

How this position supported Federal, State and Local Government policy objectives

Contributing to a thriving economy

The total Regional Arts Fund grant money achieved for projects in the Gippsland region in 2007 was \$88,950. For every dollar of the Fund, an average of another \$3.30 is attracted in project earnings, sponsorship, and other grant money, thus, the total economic activity generated across Gippsland through the Regional Arts Fund and supported by RAV's Wellington RADO during 2007 was \$382,485. If the standard economic multiplier is applied, we can say that **the economic impact of RAF-funded projects supported by RAV's Wellington RADO for the 2007 calendar year is \$956,212, or the equivalent of 21 full-time jobs.**

Contributing to quality health and education outcomes

Deb provided direct support to many artists and education or health sector workers to discuss funding opportunities and to provide advice for funding applications and networking opportunities. She also involved two primary schools in *Fresh & Salty* and worked closely with their teachers in enhancing the use of the arts in achieving educational outcomes.

Supporting the development of caring communities with a vibrant democracy

RAV's Wellington RADO developed strong relationships with a broad range of community groups and organisations in order to encourage productive collaborations. Deb worked on Wellington Shire's Cultural Development Policy which aims to create an environment conducive to community cultural expression.

Strengthening communities

Deb delivered the Wellington component of the state-wide project *Fresh & Salty* in partnership with the Heyfield Wetlands Information Centre and ArtHouse Gippsland Inc. This project successfully brought artist and non-arts organisations together. The local component was designed with the principles of the Cultural Development Policy in mind, and aimed to strengthen small towns and foster creativity and innovation across the region.

Stimulating community participation

A major part of the *Fresh & Salty* project was the delivery of a sculpture making program to three small communities in the shire. The communities were chosen via an EOI process and stimulated strong grass roots participation in the development of community sculptures for those towns. One of these groups has subsequently secured further funding to create another three sculptures for their town.

Raising awareness re: sustainable use of precious resources

The *Fresh & Salty* sculpture was given in to the care of the Heyfield Wetlands Information Centre and remains there as a strong statement about the sustainable use of water. The project brought a wide range of community partners — including schools, artists, corporations, water-watch, the West Gippsland CMA and more — together to stimulate discussion and raise awareness about our use of our most precious resource - water.

Helping regional communities manage the impact of growth and change

Deb has developed a Gippsland-wide network of artists and arts workers across all art-forms to build professional capacity and share best practice. She has worked steadfastly to build relationships with key local organisations and networks. She has provided direct support to a number of organisations to develop and implement projects that support the expression of local cultural identity and allow local groups and individuals to respond to change. In addition she facilitated the delivery of *Creative Volunteering* workshops for committee members of organisations to ensure communities are able to share and retain valuable management, networking and fundraising knowledge.

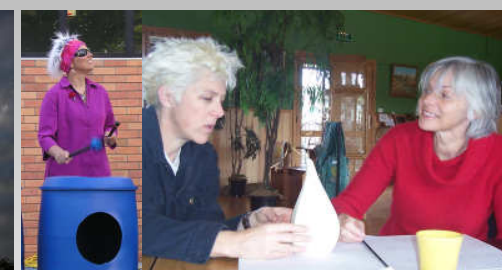


Deb Milligan is a practicing artist with a love of contemporary abstract painting. She has had solo and group exhibitions in Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale, East Gippsland Art Gallery, Latrobe Regional Gallery as well as galleries in Melbourne.

Her work as a Regional Arts Development officer is informed by her background in community cultural development, health promotion and resource production, as well as her experience operating an arts based business as a sole trader.

She moved from Melbourne to regional Victoria 15 years ago and revels in the dynamic community spirit found there, actively participating in cultural development work in her local area. She was a member of Foothills Music for seven years and in 2002 she became a founding member of Arthouse Gippsland Inc.

Deb is committed to encouraging a strong, collaborative grass roots engagement with the arts across all sectors of community and seeks to empower communities and individuals to actively shape their futures—both personal and collective—through the arts.



Partnership Priorities

Deb's position is supported locally through a partnership with the Wellington Shire Council. At the outset the major focus was the creation of a Cultural Development Policy for Wellington Shire. Deb undertook a comprehensive community consultation and cultural mapping process to this end. The policy takes a very broad definition of culture. The partnership priorities beyond this focused largely on: developing cultural networks and strategies for the growth of local initiatives; strengthening networking and information sharing in the area; assisting local festivals to improve artistic outcomes, innovation and participation in their events; working to increase skills and knowledge of local arts practitioners; promoting awareness and recognition of the range of cultural voices in regional Victoria and improving access to the Regional Arts Fund for all communities and organisations in the broader region.

Deb was appointed to this role in Nov 2005. As a measure of the impact of a RADO in this region, in the year leading up to Deb's appointment, the calendar year 2005, the total Regional Arts Fund money that was allocated to projects across the six Gippsland shires was \$43,505. In 2007 alone, the total increased to \$88,950. The Total RAF money allocated to the Gippsland region between 2006 & 2008 is currently more than \$165,000.

Direct service provided to local government partners

During 2007, Deb completed the Wellington Shire Council's Cultural Development Policy. During consultations over the previous 12 months it had changed emphasis from an Arts and Culture Policy to one looking at how the arts can be used to enhance our experience of our culture, to its final form which takes a very broad definition of culture – ranging from arts to sport and education. It looks at ways to develop an environment that fosters greater participation and active engagement with our culture – in whatever form that may take. Early in 2007 it was redrafted in response to community feedback and was subsequently adopted by Council.

Deb continued to work with Wellington Shire Council throughout 2007 implementing strategies which incorporate cultural development principles in line with the new policy. One example of this can be seen in the design of the local component of the Fresh & Salty project, specifically in the community workshop program.



Deb also worked with local arts council GRAS, the Cultural Services Unit and local artists in the funding, design and purchase of a custom built trailer to transport the Ruang instrument to smaller communities around the shire.

Throughout Deb's partnership she has also been an active participant in the Creative Gippsland network. She has worked on numerous strategic initiatives with a cultural tourism focus across the six Gippsland shires.

Nature of assistance provided to local cultural organisations

The wide consultation that Deb undertook for the Cultural Development Policy gave her a strong understanding of the needs and desires of her community. With this groundwork complete, she provided targeted assistance to a great many organisations in relation to new project development, or funding and project implementation. These have been as diverse as: Digital Film-making Workshops; brokering discussions leading to an international musician playing in a small community hall; providing assistance with a Fire & Flood photographic display at the Maffra Agricultural Show; and working intensively with local arts council, GRAS, and Melbourne based artist Jessica Wilson to lay the groundwork and develop the structure and processes for a major youth arts project to be held in Sale in 2008.

For many local organisations and artists she provided information, advice and direct assistance in relation to audience or project development, funding, project management, promotion and networking.

Deb worked intensively with artists and community members in Meerlieu, Briagolong and Heyfield as part of the Fresh & Salty project, providing comprehensive support, guidance and advice.

Deb also identified training needs and found appropriate solutions, for example, the provision of two Creative Volunteering (CVNL) workshops in the local region. Creative Volunteering is a fully accredited training program for volunteers covering a range of subjects including: marketing, working with collections; event management; developing funds and resources; working with people; good governance and more. These workshops were highly successful, reaching a broad cross section of community groups.

Major Project Fresh & Salty

RAV was keen to involve its partners in a major state-wide project in order to lift the perception of the arts broadly and demonstrate the capacity of innovative, creative partnerships to build communities. *Fresh & Salty* aimed to support communities to creatively explore one of the country's most crucial issues – water. Deb implemented the local component of this project – a major permanent public artwork by local artist Gillian Swanson which was given into the care of the Heyfield Wetlands Information Centre. Gillian was mentored through this project by sculptor Cameron Robbins. The artwork is a striking 3metre high sculpture. It is an abstraction of two fruit sacs that hold the seed of the Swamp Sedge.

Deb also worked with the artist and Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale to provide a sequential program of sculpture making workshops to three community groups, the aim being to increase arts project management skills, and an understanding of the processes involved in creating public art, in small communities. The groups were chosen via an Expression of Interest process based on a genuine expression of community viewpoint, as well as the anticipated future benefits for the communities. The resulting sculptures included a permanent contemporary metal sculpture in Briagolong, and a wave-form sculpture, made of willow, wood stakes, bamboo and ceramic tiles created by primary school students, also in Heyfield. This sculpture will remain on site for up to 12 months, after which it will be dismantled and the school children will be able to take their tiles home.

Organisations RAV's Wellington RADO provided assistance to in 2007

Heyfield Wetlands Information Centre
ArtHouse Gippsland Inc
Heyfield Primary School
Meerlieu Primary School
Meerlieu Rural Community Development Group
Briagolong Artists Group
Australian Business Arts Foundation
Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale
Creative Gippsland Network
Maffra & Sale Motorcycle Club
Maffra Agricultural Show committee

Briagolong Film Festival
Gippsland Regional Arts Society
George Grey Centre
As well as many others across the six Gippsland shires such as the Prom Coast Sea Change Festival
East Gippsland Institute of TAFE, Nowa Nowa Community Development Group, ArtsNet, Prom Coast Arts, Moe Heritage Park and others.



Regional Arts Victoria programs and services provided to the broader region

Deb delivered three Regional Arts Fund (RAF) information sessions in the Gippsland region during 2007, while another two were organised but cancelled at the last minute due to floods. The sessions also provided advice and information in relation to other funding programs, such as The Australia Council and Arts Victoria. Deb also provided year-round advice to artists and groups about RAF program grants and Quick Response Grant applications as well as constructive feedback to unsuccessful RAF applicants. For some months, Deb also assessed Quick Response Grant applications for Victoria. Throughout the year, Deb represented RAV at launches and openings of RAF funded projects, and spoke at the openings of other local events as required.

Deb also helped organise RAV's state-wide conference which was held in Lakes Entrance in 2007. One of RAV's major initiatives for the year was the delivery of its state-wide project, *Fresh & Salty*, which involved five locally designed and managed regional arts outcomes. Deb provided the local project management for the Wellington aspect, as well as assistance with the overall state-wide project.