



**Branching Out: New Connections, New Directions** is a two year Social Enterprise project developed by Tasmanian Regional Arts and funded by the Westpac Foundation.

The project intends to equip community arts organisations with skills and expertise to generate their own resources thus placing less emphasis on grants and more on economic sustainability and capacity building. We are working with two community groups in the first stage of the project to explore the challenges and requirements in developing the project.

Whilst in the early stages, **Branching Out** has great potential to grow the capacity of Tasmanian artists, community arts organisations and art spaces as it is implemented.

**So what is Social Enterprise?** Put simply it is an enterprise or business that has social, community and financial outcomes and benefits.

Most of the arts organisations that fall under the umbrella of Tasmanian Regional Arts (TRA) are small volunteer based and run under the auspices of our incorporated not-for-profit organisation. The 28 branches and affiliate organisations work closely with their communities to develop and coordinate events and projects that support visual arts, performance, literature and music. There is a high degree of commitment and passion behind these activities and a grass roots approach that supports a range of practitioners including hobbyists, published writers and accomplished artists, performers and musicians.

These organisations run on the smell of an oily rag and often rely on small grants and the in kind support of local councils and/or businesses to support arts and cultural activities in the community. They generally all share the aim of "delivering accessible and relevant arts and cultural activities to their local community" and these activities contribute greatly to the social, cultural and economic capacity of regional communities.

The benefit of these dynamic groups to their communities is immense. They support their local artists through exhibitions, provide regional audiences with access to live performance through programs such as TRA's Touring Program, encourage visitors to local festivals and events and encourage a sense of community, participation and inclusion.

We are exploring the potential of incorporating social enterprise ventures within these small groups and organisations to encourage increased financial stability

through income generation, improved governance and the development of key partnerships.

The project is coordinated by Kylie Eastley, who works in partnership with TRA's three Arts Development Officers (based in Launceston, Latrobe & Hobart) building knowledge and skills to support the development of future regional arts SE initiatives.

In partnership with Dr Robyn Eversole, Research Fellow at the University of Tasmania, the Branching Out team will document the process. These findings will be utilised to evaluate the project and determine strategies for working with community art groups who wish to develop a Social Enterprise.

The project is overseen by a state advisory committee who assist and advise on the strategic implementation of the project.

**Branching Out updates will be posted regularly with downloads accessible at [www.tasregionalarts.org.au](http://www.tasregionalarts.org.au) or head to [www.trabranchingout.blogspot.com](http://www.trabranchingout.blogspot.com) for progress.**

**For more information about the project please contact Kylie Eastley on 0439 262 344 or email [kylie@tasregionalarts.org.au](mailto:kylie@tasregionalarts.org.au)**