



Special Broadcasting Service
Locked Bag 028, Crows Nest, NSW 1585 Australia
14 Herbert Street, Artarmon NSW 2064.
T: (+61) 2 9430 2828 F: (+61) 2 9430 3700
W: sbs.com.au

News Release

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SBS SHOWCASES THE ARTS IN REGIONAL COMMUNITIES *Series of unique vignettes to launch*

In partnership with Regional Arts Australia, SBS has launched a series of unique vignettes that showcase the depth of arts talent across regional Australia.

The artists' stories were unveiled on Thursday 8 May at the Sydney Opera House by SBS Managing Director Shaun Brown and Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, the Hon Peter Garrett MP.

The vignettes were created for the launch of SBS's split regional signal which will reach 12 specific regional audiences across Australia.

Developed and produced by SBS, the stories demonstrate SBS's commitment to Australia's artistic and cultural community.

"SBS's partnership with Regional Arts Australia is another innovative example of how SBS is supporting the artistic and cultural community in Australia," said SBS Managing Director Shaun Brown.

"All of our content, apart from news, current affairs and sport, is commissioned from the independent production sector, which creates jobs, skills and investment in this important sector of the Australian economy.

"The vignettes we launch today are a unique way that SBS can marry its commercial imperative with our public service remit and our desire to support community groups who lack the resources to reach a broader audience."

The Chair of Regional Arts Australia, Steve Grieve, said: "This is a wonderful chance to take the art and artists of rural and remote Australia into lounge rooms across the nation. With one-third of Australians living outside our metropolitan centres, this is a great way of telling their stories and recognising the contribution that arts and artists making to enriching community life.

"We are extremely grateful to SBS for making this possible and for demonstrating such a commitment to regional Australia," said Mr Grieve.

Based on a Regional Arts Australia book, *Big Story Country: Great Arts Stories From Regional Australia*, a series of eight 60, 30 and 15-second vignettes feature the unique stories of regional artists working in local communities around Australia.

Our story: We don't swamp our audience with advertising. Instead we add value to the advertising experience with short commercial breaks. This keeps our audience from hitting the remote control. It also keeps their attention. That's why we enjoy higher recall than any other network.

Six Billion Stories and counting...

All vignettes offer a unique perspective on arts in regional Australia combined with a true sense of local community.

- From Bega, NSW **Fling Youth Dance Company** by Lee Pemberton, the story of how Fling was created, its remarkable success, and the opportunities Fling offers young regionally-based Australians.
- From Lake Condah in Victoria, **Possum Skin Cloak** by Vicki Couzens, about the resurgence in the traditional practice of making possum skin cloaks.
- Filmed across country Victoria, **Football Stories** by Malcolm Mckinnon is a series of short films which document the central role football plays in country communities.
- From Northcliffe in the south west of Western Australia, Fiona Sinclair shows how a small community with big, bold ideas created the **Southern Forest Sculpture Walk**.
- Devonport, Tasmania is home to Rod Westbrook, a photographer whose fine detailed images are really **Slices of Nature**. Rod has spina bifida and tells how he has created his own genre of work he calls *rodograms*.
- Leaving the city for a life in Mitchell, Queensland, inspired Jenny Buckland to record **A child's life on the station**. Her story shows us the wonderful life of children in rural communities.
- At the heart of Australia in Alice Springs, Peter Lowson tells the extraordinary story of **Drum Atweme**, a group of young talented Aboriginal drummers and the success they are achieving.
- The final vignette tells the story of the **Fleurieu Biennale**, the richest landscape prize in Australia which is held in the McLaren Vale region of South Australia and shows what a passion for art and pride can achieve in your region.

The vignettes have been filmed by James Ashburn of Luscious Motion, with music scored by Song Zu.

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For further information contact:

Jane McMillan
SBS
T: 02 9430 2807
M: 0438 690 305

OR

Kristy Gordon
Access Public Relations
T: 02 9279 4844
M: 0407 780 635

Vivienne Skinner
Regional Arts Australia
0411 206 224