



MEDIA RELEASE

Dubbo to host first Regional Arts Australia conference with new Artlands brand

The vibrant city of Dubbo in the Orana region of New South Wales has been chosen to host the 2016 Regional Arts Australia (RAA) conference and festival from 27 - 30 October.

It will mark the return of the conference to NSW for the first time in 14 years, and will see the introduction of the Artlands brand to be used for all future RAA conferences.

The handover to Dubbo from Kalgoorlie, host for the RAA conference for the past five days, included a welcome from Wiradjuri elder, Dr Stan Grant AM who presented elders of the Wongatha people with gifts. Aunty Laurel Cooper received a friendship pouch and carry bag made from hand-dyed raffia and woven by the Hands on Weavers from Wagga Wagga. Wati elder, Uncle Aubrey Lynch accepted a 'Yinyamarra Murra-way' wooden carving, a collaborative piece designed by Robert Perrin, carved by Malcolm Morris and finished by Dylan Goolagong, Wiradjuri men from the Orana region.

Regional Arts NSW (RANSW) Chair, Peter White said although RANSW is a small organisation, the extensive network of 14 Regional Arts Boards will engage regional towns and communities through all areas of the state.

'We are looking forward to showcasing NSW,' Mr White said.

NSW Deputy Premier, Arts Minister and Member for Dubbo, the Hon Troy Grant MP sent his wishes via video.

'Dubbo is the capital of western NSW and has plenty to showcase. It's a strong region with the infrastructure needed to host a conference and festival of this size, and we can't wait to welcome delegates to the region in 2016, Mr Grant said.

Mr Grant will also be the guest speaker at the fundraising dinner for Artlands 2016 at Walsh Bay Arts Table 2014 on November 11.

Mayor of Dubbo, Councillor Mathew Dickerson brought a unique touch to the handover with his bespoke poem about his city, inviting delegates to Artlands 2016 to visit the 'hub of the west' for the conference and to stay on afterwards to visit the region.

Speaking before the handover, Cr Dickerson said Artlands 2016 will provide the ideal opportunity to showcase the city's state of the art facilities including the award-winning Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre.

'The centre has attracted a range of widely acclaimed international and national shows to the region and the Western Plains Cultural Centre, which is the largest gallery space west of the Blue Mountains,' Cr Dickerson said.

Incoming RAA President, Kate Fielding said the conference and arts festival transforms both the people who come to it and the place where it is held.

'It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the host town to experience the breadth of the best thought and art from around the country in their own backyard,' Ms Fielding said.

Delegates viewed a film of Dubbo and the surrounding region and the launch culminated in the introduction of the new Artlands logo and website, www.artlands.com.au

CEO of RANSW Elizabeth Rogers said while the conference was two years away, it was important to give people time to plan their time and travel.

'We're very excited to be planning this conference and arts festival and in particular the Aboriginal arts program that will be a highlight of Artlands 2016,' Ms Rogers said.

'The conference program will feature keynotes of the highest calibre to give delegates the opportunity to consider all aspects of creativity and arts practice in regional Australia,' she said.

Ends

For further information regarding this release contact CEO Regional Arts NSW, Elizabeth Rogers on 0412 099 935