

Let's imagine...

What we want you to do is make a

It's 2008.

snapshot of that night in 2008.

It's a Saturday night.

Think about what young people would like

It's your town.

to be doing. This is your chance to show

What are young

those people up the back what it is you

people doing?

want. You've got half an hour.

What's happening

Work together and think about what it is

for young people?

that will really make a difference.



by RUTH NEAVE, RADO

partners. Not surprisingly, forum organisers jumped at the opportunity to have two theatre practitioners with extensive experience in youth specific projects, and the chance to inject a little colour and movement in the forum program. Enter stage right, Jo Turner and Sarah Goodes.

From the opening moments Jo and Sarah were an integral part of forum life. Their bag of theatrical tricks helped people get to know each other, encouraged communication and cooperation, challenged people to consider their world from new perspectives, and enabled people to tell their own stories.

For 30 minutes on this glorious autumn morning, the banks of Glenbawn Dam are adorned by young people planning their future. Small groups form and commit to an idea. Using the tricks learnt from Jo and Sarah, they work together to tell their story, space is considered, the position of the audience, actions that may describe the idea are tried, adjusted, and reworked.

Imagining a future

JO TURNER AND SARAH GOODES ARE DIRECTING SUNDAY MORNING'S session at the Upper Hunter Youth Forum. Forty young people from Merriwa, Scone, Murrurundi, Muswellbrook, Dungog and Singleton shires have gathered at Glenbawn Dam to take part in the forum. 'Those people up the back' are the economic development officers, community services managers, youth workers, regional development staff and sponsors who arranged everything from buses, sausages and submissions to make this weekend happen.

Upper Hunter communities are keen to encourage young people to stay within the region. Recognising that employment opportunities greatly influence young people's choices, the Upper Hunter Youth Forum's goal was to consider enterprise initiatives for young people. A series of local meetings and planning days were held before the Regional Youth Forum with no shortage of great ideas emerging, many with a cultural edge. Enter stage left, Arts Upper Hunter.

While the forum was taking shape, Arts Upper Hunter and Australian Theatre for Young People (atyp) were working on a project funded through the Regional Arts Fund to promote the performing arts to young people and explore opportunities for youth performing arts projects.

With cultural projects high on the forum's agenda, The Regional Youth Forum and the Regional Youth Theatre project were natural



Left: A new take on spray art in Singleton.

Below: Joey Ramone prepares for a big night in Dorrigo.



This project was made possible with assistance from the Regional Arts Fund, a Commonwealth Government initiative supporting the arts in regional and remote Australia.



The 30 minute call is given, the troupes head back and 'those people up the back' are treated to a performance on the future... International Red Heads Day, a café with food and jobs for young people, a youth centre with a pool comp, the largest sun dial in the southern hemisphere, and a concert with Britney Spears and Joey Ramone on the same bill. There's more than a couple of 'naturals' in the cast and the snapshots are as entertaining as they informative.

The weekend isn't over yet. There's a couple of hours left for fine-tuning the proposals. Discussions include the performing arts in the planning, development and marketing of the projects. Those people up the back and the front have glimpsed inside a bag of theatrical tricks and have been left wanting more.

END ACT ONE ■

August

22 August - 12 October

👁️ *Two laws... One Big Spirit* The work of Rusty Peters, a Gija man from the Kimberley, Western Australia, and Peter Adsett from Humpty Doo, Northern Territory. **WAGGA WAGGA** Art Gallery Tel 02 6926 9660

23 August

🎭 *The Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* by Ray Lawler. Performed by the Picton Theatre Group. Wollondilly Shire Hall, **PICTON**. Bookings Tel 02 4677 3962

23 - 24 August

👁️ Arts Action Outreach, etching workshop, Bega Regional Gallery, **BEGA** Tel 02 6499 2187

23 August - 13 September

👁️ *Catalyst: Beach Scene* by Roy de Mestre, one of Australia's major artists. The work, bequeathed to Goulburn by Dr CG Moffitt, is a highlight of the collection. The artist, born in Bowral, had family links to Goulburn. **GOULBURN** Regional Art Gallery Tel 02 4823 4443