with stories on the winning poets.

Staff from Central West Libraries also set up a stand for the day to promote Forbes Library, Central West Writers' Centre and reading, writing and literacy.

The Australian Poetry Slam State Final was held at the Sydney Theatre Company, Walsh Bay, Sydney on Friday 4th November, 2011. The National Australian Poetry Slam Final was held at the Sydney Theatre on Sunday 27 November at 5pm.

We were pleased with the way the Festival organisers presented the Forbes Heat and all the other entertainment on the Main Stage. We would also like to pass on our congratulations to all the organisers, participants and audience on the day, and we would certainly participate in any such future events. [Please see the Appendices for the Forbes Heat postcard.]

Jasmine Vidler

Reading and Writing Coordinator

Central West Libraries and Central West Writers' Centre

Of the two Forbes finalists, only Ted Webber was available for the State final at Walsh Bay. He submitted the following report on his 'adventure' in The Big Smoke.

Ted's Poetry Adventure

Last Friday Nov 4th, my wife June and I travelled to Sydney to compete in the NSW Finals of the Australian Poetry Slam which was held at the Sydney Theatre Company's theatre at Walsh Bay. In the preceding weeks, I had been amazed by the support extended to me by the Young Community. The Young Witness and the Young Arts Council in particular were very

helpful. But the most humbling was to receive so many phone calls and comments from people in the street, or supermarket or clubs, offering their best wishes. Thank you so much.

The slam was an eye opener to me. No props, no music, no special clothing, just a strict two minutes to present your original work in any way you wanted to the audience; normal voice, sing, shout, whisper, rhyme, free verse or whatever. Apart from myself there was only one other rhyming poet. Subject matter ranged from baking a cake, to a teenager going on a first date and possibly having a first kiss, sticking up for Palestinian rights, escaping from Vietnam and a confronting double X rated piece. Sixteen poets were awarded points by judges selected from the audience and only the top two go on the Australian Poetry Slam finals. I was not one of them.

I am a competitive person so cannot deny that I was disappointed yet am satisfied that I did the best I could on the night. No regrets. If I qualify next year I will come much better prepared with a raunchier funnier piece, probably not rhyming.

June and I enjoyed our weekend adventure. Along the way we got lost on the train system, sat for over two hours waiting for a bus that never came, caught a cab that got stuck in a traffic gridlock caused by a big crash on the Harbour Bridge and \$70 later arrived at the theatre just on time. After the show we enjoyed a nice night time walk along the harbour side, admired the Bridge and Opera House lights then accidentally gate crashed a wedding. We then found that we had missed the last bus back to our hotel. Luckily the kind driver of another bus dropped us off as close as he could, at midnight, right at the top of Kings Cross. From there we walked bug-eyed down the Golden Mile of Darlinghurst Street passed bouncers, strip clubs, ladies of the night, others I can't describe, and "adult" shops. Certainly different to Young!!!!!!



FESTIVAL PROGRAM

THE KALARI-LACHLAN RIVER ARTS FESTIVAL what's on

SATURDAY 3rd Sept 2011 PROGRAM

2.00 Guitar lessons with **GRANT SAMBELLS** at Mitchell Conservatorium of Music

6.00 WELCOME TO COUNTRY PERFORMANCE at THE WIRADJURI DREAMING CENTRE
performed by students from Forbes Central Primary School, Forbes North Primary School, Forbes High School Red Bend Catholic College, St. Laurence Primary School, Forbes Pre-School, Learning Ladder Pre-School and special guests.

7.30 SPECTACULAR SCREENINGS of *"DIARY OF A WHIMPY KID"*
at Forbes Youth & Community Centre

7.30 STREET PARTY between **PIT STOP & MEZZANINE STYLE** with a range of outdoor food & music and a look at the stars with **Central West Astronomical Society**

7.30 MEZZANINE STYLE CABARET (including Mez's own Special Ribs Night Menu)

Entertainment	7.30 RED BEND Yr 12 HSC muzos
	8.00 Official Speeches by Lord Mayor & NorthParkes Mine
	8.20 FORBES COUNTRY MUSIC CLUB
	9.00 VINCE UMBERS
	9.10 ADAM ENDSLOW
	9.20 RED BEND Yr 11 drama
	9.30 GRANT SAMBELLS
	10.30 MARTIN LEE AND JUSTIN SCREEN
	11.00 OPEN JAM

ART EXHIBITIONS

@ MEZZANINE STYLE COFFEE HOUSE

ALICE LEAVES WONDERLAND Paintings by Kiata Mason

PAPER AND PANACHE Handmade books by visual artists of the Templar Street Artspace

INITIATING A FRIENDSHIP Debut exhibition by local photographer Amy Whitfield

LANDCARING Artworks by Forbes Art Society Members

DHINNAWAN BOY Indigenous art by Colin Wightman

LOCAL MIX Local artists encouraged for a mixed exhibition under the mezzanine level

Participating Artists from Parkes, Grenfell and Forbes include Diane Collie, Diane Garner, Kiata Mason, Barbara Mason, Melody Rhumond, Karen Runchel and teacher Jane Bennie

ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE @ Jemalong Retirement Village, Forbes

Work by four gifted residents of Jemalong Residential Village, Maude Morris, Arthur Lawler, Val Cartwright and Margaret Livingston, with drawing by Beginners of the 2010 art classes. Opening 4 pm, Friday 2 September, in the Opal Room, with light refreshments. Public welcome.

riverartsfestival.org.au



THE KALARI-LACHLAN RIVER ARTS FESTIVAL

what's on

SUNDAY 4th Sept 2011 PROGRAM (by Lake Forbes behind the Bowlo)

THE MAIN STAGE

- 10.00 THE FUTURE STARS MUSICAL
- 11.00 LARRY BRANDY STORYTELLER
- 11.30 GOOGAR DANCERS
- LYRE BIRD DANCERS
- HAPPY FEET BALLET SCHOOL
- 12.00 POETRY SLAM with MILES MERRILL
- 1.00 RED BEND CONCERT BAND
- 1.30 LUCY SIMMONDS
- CELLOPHANE FRAMES
- 2.00 MELISSA ROBERTSON
- 2.20 ROBIN YEATMAN & SAM WILLIAMS
- 2.40 NIEL & JANE GILMOUR
- 3.00 TANÉ
- 3.40 CHARMAINE POUT
- 4.00 FORBES COUNTRY MUSIC CLUB
- 5.30 DR. MUSIC & THE CON KIDS
- 6.15 GRANT SAMBELLS
- 6.45 THE KATE KELLY SONG CYCLE

THE BUS SHELTER LOUNGE

- 10.00 MITCHELL CONSERVATORIUM MUSICIANS
- 11.00 PREVAILING WINDS
- 11.30 MITCHELL CONSERVATORIUM MUSICIANS
- 1.30 RED BEND MUSIC & DRAMA
- 3.00 MITCHELL CONSERVATORIUM MUSICIANS

THE BOWLING CLUB

- 8.00 Forbes Cycle Club meet
- 8.00 The Bush Poets Breakfast
- 10.00 Beyond Blue Bowls Comp -
- RAMHP Pitt Stop Health checks &
- Richmond Fellowship PHAMS
- 7.30 Forbes Country Music Club

BUCK BENTICK BUSKERS

- 10.00 Forbes Country Music Club
- 1.00 Bush Poetry
- 2.00 Forbes Country Music Club
- 4.00 Melissa Robertson
- 4.30 Niel & Jane Gilmour
- 5.00 Charmaine Pout

ON THE LAKE & BRIDGE

- 10.00 MULTI FAITH GATHERING
- 8.30-10.00 DRAGON BOAT CLUB SESSION 1
- 10.30-12.00 SESSION 2
- 11.30-1.00 SESSION 3
- 4.00 FORBES TOWN & DISTRICT BAND
- 6.15 LANTERN PARADE
- 7.15 LANTERN FINALE

OTHER ATTRACTIONS & EVENTS

- 10.00 ARTS+CRAFTS STALLS including *BHUTAN WEAVING & HUNZA EMBROIDERY *KOORI CREATION ART *WOOLERINA WOOL * SILVER JEWELLERY & HATS *BONSAI *PHOTOGRAPHY FOR KIDS *THE ENCHANTED FOREST *SPINNING, KNITTING & CROCHETING *CHILDREN'S WEAR *MOSAICS *VINTAGE STYLE CLOTHING *HANDPAINTED SILK *MITCHELL CONSERVATORIUM MUSIC FUN and more...
MARQUEES+TENTS with *READERS & WRITERS *LANDCARE *FORBES SENIORS *CMA FOUNDATION *WIRADJURI BUSH TUCKER, DANCE & DIDGERIDOO WORKSHOPS *FORBES NETBALL CLUB *FARMERS *SES RESCUE TRUCK and heaps more...
FOOD GALORE by *SALVO'S TUCKER TRUCK *MEZZANINE PICNIC PACKS *SNOW ICE CREAM VAN *ALL YOU WANT CATERING GIBSON'S OLIVES & TAPENADES *PETER ASHCROFT ALL YOU CAN EAT and a lot more food...
+ WINE TASTINGS, CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES, ST. GEORGE DRAGON and much much more....
- 11.00 POETRY SLAM WORKSHOPS with MILES MERRILL in the READERS & WRITERS TENT
- 11.00 TAI CHI in the WOODS



FUNDING

The 2011 River Arts Festival was entirely funded by grants, sponsorships, tax deductible donations, in-kind support and the contributions of volunteers, which ensured that all activities were free to the public, in keeping with our Festival values.

Stefo Nantsou's early commitment to the consultation process and the Festival itself was a very important factor in its success. This was made possible through The Kate Kelly Project, with a follow-up grant from Forbes Shire Council, and later by Sydney Theatre Company.

Once the decision was made in late 2010 to go ahead with the festival, the Kate Kelly Project applied for grants and sponsorship totalling some \$90,000, including a major grant application to Festivals Australia for the headline act, the premiere of The Kate Kelly Song Cycle. These applications were accompanied by more than twenty letters of support from Project Partners. A request for financial support was also made to Forbes Shire Council in early 2011.

Neither the Festivals Australia grant application nor the submission to Council were successful, which meant that we had to make urgent approaches to philanthropic networks for funds to produce the Kate Kelly Song Cycle.

The two applications to the region's two major employers, NorthParkes Mines and Barrick Cowal, were eventually approved, however. These two cash sponsorships totalling \$20,000 ensured that the Festival could go ahead. Forbes Shire Council acted as the auspicing body to manage the cash funds.

The 2011 Festival received cash sponsorships, tax deductible donations, and in-kind support totalling an estimated \$66,000, as outlined below. The Festival was also supported by many hidden subsidies.

Sponsorships

The involvement of Sydney Theatre Company, which sponsored director Stefo Nantsou's participation in the Festival, was fundamental to the success of the first River Arts Festival.

It was the success of applications for cash sponsorship to two of the region's two major employers, NorthParkes and Barrick Cowal Gold, through their community partnerships programs in early 2011, which ensured that the Festival could proceed, however.

These cash injections covered basic requirements, such insurance, staging, sound and lighting, security and promotion for all events. Our other highly valued cash sponsors made events such as the Welcome To Country possible.

MAJOR SPONSORS

NorthParkes Mine, Sydney Theatre Company

STAGE SPONSOR

Barrick Cowal Gold

OTHER SPONSORS

Arts OutWest

Bernadi's IGA and Discount Dave's (paint)

Joe Bernadi (Festival shop front in Rankin Street)

Central West Libraries (Poetry Slam)

Community Relations Commission for a Multicultural NSW (Lantern Parade)

Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations (Welcome To Country)

Lachlan Catchment Management Authority (WTC)

LightnUp Lanterns (WTC, Lantern Parade)

Matt Drane Fabrication (emergency generators for WTC)

Regional Arts NSW (Kate Kelly Project)

Target Country (Volunteers t-shirts)

Tax Deductible Donations

The Festival's headline act, the premiere of The Kate Kelly Song Cycle, was made possible by tax deductible donations totalling \$11,500 contributed through the Australian Business Arts Foundation's Australia Arts Fund supported by Macquarie Bank. The major donation was by Annamila Pty Ltd of Melbourne. Other donations were made by Robyn Prior (Melbourne) and Barbara Holloway (Canberra). The Kate Kelly Song Cycle premiere would not have been possible without these generous contributions by philanthropists.

AbaF's Australia Arts Fund enables donors to contribute to arts projects by approved artists. To qualify for being listed on the AbaF database, artists must satisfy AbaF that they are bona-fide practising artists "engaged in the pursuit of quality cultural activities", and that the funds granted "will proceed as described and further Australia's cultural life", and "be used for the designated purposes".⁵ Before being approved, artists must develop a convincing business plan in consultation with AbaF mentors. Festival Convener Merrill Findlay was able to meet the Australia Cultural Fund's stringent registration criteria because of her professional background as a writer. She developed a business plan in consultation with AbaF staff and, after a lengthy process, the Kate Kelly Song Cycle was finally registered. During this time a Melbourne philanthropist expressed interest in the project, the planets aligned ... and the premiere of the Kate Kelly Song Cycle could proceed.

The Festival's association with the Australia Business Arts Foundation was beneficial in 2011. We have now been invited to work with AbaF and the Australia Culture Fund to seek donations for future Festivals.

⁵ Australia Cultural Fund Registration Form, 2011.



In-kind support

Forbes Shire Council voted to support the Festival once it was obvious that it was financially viable. Council covered the cost of accommodation for the Song Cycle musicians, toilets, garbage disposal, the Development Application process, and staff time, including the labours of Ian Prior, Sarah White, Kelly Woolridge and the grounds staff.

In-kind support contributed by local organisations, businesses and individuals was vital to the Festival's success but this support is impossible to cost. The range of the in-kind support is exemplified by the Forbes Lions Club's contribution. Lions Club members produced several hundred small origami lotuses lanterns for the Festival finale, and invited members of the public to make their own lotuses and write their prayers, hopes and dreams in them at the Festival. Candles were put into the lotus lanterns and, at the end of the Kate Kelly Song Cycle, they were lit and released onto Lake Forbes. The sight of several hundred illuminated lotus flower lanterns floating across the water was a visually stunning and very moving finale to the Song Cycle.

Mitchell Conservatorium and other organisations provided rehearsal space; Forbes Sports & Recreation Club contributed amenities throughout the Festival, and champagne for a thankyou reception hosted by The Kate Kelly Project for the musicians and choirs; Forbes Lions Club produced the lotus lanterns for the finale; Matt Drane Fabrications came to the rescue when the electricity failed at the Wiraduri Dreaming Centre by providing two generators free of charge at short notice; Mick Willmott collected a large generator in his farm truck for the main Festival stage to save us some transport costs, and then had to make a second early morning emergency dash into Parkes when problems were detected with that generator ... and the list of contributions continues.

The generosity of local people to ensure the success of this Festival was overwhelming and made this event a truly collaborative effort.

Subsidies

The River Arts Festival, including the Kate Kelly Song Cycle, was subsidised in many hidden ways.

Director Stefo Nantsou worked many hours that were not covered by his Sydney Theatre Company salary. He estimates that the value of his unpaid overtime would be "a further couple of thousand I'd say". He also personally contributed \$2,300 towards the music and lighting for the Welcome To Country.⁶

The Festival was also subsidised by the convener Merrill Findlay's Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) stipend for an unrelated PhD research project, which meant that she could juggle her academic work and her pro bono Festival work without leaving Forbes in the critical months immediately preceding the Festival. Without this APA stipend neither the Festival, nor the Song Cycle would have been possible. This subsidy will not be available for future Festivals.

⁶ Email to Merrill Findlay dated 15 November 2011.



The Kate Kelly Song Cycle was further subsidised by composer, Ross Carey, who, under other circumstances, could have expected a fee of at least \$25,000 for the Song Cycle music. He received no fee from either the Festival or The Kate Kelly Project for the music which formed the foundation for the Festival.

The two community choirs who participated in the Song Cycle similarly subsidised it, in that they were not paid for rehearsals or for their performance.

Many other people made similar commitments to the Festival which have great value but have not been costed. Our profound appreciation for all their contributions.

INCOME/EXPENDITURE

Excluding the unpriced subsidies, in-kind support and volunteer labour, the cost of the inaugural Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival was around \$66,000. Even though the Festival was a not-for-profit event, its cash income slightly exceeded expenditure. The Festival made a small profit of \$957.47. The financial report below was prepared by Forbes Shire Council's Acting Director of Corporate Services, Ian Prior, who managed the Festival's accounts. Thank you Ian.

Financial Report

FESTIVAL INCOME	\$	\$
Sponsorships/Grants:-		
North Parkes Mines	15,000.00	
Barrick Gold	5,000.00	
CASP Funding	3,000.00	
Community Relations Commission	1,100.00	
Total Sponsorships		24,100.00
Donations		
Annamilla	10,000.00	
Barbara Holloway	500.00	
Robyn Prior	1,000.00	
Total Donations		11,500.00
Refunds/Reimbursements:-		
Lanterns Income	171.20	
Total Refunds/Reimbursements		171.20
In Kind Donations/Income:-		
Forbes Shire Council - D/A	750.00	
Forbes Shire Council - Festival Costs	4,062.90	
Total In Kind		4,812.90
Other Parties In Kind Contributions		
Zeal Theatre (Approx. Including Stefo's time/travel etc.)	8,700.00	



LightnUp Inc - Lantern Parade	5,000.00	
Arts Out West	1,660.00	
CMA - Welcome to Country	8,200.00	
Central West Libraries	2,174.20	
Forbes Sport & Recreation Club	600.00	
Total Other Parties In Kind Contributions		26,334.20
TOTAL INCOME		66,918.30
FESTIVAL EXPENSES		
Festival Cabinet		
Administrative costs	2,020.73	
Festival Director	1,000.00	
Staging	7,504.54	
Lanterns Workshops	4,929.55	
Kate Kelly Song Cycle	12,956.38	
Promotion	3,269.82	
Grounds Setting Up/Dismantling (Council)	7,148.11	
Security	797.50	
Total Festival Committee		39,626.63
Other Parties/Partnerships		
SydneyTheatreCo/Zeal Theatre (Approx. Including Stefo's time/travel etc.)	8,700.00	
LightnUpInc - Lantern Parade	5,000.00	
Arts Out West - Welcome to Country	1,660.00	
CMA - Welcome to Country	8,200.00	
Forbes Sport & Recreation Club	600.00	
Central West Libraries - Poetry Slam	2,174.20	
Total Other Parties/Partnerships		26,334.20
TOTAL EXPENSES		65,960.83
NETT RESULT		957.47

PROMOTION

The Song Cycle and the inaugural Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival were promoted through posters, leaflets, word-of-mouth, networking and a media campaign which included paid advertisements on regional radio and television, articles in partner organisations' newsletters, blogs, web sites and social media (Facebook and Twitter).

The Festival's many partners, including Parkes & Districts Landcare (Central West Lachlan Landcare), Forbes Shire Council, Mitchell Conservatorium of Music and the Lachlan Catchment

Management Authority, cross-promoted the Song Cycle and Festival in their newsletters and web sites, for example. The Festival's status as the opening event for the NSW State Landcare conference in Parkes gave it broad exposure in landcare and environment circles throughout regional NSW.

Poster

The Festival poster and postcards were designed by Sandra Luthi through the University of Canberra's Faculty of Arts and Design's advertising studio and Black Ink Design. A3 and A4 size full colour posters were distributed in Forbes and throughout the region and were very well received.

Sandra's logo design was also featured on the television ads, volunteers' t-shirts and the Festival letterhead.

Paid advertisements

The Festival bought air time on 2PK/ROK FM and 97.9. Valley FM, and the two regional television stations, 9 and 7, each of which also provided free community announcements.

Stefo Nantsou reading a Festival ad in the 2PK studio, Parkes. Photo by Merrill Findlay.



The initial radio ads were scripted by Antony Arena, Stefo Nantsou and Merrill Findlay and recorded in the studios of 2PK/ROK FM and 97.9. Valley FM, with the support of studio staff. The final radio and television ads, as aired in the ten days before the Festival, were produced free of charge at Canberra University LUCID Student Communication Learning Agency in the Faculty of Art & Design, by multimedia students Lucy Lovegrove, Josh Jessop-Smith and Jumpol Likitawong, under the direction of the Agency manager Antony Arena.

Valley FM broadcast live from the Festival site on the Sunday, with the support of the Forbes Sports & Recreation Club, which provided power and telephone facilities.

Web site: riverarts.org.au

The Festival web site, www.riverartsfestival.org.au, which went live at the end of May, 2011, was an especially useful promotional tool, despite its simplicity. It needs to be developed further for future Festivals, however.

Stats for the site to Sunday evening, 4 September, the night of the Song Cycle premiere, are as follows.

Unique visitors: 1177

Number of visits: 2283

Number of hits: 57508

MEDIA COVERAGE

*Luke Wong, ABC Open, in residence at Mezzanine
for the duration of the Festival.
Photo by Steve Woodhall.*

Media work was undertaken pro bono by the Festival convener, and by Jasmine Vidler, coordinator of the Forbes heat of the Australian Poetry Slam. Festival events, especially the headline act, The Kate Kelly Song Cycle, and the Poetry Slam (See Jasmine Vidler's report above), were well covered by the Forbes Advocate and the regional media, although national coverage was limited. Ross Carey, Sian Prior and Merrill Findlay were, however, interviewed on ABC Radio National's Bush Telegraph, and photos from the Festival were published online by most of the Fairfax regional news organisations.



The Song Cycle was not critically reviewed, as one would have expected had it been performed in a capital city. Forbes is, after all, a little beyond the comfort zone of most New Music reviewers! It nevertheless attracted significant media interest in the Festival.

On-line Multimedia

ABC Open producer Luke Wong from ABC Central West was present throughout the Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival and published at least three multimedia features on the ABC Central West web site, including video footage and slide shows.

Forbes plays host to world premiere of Kate Kelly Song Cycle

Luke Wong, ABC Open

The Lake Forbes shore became alive with the sound of music when the world premiere of the Kate Kelly Song Cycle was performed on Sunday 4th September 2011.

A large audience gathered beneath wind-rustled gum trees to hear the evocative story about the sister of bushranger Ned Kelly who settled in Forbes in the later part of her life.

The performance brought the inaugural Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival to a dramatic finale with hundreds of musicians and artists performing over the weekend.⁷

⁷ Forbes Plays Host to World Premiere of Song cycle, ABC Central West, 7 September, <http://www.abc.net.au/local/photos/2011/09/07/3312248.htm>, accessed 31 October 2011.

Another of Luke Wong's multimedia features, Lantern Parade Lightens Up Forbes, included video footage of the Lantern Parade.⁸ A third feature included an mp3 download of poet Miles Merrill performing before the main stage, with an extended article and photo.⁹

Festival events, including the Song Cycle, also found a global audience through blogs by Sian Prior (sianprior.com) and others; through merrillfindlay.com and riverartsfestival.org.au; through social media, such as Facebook and Twitter;¹⁰ and on web sites which had no connection with the project, such as My Community Connect.¹¹ The ABC Bush Telegraph interview and the associated feature by Belle Trompe, as published on the ABC Radio National's web site,¹² were also republished in unexpected places, such as Hot Trend Site,¹³ and a European news web site Crusade Guild.¹⁴

Print

The Forbes Advocate was extraordinarily supportive of the Festival and ran several articles a week about Festival events in the month leading up to opening. The Festival continued to feature in the Advocate for several weeks after the weekend events. The headlines in the issue of 6 September, for example, proclaimed *First Festival a Winner*.¹⁵ Other regional newspapers also covered the Festival and related events.

Radio

Festival events, especially the Kate Kelly Song Cycle and the Poetry Slam, received wide radio coverage though the ABC, commercial radio, and community radio stations.

ABC's Angela Owens and documentary maker Tracy Sorenson with Merrill Findlay in ABC Central West's studio, Orange, for the Bush Telegraph interview, 30 August, 2011. Photo by Luke Wong for ABC Open.



ABC Radio National

The Song Cycle's composer, librettist and soloist were interviewed on Radio National's Bush Telegraph program on 30 August in a complicated three-way hook-up. Composer Ross Carey was in the ABC's Ultimo studio, soprano Sian Prior was in the Melbourne studio, and librettist Merrill Findlay was in the Orange Studio. This program was repeated on several regional radio stations and

⁸ See <http://www.abc.net.au/local/videos/2011/09/07/3312196.htm>, accessed 31 October 2011.

⁹ See <http://www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2011/09/07/3312004.htm?site=centralwest>, las

¹⁰ See <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Kalari-Lachlan-River-Arts-Festival-Forbes/176251782393229>, accessed 31 October 2011.

¹¹ See http://www.mycommunityconnect.com.au/?rt=event&event_id=19151, accessed 31 October 2011.

¹² See <http://www.abc.net.au/rural/telegraph/content/2011/s3305695.htm>, accessed 31 October 2011.

¹³ NSW town to celebrate Ned Kelly's sister in song, posted , August 20, 2011;: <http://hottrendsite.com/nsw-town-to-celebrate-ned-kellys-sister-in-song-30082011/>, accessed 31 October 2011.

¹⁴ <http://www.crusadeguild.eu/2011/08/30/nsw-town-to-celebrate-ned-kellys-sister-in-song-abc-local/>, accessed 31 October 2011.

¹⁵ See <http://www.forbesadvocate.com.au/news/local/news/news-features/first-festival-a-winner/2282327.aspx> Last accessed 31 October 2011.

was made available online as an mp3 download. It was accompanied by a web feature by Belle Tromp, *NSW town to celebrate Ned Kelly's sister in song*.¹⁶

ABC Melbourne

Soprano Sian Prior, a media personality in Melbourne in her own right, discussed The Kate Kelly Song Cycle with John Faine on 774 ABC Melbourne on 13 June, and solicited feedback from listeners.¹⁷

Regional radio

Broadcasters Brooke Daniels and Angela Owens, at ABC Central West in Orange NSW, interviewed Merrill Findlay, and River Arts Festival director, Stefo Nantsou, resident director with Sydney Theatre Company, many times in the months leading up to the premiere. They were extraordinarily supportive of our endeavours in Forbes. Several other regional ABC stations picked up these broadcasts which were also available online.

Other interviews were broadcast by commercial radio stations 2 PK and ROK FM in Parkes, and 2EL in Orange.

The promotional value of the media exposure for the town was significant, although is unclear how many people were attracted to Forbes by the interviews and other coverage.

Community radio

Lachlan Valley FM, a community radio station based in Forbes, supported the Festival and the Song Cycle enthusiastically, as a project partner, and broadcast live from the Festival site on the Sunday.

Television

The Festival was covered by regional commercial television stations, 9 and 7, but received limited air time. The Festival clashed with several football and netball finals in the region – and chamber opera simply cannot compete with sport for prime time news coverage in the bush.

DOCUMENTATION

Festival events were well documented by still photographers, documentary video makers, and ABC Open. Please see riverartsfestival.org.au for links to online photographs. A live sound recording was made of the Song Cycle's final rehearsal and premiere performance, which will be available in 2013 from Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival Inc.

Steve Woodhall from Bathurst and Forbes photographer Amy Whitford produced professional quality images of the Song Cycle and Festival and have generously given permission for them to be used for non-commercial purposes. The photos are available via links on www.riverartsfestival.org.au.

¹⁶ See Bush Telegraph, 30 August 2011, <http://www.abc.net.au/rural/telegraph/content/2011/s3305695.htm?site=centralwest>, accessed 31 October 2011.

¹⁷ See Sian Prior, Dr David Corlett and Russell Morris, by Amber Tripp, 13 June 2011: <http://www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2011/06/13/3242330.htm?site=melbourneµsite=faine§ion=latest&date=%28none%29>, accessed 31 October 2011.

Steve Woodhall's images of the Song Cycle performance and the River Arts Festival were viewed by thousands of people after they were featured as a Festival gallery in the first Arts Sunday interactive special on regional Fairfax newspaper sites. This joint initiative by Arts OutWest and the Western Advocate in Bathurst went live at the beginning of October. Steve's images were immediately re-published on regional newspaper web sites across the country, from Nambucca Heads on the NSW coast to Margaret River in Western Australia, from the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia to Katherine in the Northern Territory.¹⁸

Many other people also documented the Song Cycle rehearsals and other aspects of the production. A selection of these images will be published online.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We learned a great deal from organising the first River Arts Festival. The following recommendations are made to ensure that future Festivals will be even better.

TIMING

- September worked well. Festival to be held on first or second weekend of September (depending on Forbes Show date)
- Extend the Festival over the whole weekend, with the main day on Saturday on the Lake foreshore
- The Welcome To Country and Opening party to be on Friday evening
- Sunday becomes an Away Day to include other venues around Forbes, and other communities along the Kalari-Lachlan River and beyond.

MANAGEMENT/COORDINATION

- Skills upgrading for everyone involved, including Project Management workshops
- A paid coordinator in the 3 months leading up to the Festival
- A fully functioning shop-front Festival office for these 3 months
- A dedicated PR/media manager
- A small office or Visitors/Information booth on the Festival site as a point of first contact
- Professionally designed site maps showing all Festival venues
- Cabinet Ministers to be responsible for only one portfolio each, with responsibilities discussed and agreed to (approx. 15 Ministers)
- Volunteers need a structured briefing sessions before Festival
- Launch of a major sponsorship and donation campaign

LOGISTICS

- A production manager/producer to co-ordinate all performances, equipment etc

¹⁸ See Arts Sunday, http://www.artsoutwest.org.au/news/news_item.php?nid=168 and Arts Sunday first weekend of the month, <http://www.westernadvocate.com.au/multimedia/28195/kalari-lachlan-river-arts-festival.aspx>, both accessed 31 October 2011. For the full interactive Festival gallery see <http://www.westernadvocate.com.au/multimedia/28195/326833/kalari-lachlan-river-arts-festival.aspx>, and click through images to view the Song Cycle ones. Accessed 31 October 2011.



- Assistant stage managers to look after each Festival venue
- Structured coordination and roster for volunteers, with team leaders appointed
- A volunteer recruitment drive for more volunteers
- Stalls locations to be better planned and clustered according to products/services offered
- Planned parking to be regulated and supervised by volunteers
- Two-way communication system for Director and key Ministers throughout the Festival

AMENITIES

- Mains power to be installed on all Festival sites (generators were unreliable in 2011)
- Information booths at main Festival sites staffed by volunteers
- More toilet facilities, all of which need to be supervised
- Regular monitoring and emptying of garbage bins and porta-loos
- Improved Green Room, with constant supervision and amenities for performers, including tables, chairs, hanging space and mirrors
- Volunteers Tent with amenities, including a table/chair for Volunteers Coordinator
- More signage on Festival site/s directing people to different events/venues
- Council to install sign-posts to Frogs Hollow and Wiradjuri Dreaming Centre and show these sites on all Council maps
- A permanent timber stage/music bowl to be built on the lake foreshore near Frogs Hollow for future Festivals and regular community arts events

PROMOTION

- Large banners or signs installed on the Newell Highway advertising the River Arts Festival
- Festival banners erected around town, including Lachlan Street
- Early distribution of flyers
- Additional advertising through NSW Tourism
- Promotion of Festival in other local and regional papers/magazines
- Cross-promotion with all partner organisations and sponsors
- Festival sites to be displayed on Google Maps and other online sites
- Arts and cultural activities, including the River Arts Festival, to be highlighted in all Council promotional material, including the web site
- Festival photos to be used to promote Forbes
- An electronic media manager responsible for Festival web site and social media

LONGER TERM NEEDS

- A Community Cultural Centre and other cultural amenities within the CBD, preferably near the Lake foreshore as part of a Festival/Cultural Precinct
- Community Cultural Centre to include modern performance, exhibition, studio and retail spaces, a cultural and natural heritage interpretation experience, a neighbourhood house, educational facilities promoting ecological sustainability, all set within a landscaped precinct
- The cultural heritage of both indigenous and non-indigenous residents to be highlighted in the new Centre through permanent and travelling displays and exhibitions
- Council to consider commissioning a feasibility study before the 2013 Festival



APPENDICES

Director's Report: 2011



25th October, 2011

Dear Merrill,

This is just a quick letter of ideas regarding the achievements of the River Arts Festival and the potential areas of consideration for the next one in two years time. I believe it goes without saying that the positives of the Festival far outweigh the negatives. The numbers on the day, as well as attending the Welcome the Country and the Mezzanine Cabaret on the Saturday evening were testament to the hard work everyone put in to make the inaugural festival a winner. And given the short lead time, it was extraordinary.

Highlights of the Festival were:

Show casing the local talent, growth of positive community spirit, artistically utilizing the beautiful locations of the lake for the lantern parade and welcome to country ceremony, the excellent Media Coverage from TV and local paper, as well as the high quality flyer/poster design and the great T-Shirts, the Festival office in town was great, and seeing so many smiles over the course of the weekend.

What needs more work for next time:

A production manager/producer to co-ordinate all performances, equipment etc.
Flyers need to be distributed earlier.
A large banner to be located on Newell Highway to advertise festival
The Festival office in town with power.
Change the Main Festival day to a Saturday.
Need a good site Map for Stalls planning and locating.
Assistant stage managers that look after each Festival venue.
More volunteers required and a Volunteers tent with amenities.
More toilets and garbage bins needed emptying.
A small office/ Visitors/information booth on the Festival site.
The Festival sites need power, generators are too unreliable.

These are just a few starters. Hope they are of some help. I look forward to seeing you all again very soon.

Cheers,

Stefo Nantsou
STC resident director



Welcome To Country Script

Conceived, authored and directed by Russell Hill, Minister for Indigenous Participation in the Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival Cabinet, with the support of Festival director Stefo Nantsou and the Festival Cabinet. First performed at the Wiradjuri Dreaming Centre, Lake Forbes, 3 September 2011, as the opening event for the inaugural Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival

Start with blackness and silence

Then the sound of a storm, thunder, lightning, louder and louder, flashes of light, then blackness again.
[30 seconds to 1 minute]

Lights pick up dancers, in fluoro paint, coming through the audience. Dancers sneak across the Dreaming Centre then through seated crowd and start dancing their way to the front stage.

Narrator: *Here it comes, the First Contact. Spirit Beings in a new world. They're coming to investigate the new surroundings.*
[1 minute]

Narrator: *The Spirit Beings start calling up Biaime, the Great Creator, whose responsibility is to create the country for Aboriginal people.*

Lightning, thunder, low lights flashing, loud noise. The Spirit Being dancers move from side to side before grabbing Biaime and drifting back to the centre. Biaime commences dancing.
[2-3 minutes]

Spirit Beings dance towards Biame and carry her to the table/rock.
Biamie commences calling upon creation. She dances on the table/rock.
[20 seconds]

Narrator: *Biamie calls upon the Rainbow Serpent to create the landscape.*

Rainbow Serpent moving around rocks

Narrator: *The Rainbow Serpent is an important part of the beliefs and culture of the people throughout Wiradjuri Country. Today the Rainbow Serpent is associated with ceremonies, with the organisation of the community and with keeping the peace. The Rainbow Serpent is also part of the beliefs of Aboriginal people in other parts of Australia. She begins with the mountains and valleys.*

Serpent deposits 2 kangaroo figures who blend into landscape.

Narrator: *She then starts creating animals for the environment. First comes the Womboyne, the Kangaroo.*
Figures hidden under hessian start wiggling out to become kangaroos. Giant lighted kangaroo lantern emerges.
[30 seconds]

Narrator: *Local Wiradjuri have a strong connection to Womboyne who is an integral part of Aboriginal survival and plays an important role in ceremonies.*
[30 seconds]

Narrator: *Biamie then calls for more animals to fill the vast open plains.*



Rainbow Serpent moves across the stage again

Narrator: *Biamie calls for Diniwan the Emu, the great flightless bird of Australia. Diniwan plays an important role in Aboriginal life and has his own star system above. His movement across the sky at night tells Wiradjuri people when the breeding cycles and harvest times are, so they can practice a sustainable community lifestyle.*

[30 seconds]

Narrator: *Biamie then identifies a need for wildlife in the sky and creates Mullayan the Eagle, the king of the Sky.*

Noise of eagles and dancers dance like eagles come from the back of crowd.

[30 seconds]

Narrator: *With an abundance of wildlife now created, Biamie recognises the need for hygiene, so she creates the Googars, or goannas, whose role is to clean up carcasses and maintain a healthy environment. Googars are strong totems for the Wiradjuri people. They play an important role in the environment and in Aboriginal people's spiritual beliefs.*

Goanna lantern brought in.

[30 seconds]

Narrator: *Once most of the animals are created Biamie calls on the Rainbow Serpent to help create the rivers and water. The Serpent digs up the channels to form the great Kalari River, now also known as the Lachlan.*

Kids running around with blue banners etc following serpent, kids replicating filling up water holes. Giant fish lantern brought in.

[30 seconds]

Narrator: *Biamie then creates the people. In this area they are known as the Wiradjuri.*

2 men come in and start striking flints to make a fire

Narrator: *Aboriginal people have been responsible for the management of this country for a long time now. In Wiradjuri culture we believe that we come from Country and, in the end, we return back to Country. One of our land management techniques is mosaic burning, a practice our ancestors used to enhance native plants and provide food for the wildlife. Lack of fire management in Wiradjuri Country today has had major negative effects on our flora and fauna.*

Kids come running in with orange/red streamers representing fire.

[30 seconds]

Narrator: *Later on came Contact. From the distance our ancestors could see something strange. Was it the return of the Spirit Beings?*

'Captain Cook' enters carrying the Union Jack, followed by a convict in chains: *In the name of His Majesty the King I name this place England.*

[30 seconds]



Narrator: *No, this was Settlement which, at first, was extremely frightening for the Wiradjuri people. But soon European settlers were using Aboriginal men and women as tour guides for their early exploration of this country.*

Soon resistance occurred, led by a strong Wiradjuri man named Windradyne.

Young man standing with spear and shield
[1 minute]

Narrator: *Windradyne led the Wiradjuri people in the Bathurst Wars, a resistance movement against the invasion of their lands by the British settlers. Windradyne was known to the British as Saturday.*

Governor Thomas Brisbane once wrote of Windradyne that he was "one of the finest looking natives we have seen in this part of the country. He is not particularly tall, but is much stouter and more proportionably [sic] limbed than the majority of his countrymen; which, combined with a noble looking countenance, and piercing eye, are calculated to impress the beholder with other than disagreeable feelings towards a character who has been so much dreaded by the Bathurst settler. Saturday is, without doubt, the most manly black native we have ever beheld---a fact pretty generally acknowledged by the numbers that saw him."

This battle went on for several years until Windradyne died.

Everything goes dark
[20 seconds]

Narrator: *Soon the pastoralists took hold of the Forbes region. In the early days of colonisation they mainly by grazed cattle. Many Wiradjuri people worked on pastoral runs as maids and stockmen.*

Aboriginal people dress as maids and stockmen with no shoes on

Narrator: *Later came the Gold Rush (people walk in as gold miners) and closer settlement, as the large pastoral runs were subdivided for farms and cleared to complete the dispossession. This was not a good time for the Wiradjuri people. Many families were pushed onto Missions, while others set up independent refugee camps on crown land around Gooloogong, for example. Soon Colonial and mission authorities began removing their children. In the early C20th, Wiradjuri people were 'ethnically cleansed' from the town of Forbes.*

Police officer and men in suits come and take some of the children. Aboriginal people pushed around by Police and moved into a small fenced off area.

Narrator: *The children who were removed later became known as The Stolen Generation. On Wednesday 13th February 2008 the prime minister of Australia acknowledged this and publicly said 'Sorry'.*

Person enters stage dressed as Kevin Rudd

Narrator: *Today we honour the Indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history.*

We reflect on their past mistreatment.

We reflect in particular on the mistreatment of those who were Stolen Generations---this blemished chapter in our nation's history.

The time has now come for the nation to turn a new page in Australia's history by righting the wrongs of the past and so moving forward with confidence to the future.



We apologise for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.

For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.

To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.

And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.

Aboriginal people all over Australia are singing and dancing because at last the truth could now be told.

Aboriginal people dancing and singing in celebration
[15 seconds]

Narrator: *The truth at last. Today Forbes is home to over 2,000 Aboriginal people, including those from other mobs, not just Wiradjuri. Forbes is now known as a resettlement town. Like all other Australians living here, Aboriginal people want this place to be friendly, homely and great town to bring up our children, like this land was for many Wiradjuri people in the past.*

Even though we all work together to help build Reconciliation today, Wiradjuri people never forget where they come from, nor the journey our people have made. And nor do we forget our great creator Biaime and the Rainbow serpent.

Forbes North Wiradjuri Choir go on stage

Narrator: *Together, learning our knowledge, hearing our culture, we can all build a brighter future for all our kids.*

'We are Australian' song, in Wiradjuri then English and finish in Wiradjuri

Biamie dances across stage and lights the fire sculpture signage which says Guwaymbarha, Welcome.

'Welcome' said in Wiradjuri and then in English.

Musicians continue jamming.

Narrator acknowledges the sponsors: *Light'n Up Lanterns of Lismore, Lachlan CMA, Department of Employment Education and Workplace Relations, Arts OutWest, Forbes Shire Council, and others, including Matt Drane Fabrications who provided two generators at very short notice.*

And none of what you have experienced this evening could have been done without the support of Forbes Pre-School, Forbes Learning Ladder, Forbes Central Primary School, Forbes North Primary School, St Lawrence Catholic Primary School, Forbes High School and Red Bend Catholic College

Or the Welcome to Country committee: Anthony Towney, Amy Shine, Catherine Guise, Juley Clarke, Karen James, Kathy Wighton, Larry Towney, Merindah Wilson and Samantha Hanley.

Or our music gurus: Stefo Nantsou, Larry Towney, Tom Lycos

Or the Kalari Lachlan River Arts Festival Cabinet.

Poetry Slam Promotional material

The postcard promoting the Forbes Heat of the Australian Poetry Slam postcard distributed by Jasmine Vidler, for the event's co-sponsors, Central West Libraries and Words Out West.

Word Travels in association with Sydney Theatre Company presents

Australian Poetry SLAM 2011 Forbes Heat

Imagine Hilltop Hoods mashed with Obama, a line of Paul Kelly, a few pinches of Judith Lucy and a test-tube of Les Murray all vying for audience love (and a writer's tour to China and Bali worth up to \$11,000).

This is no poetry reading. The mightiest, tightest spoken-word artists from every corner of Australia hit Sydney with blood, sweat and rhyme. The SLAM is on.

Sunday September 4

Wordshop 11 am - Reading and Writing Tent
Slam 1pm - The Main Stage (12:30 sign up)

Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival
Lake Forbes Foreshore along Buck Bentick Walk
via Lachlan Street
Forbes 2871

riverartsfestival.org.au



NSW and National Finals

Australian Poetry SLAM - NSW State Final

Friday 4 November, 8pm

Australian Poetry SLAM - National Final

Sunday 27 November, 5pm

SYDNEY THEATRE, 22 HICKSON RD, WALSH BAY

BOOKINGS (02) 9250 1777

OR SYDNEYTHEATRE.COM.AU

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With thanks to The Bookworm
International Literary Festival and
Ubud Writers & Readers Festival





Debriefing Minutes

MINUTES OF DEBRIEFING FOR KALARI-LACHLAN RIVER ARTS FESTIVAL

22 SEPTEMBER 2011 @ FORBES SPORTS & REC. CLUB

PRESENT: Merrill Findlay, Margot Jolley, Melody Ruhmund, Jane Bennie, Janine Whitfield, Ro Burns, Marg Wilmott, Anita Rutherford, Len Reade, Graham Falconer, Lyn Ford, Justin Sreen, Mitchell Richards & Denise Rutherford

APOLIGIES: Russell Hill, Larry Towney, Anne Hodges, Bill Moxey, Robert Hoswell, Reika Hoswell, Peter Clark, Chantelle D'Arney, Jasmine Vidler and Di Gill

Meeting facilitated by Margo Jolley. Minutes by Denise Rutherford.

Merrill opened the meeting and congratulated everyone on the extraordinary success of the inaugural Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival. She also thanked everyone for their hard work and support. The achievement was amazing, especially since the lead time was only four months from the time most of the funding was confirmed. Merrill especially acknowledged the contributions made by our director, Stefo Nantsou, Forbes Shire Council (once they were convinced that the Festival would actually happen!), our sponsors, and our volunteers, whose combined support made the Festival possible. The 2013 Festival will be even bigger and better!

LANTERN WORKSHOP AND PARADE

Report by Ro Burns

The lantern workshops conducted by Jylle Jackson (Lismore) were very successful and well attended (conducted on 15-14 July 2011).

The parade of lanterns along the lake was spectacular. The music on stage created a special ambience for the occasion.

The floating lotus flowers on the lagoon were very fitting for the Kate Kelly Song Cycle finale and the festival closure. Peter and Elaine Bright from Forbes Lions Club, who were responsible for the lotuses, have volunteered their services for 2012. There was concern that a small fire incident occurred when paper lotuses ran aground and ignited some grass on the lagoon bank. In future the lotuses may need to be contained and better supervised. No formal risk management assessment was undertaken which was an oversight.

Andrew Garrett from North Park Mines made a commitment to Jyllie Jackson of LightnUp Lanterns, Lismore, to sponsor her return to Forbes for a second lantern parade in 2012. Ro will coordinate the Forbes end of this event.



SHOPFRONT

Report by Ro Burns et al

The shopfront in Rankin Street was made available by Joe Bernadi. It generated great public exposure for the festival and provided a very accessible gathering point for the community and volunteers. There was ample space for the workers and the only drawback was that there was no electricity. A visible shopfront should be opened well in advance of the next Festival.

WELCOME TO COUNTRY

The Welcome to Ceremony was an amazing experience for everyone who participated in it and attended it as audience members. All Forbes schools were involved in what was an outstanding production. The general consensus was that the use of the Light'nUp native animal lanterns in telling the story of Country, and the inclusion of stories about the relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous people enabled the audience to connect with the production on many different levels. The sandbag lights used to light the welcome path (223 made by Ro Burns, Melody Ruhmund and assistants) were beautiful and symbolically powerful. The 'cool' music performed by narrator/director Stefo Nantsou and his band was an integral part of the production. Writer/producer Russell Hill, Larry Towney and the production committee are to be congratulated.

All agreed that an extended Welcome Ceremony should be part of the 2013 festival which coincide with bicentenary of the crossing of the Blue Mountains and invasion of the Wiradjuri Country.

MEZZANINE OPENING & STREET PARTY

Report by Janine Whitfield

Mezzanine was a popular venue for the opening of the Kalari Lachlan River Arts Festival after the Welcome To Country. Forbes Mayor, Phyllis Miller, Federal Member for Calare John Cobb, and State Member for Dubbo Troy Grant all made brief speeches and committed their support to future Festivals. Guests were entertained by local artists during the evening plus some virtuoso performances from visitors. Janine received very positive feedback and many visitors continue to comment on the art works displayed her the walls.

The street party held on Rankin Street outside Mezzanine was not a success, however. It required more planning and more volunteers to ensure that the sound system, staging etc was ready when people arrived from the Welcome To Country. Despite the hard work of Mezz staff many people did not know about the event and volunteers did not show. Additional signage and planning will be required for next festival. Gas heaters for the al fresco dining would have been ideal as the evening turned cold.

The Pitt Stop spray painting activity did not proceed. The Central West Astronomical Society did, however, set up their telescopes to allow Festival goers to look at the stars and planets. About 50 people participated in this outdoor event.

ART EXHIBITIONS

Report by Jane Bennie

The first event for the festival was the art exhibition at Jemalong Retirement Village on 1 September. This was the first time the Village had held art exhibition. The resident artists received a great deal of praise from their relatives and the general public. The art show generated a much interest and highlighted the links between the arts and good mental health and wellbeing.



Other exhibitions were held at Mezzanine Coffee House. These included an exhibition entitled Landcare by Forbes Arts Society, a photographic exhibition by Amy Whitfield (her first), and a collection of handmade books made by members of the Central West Arts Group. Jane estimates that 25 artists exhibited their work at this first River Arts Festival.

Jane also created a community artwork from dozens of 'enchanted' river red gums, some of which were on display in shop windows before the Festival. Groups were invited to either commission a themed tree or decorate their own for inclusion in the enchanted forest on the Festival site. This community artwork generated a great deal of interest and created a focus point for other community arts activities by local arts and crafts workers at the festival.

FILM SCREENING

A youth group, Spectacular Screenings, screened *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* at the Forbes Youth Centre, as part of the Festival. This event was very well attended by 100 children and their parents.

GUITAR WORKSHOP

Report by Marg Wilmott

Sydney classical guitarist Grant Sambell conducted a workshop for acoustic guitarists at the Conservatorium on Saturday 2 Sept. It was attended by 15 musicians. The Conservatorium was delighted by the result. We see music workshops as a feature for future festivals.

BEYOND BLUE BOWLS

Remote report by Di Gill

This event clashed with the Ben Hall Pairs which meant that only one green was available for the Beyond Blue Bowls Competition. The event attracted about a dozen bowlers but with more advertising greater numbers could be expected.

The Pitt Stop Health check was a great success with 60 participating, some of whom were asked to seek medical help for their conditions. The health checks were conducted by RAMPH with mental health support from Richmond Fellowship. Di suggested that the Pitt Stop could be put further away from the bar next time.

FESTIVAL LOUNGE

Report by Lyn Ford

The Sports & Recreation Club was the official Festival Lounge, but this did not work out as well as expected from the Club's perspective. Most of the problems were internal issues, however.

The Lounge area was taken up by bowlers involved in the Ben Hall Pairs bowling competition, which had to be given priority, and the planned art exhibition by Forbes Arts Society was relocated to Mezzanine because of problems with hanging space (the Arts Society didn't have the person power to move heavy screens) and lighting.

The wine tasting on the deck was not as well patronised as expected and people had difficulty accessing the outdoors balcony. The club is looking into providing an external access to this area. Extra signage would also have encouraged Festival participants inside the Club.

A great deal was learned from this first Festival to be put into practice next time. The Club wants to remain closely involved with the Festival.



BUSH POETS BREAKFAST

This event was hosted the Australian Bush Poetry Association and catered for by Peter Ashcroft. It received good media coverage with live interviews on local ABC radio, and attracted a good crowd. Extra volunteers and amplification will be required for this event next time. The club is looking into an amplifier for the deck area.

Some of the bush poets later participated in the Poetry Slam workshops and performance with visiting poet Miles Merrill (hosted by Central West Libraries and Central West Writers Group).

MULTI FAITH SERVICE

Report by Merrill Findlay

The multi-faith service hosted on the Bridge by the Salvation Army was attended by around 30 people from diverse backgrounds. Texts from all the major world religions were included in the service and participants were encouraged to write positive words on coloured labels about the power of diversity. The bridge was a beautiful setting, although somewhat isolated from other Festival activities. Additional signage to direct people to the Multi-faith service should be considered for future festivals.

VOLUNTEERS

Report by Melody Ruhmund

We need more volunteers for future festivals as jobs came up that we didn't expect. The volunteers we had were fabulous, however.

The role of volunteer coordinator is very important to the success of the Festival and requires a dedicated person. Two-way communication technology would have been helpful to redirect volunteers to areas of greatest need on the Festival site/s. A formal roster with each volunteer being on duty for 2-4 hours would also have been a great benefit. And volunteers' tent where volunteers could meet and rest would have been helpful.

STALLS

The quality and diversity of the stalls was excellent, but more consideration needs to be given to the Festival site layout to locate similar types of stalls together, and to ensure they are not too dispersed. Most stall holders seemed happy with their takings for the day. Some were disadvantaged by their siting, however.

The Landcare and Farmers tents were especially disadvantaged because of their isolation from the rest of the Festival activities. The situation would have been improved if the CMA had hosted a tent, as they said they would.

A central point of contact for stall holders and a small office / information area would have been helpful.

CATERING

Mass food was provided by the Salvation Army's 'tucker truck' and by Peter Ashcroft. Food/drink stalls included a pizza oven, Cambodian food, a coffee van, and the netballers' drink stand. Overall



the food stalls were very successful. The pizza and coffee places did especially well. Better site planning for the food stalls will improve the outcomes for everyone at the next Festival.

CHILDRENS ACTIVITIES

Report by Melody Ruhrumund

The mural painting was very popular with both children and adults and attracted dozens of participants. It was in a good location for this festival.

We need more arts and children's activities for future festivals, however, including interactive workshops, circus activities, "Art in the Park", Western Plains Zoo animals, and a jumping castle, for example.

MAIN STAGE

Report by Marg Willmott

The central location of the main stage created a focus for the Festival. The sound system and lighting were excellent. The Conservatorium was especially pleased that the Jazz Band was invited to perform at the Bathurst Races after its Main Stage performance.

In future more attention needs to be given to the Green Room to provide amenities for performers, including chairs and a mirror, and security at the door so people can leave their bags and jackets while performing.

More stage management with extra volunteers to ensure seats are available for choirs etc would also be helpful.

The feature event on the main stage was the premiere of The Kate Kelly Song Cycle by Ross Carey and Merrill Findlay, performed by soprano Sian Prior with an ensemble of professional musicians (Martin Lee, Justin Screen, Rachel Whealy and Liz Jones) and the Forbes Shire Choir and the College for Seniors Choir, conducted by Bill Moxey. All participants felt that it was a great privilege to be involved in this production. For many people, it was their first experience of opera. An extraordinary event which will be remembered for many years to come.

OTHER STAGES

The Festival had 3-4 stages operating all day. These included the Bus Shelter stage for Conservatorium performers, the Country Music stage on the walk way, and a space on the Festival Lounge deck. People were generally happy with the Bus Shelter stage, but the siting of the Country Music space on either side of Buck Bentick Way created traffic problems. The Festival Lounge stage was not fully utilised.

AFTERS PARTY

The Afters Party at Mezzanine was a success although it was not widely publicised. The surprise Red Bend theatre performance was excellent. These young actors will now have other opportunities to perform at Mezzanine.

MEDIA & DOCUMENTATION

The Festival received excellent coverage through the Forbes Advocate, and from ABC Central West, 2PK/Rok FM, Valley FM, plus other regional radio stations, as well as from ABC Open which



produced audio visual content about the Festival for the ABC web site. The Kate Kelly Song Cycle premiere was also featured on Bush Telegraph, ABC Radio National, and the two regional TV stations, 7 & 9, ran news stories on the Festival.

Community radio station Valley FM parked their live broadcast van outside the Festival Lounge on the Sunday of the Festival to utilise the Bowling Club's phone and power connections. Unfortunately this location meant that the van was very isolated from Festival activities, an issue which needs to be addressed next time.

Video documentary maker Tracy Sorenson had five cameras operating at the Festival and is slowly editing the footage into a television documentary and You-tube shorts. A CD of the premiere performance is in production.

The Festival was thoroughly documented by photographers Steve Woodhall and Amy Whitfield. A selection of their images are now available on line.

Again, our thanks to everyone who helped to make the inaugural Kalari-Lachlan River Arts Festival such a success.

Meeting closed at 7.40pm

OUTCOMES FOR CONSIDERATION FROM THIS MEETING

WHAT WAS GREAT

- Opening the local community up to opera, for many a first time
- Show casing local talent and music
- Community Spirit – validation & recognition of festival
- Ambience – lake location, lantern parade and welcome to country ceremony
- Good for Business – local shops, accommodation
- Sense of Place – Frogs Hollow a great location
- Poetry Slam – Miles Merrill a great personality
- Media Coverage – ABC, Local Newspaper, Prime TV, Flyers, poster
- T Shirts – Target and logo were a real hit in the town,
- Logo on t-shirts made it easy to identify volunteers
- Posters original and attractive – caught people's eyes/attention
- Patronage was excellent
- Great support – locals & travellers attended , estimate over 2,000 people
- Coverage of the parade on local Prime TV, ABC & Regional Fairfax newspapers

WHAT WE CAN DO BETTER

- **COORDINATORS –**
 - Ministers to be each responsible for one specific portfolio
 - Additional volunteers required for the main stage, green room
 - Toilets and garbage bins need supervision and emptying
- **DATE**
 - End of September???
 - Program = Friday and Saturday rather than Saturday night and Sunday?
- **SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY**
 - Stefo Nanstu has given a verbal commitment for 2013 festival
- **MAIN STAGE**
 - Location and set up of main stage was excellent
- **LAYOUT FOR STALLS**
 - Need a site Map
 - Stalls locations to be better planned/grouped together. Eg all food stalls together
- **MATERIALS**
 - Additional toilets, rubbish bins (Council)
 - Ongoing supervision of toilets and rubbish disposal
 - Parking – to be policed, volunteers to supervise
- **VOLUNTEERS**
 - Firm coordination and roster for volunteers
 - More volunteers required
 - Team Leaders for volunteer groups
 - Volunteers tent with amenities
 - Volunteer briefing before Festival
- **COMMUNICATION ON THE DAY**
 - Two-way radio for continual contact between 'officials'
 - Master sheets with names of coordinators
 - Running sheet for all Ministers (where & who has responsibilities)
- **OFFICE**
 - Small office/Information booth on the Festival site
 - Time out for Volunteers
 - A Visitors/information centre - (a point of contact)



- **CABINET MINISTRY**
 - One ministry per person with agreed responsibilities
- **FLYERS**
 - Need to be distributed earlier
 - Need a good map of Forbes showing Festival sites
- **ADVERTISING**
 - Additional advertising required through NSW Tourism
 - Promote in other regional papers
- **BANNER & SIGNAGE**
 - Larger Banner to be located on Newell Highway to advertise festival
 - More signage on Festival site/s to different events/venues
 - Council signage for Frogs Hollow
- **SPONOSORSHIPS**
 - Seek additional sponsors for future festival
- **COMMUNITY CULTURAL AMENITIES**
 - Community cultural amenities lacking
 - Submission for Community Cultural Centre for Forbes CBD to include modern performance, exhibition and studio spaces, a retail area, and cultural heritage and environmental interpretation experiences, and neighbourhood house
 - Ask Council to commission a feasibility study
 - integrate indigenous and non-indigenous people and displays into the centre
- **TRAINING**
 - We all need training in project management and other skills in preparation for future festivals
- **GENERATORS**
 - Double check that generators are fully functioning and that reserve generators are in place

SUPPORTERS LOGOS







*design & illustration by
sandra luthi*

Report prepared for the River Arts Festival Cabinet
By Merrill Findlay, 2011
Copy edited by Cecilia Moar

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