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Abstract

This chapter explores the vernacular cultural assets of Wollongong, a largely suburban industrial city located just to the south of Sydney. Our interest here stems from our research for the wider Cultural Asset Mapping in Regional Australia (CAMRA) project, which asked the following key questions: outside of official planning discourses, what kinds of cultural assets exist in a rapidly changing and historically industrial region? What constitutes creativity in such a context? And, as researchers, what kinds of research practice are necessary to engage with marginalised social groups and working-class communities as part of a cultural asset mapping approach? In this chapter, we reflect on our research experiences, and discuss the particularities of cultural and creative practice in a working-class steel city that is undergoing transitions. The story includes surfboards, punk music and custom-designed cars, but also diverse suburban 'cool places' invisible to the creative cities script.

Keywords

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accessible everywhere, have become much more pervasive. Production and consumption of music is increasingly reliant on these emerging technologies. Individual songs, albums and entire discographies are downloaded from iTunes or LimeWire in minutes, transferring music to CD and MP3 players. Programs and software help develop unique sounds and beats, often replacing the need to learn musical instruments. Music can be made at home or at the local youth centre, recorded and uploaded to YouTube or Facebook sites. In turn, these networks spread music to larger audiences, promoting skills and ambitions of grassroots and underground performers, as well as signed professionals.

Indigenous hip-hop production requires a combination of underlying telecommunications infrastructure (adequate in Nowra and the Torres Strait, but still woeful in large parts of rural and remote Australia) and progressive thinking by local social workers and community planners. In the case of Nowra, the youth centre allows and encourages young people to be creative – prosaic community infrastructure enabling cultural activity of significance. Indigenous hip-hop is an evolving musical form, providing an important platform where young musicians express identities, creativity, passions and skill. The hope of the musicians featured in this chapter (and the authors) is that in the future aspiring Indigenous hip-hop artists will have improved opportunities to progress musical flair and talent into viable professional careers. Access to relevant musical equipment, infrastructure, mentoring and performance opportunities are crucial to the future development of a vibrant Indigenous hip-hop.

An earlier version of this chapter, 'Indigenous Hip-hop: Overcoming Marginality, Encountering Constraints', was published in *Australian Geographer*, vol. 41, 2010, pp. 141–58.

Engaging Creativity in Industrial Regions: Mapping Vernacular Cultural Assets

Chris Gibson, Andrew Warren and Ben Gallan

This chapter explores the vernacular cultural assets of Wollongong, a largely suburban industrial city located just to the south of Sydney. Our interest here stems from our research for the wider Cultural Asset Mapping in Regional Australia (CAMRA) project, which asked the following key questions: outside of official planning discourses, what kinds of cultural assets exist in a rapidly changing and historically industrial region? What constitutes creativity in such a context? And, as researchers, what kinds of research practice are necessary to engage with marginalised social groups and working-class communities as part of a cultural asset mapping approach? In this chapter, we reflect on our research experiences, and discuss the particularities of cultural and creative practice in a working-class steel city that is undergoing transitions. The story includes surfboards, punk music and custom-designed cars, but also diverse suburban 'cool places' invisible to the creative cities script.

At the outset, no presumptions were made about what creativity might be, where it resides in the city, or its importance

to cultural planning practice. Creative industries audits had already been conducted for Wollongong, and the contours of conventional arts activities in the city were already well known. A different approach to informing cultural planning was needed. A more meaningful influence was the growing field of community-engaged research for arts and cultural planning, which emphasises processes and outcomes related to concerns with social justice and cultural diversity – the politics of knowledge production as significant as the knowledge created. Cultural asset mapping for us meant negotiating with regional research partners, navigating the politics of knowledge-generation and delivering tangible ‘data’ on grassroots culture and creativity, while embracing the possibility of diverse activities and perspectives without prescribing fixed methods.

The setting for our research was Wollongong, an archetypal blue-collar industrial Australian city, in the wider Illawarra region, historically dominated by the coal and steel industries and facing ongoing fears around deindustrialisation. This setting amplifies the relevance of exploring vernacular creativity and cultural assets, for it reveals the particular way regional economic futures are imagined. This case illuminates how youth and vernacular working-class cultures have tended to be forsaken within a desire to find new regional economic narratives, in places burdened with the reputation of being imperilled by global economic forces.

In Wollongong, one policy prescription has been to embrace ‘creativity’ as a strategy for ensuring economic futures. The dominant policy view is that cities shrug off rust-belt identities and adapt economic development strategies that foster ‘creativity’, diversify local economies, create jobs, attract tourists, and appeal to a creative class of in-migrants. In this view, an industrial heritage can be a burden; creative-industry promotion then becomes a means to jettison brown industrial images and infrastructure in favour of streetwise, bohemian and cosmopolitan imagery.

Nevertheless, ‘creative’ has tended to be articulated through conventional understandings of the arts: supporting galleries and

performance centres and incubating innovation in corporate science, technology and engineering sectors. There are presences of what are typically described as ‘creative industries’ in Wollongong, including a theatre scene, visual artists, filmmakers and designers – and the city has pockets of gentrified ‘creative class’ activity, partly in the inner city and also on its scenic northern beaches (a function of lifestyle and amenity). Many gains have been made in Wollongong, but benefits have been unevenly distributed: a stark north–south socio-economic divide persists within the city; regional youth unemployment remains high; retraining schemes for workers who lost jobs in heavy industry have had mixed results; and long-term dislocation of manufacturing workers has not been sufficiently countered by growth in new industries. This was the setting within which researchers were charged with the task of mapping vernacular cultural assets – as imagined by residents themselves.

Adding to the urgency of this task was that the kinds of arts and cultural activities previously promoted often reinforced middle-class metropolitan tastes while denigrating local working-class people as somehow ‘less creative’ (one Wollongong suburb was infamously voted Australia’s ‘most bogan place’ in a nationwide poll). Typical are slickly branded campaigns revolving around middle-class aesthetics and a predilection for bourgeois consumption spaces rather than enterprises that generate jobs and production. Another danger was that previously the enormous creative potential residing in economically oppressed social groups had been neglected – a question of fundamental social justice as well as cultural planning.

Wollongong City Council cultural planners, who were industry partners on the CAMRA project, wanted to include well-established arts communities in the research, but also – mindful of the critiques of creativity and class alluded to above – wished to explore a more expansive understanding of what creativity might be, and where it could be found. An open-minded approach was important in Wollongong: with its industrial base, strong

working-class culture and challenging demographic mix (high levels of cultural diversity, newly arrived migrant and refugee communities, socio-economic inequality, and problems of youth unemployment), any project focusing only on the established arts and creative industries would quickly run the risk of reinforcing existing divides and appear elitist.

Negotiating methods and pragmatic research journeys

Clarifying our approach to mapping local cultural assets took a year's worth of regular meetings by university researchers on the CAMRA project with cultural planners at Wollongong City Council. Both parties were driven by a desire to broaden consultations in light of future cultural planning needs – to incorporate diverse views and thus open up the conversation about what constitutes creativity in an industrial city setting. CAMRA researchers also pursued specialist projects on specific *forms* of vernacular creativity (custom car design, surfboard shapers) and *sites* of creativity (for example, the Oxford Tavern, the live music venue, host to Wollongong's fringe/alternative/punk subcultures until its untimely closure in 2010).

To sufficiently capture Wollongong's cultural assets a mixed-method approach was required. Specific projects associated with Honours and PhD thesis projects meant it was possible to dedicate time and energy to locating and exploring alternative creative sectors beyond the usual places, while a series of other activities would be pursued by the project as a whole, with the broader population. A pragmatic approach was taken to initially select specific creative activities and sites: custom car design was a focus because of the authors' prior knowledge and awareness of a creative scene in Wollongong surrounding car design, which had also recently been demonised by mainstream media in the area as 'hoon' culture. The Oxford Tavern was chosen because of the involvement of one of the authors as a musician there. Surfboard

shaping was chosen because another of the authors is a keen surfer and knew of the region's high-quality custom surfboard workshops – but also knew that surfboard makers felt frustrated and somewhat 'out of the loop' of decision-making in the city about cultural and economic planning.

It became apparent that a much more ambitious public research exercise would be needed to broaden the net. This latter exercise became the hosting of a 'cultural mapping lounge' at Wollongong's largest annual civic festival, Viva La Gong, in November 2009. The 'cultural mapping lounge' consisted of a stall, manned by staff and students and CAMRA personnel from the University of Wollongong (UOW) and the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS). At the mapping lounge members of the general public – literally anyone – were invited to have their say on two basic questions: 'What is the coolest place in Wollongong?' and 'What is the most creative place in Wollongong?' These two questions, although simple, were the product of many hours of debate within project partnership meetings. They were chosen because they invited people in a reasonably accessible, 'pop culture' format to reflect on their city, on cultural life, and on creativity. They addressed the core questions of our research (as outlined previously) but in a non-academic format and using language that engaged rather than alienated participants. Accompanying these questions, members of the general public were also asked to draw on a paper map of Wollongong – explicitly identifying their 'cool' and 'creative' places with blue and pink highlighter pens (see <http://vimeo.com/77756380> for a video explaining the process). Drawing on advances made elsewhere on a previous project (see Chris Brennan-Horley's chapter in this book), these maps were later collated and combined within geographic information systems (GIS) technology to produce analytical and statistical reports on where Wollongong residents located 'cool' and 'creative' places. Overall, 205 people participated in this exercise, producing 160 interviews and maps (some participated as couples or as whole families, completing one interview and drawing on a single map).

What transpired was that instead of an empirical exploration of specific cultural planning themes, a looser narrative approach emerged within which the aim was to simply ask people about their experiences and then let participants narrate a story of their lives and of the role played by creativity and local culture. This narrative approach enabled a form of personal dialogue with researchers not possible through semi-structured interviews.

Vernacular creativity: A brief sketch

Results from our cultural mapping lounge were instructive. Although most of the 160 map interviews were brief, there were 2,355 drawings of 'cool' and 'creative' places on the maps – an average of fourteen per map. Some fifty hours of interviews were recorded, equating to 107,000 words of transcribed narrative material from a single day's research activity. Participants were from diverse demographic backgrounds, including whole families, retirees, students, farmers, motorcycle bikie gang members, Buddhist monks (Wollongong happens to be a major centre of Buddhism, featuring Australia's largest temple), steelworkers and well-known figures in the regional Aboriginal community.

Some overall findings were reasonably predictable. Wollongong city centre and nearby North Wollongong (a trendy beachside, inner-city area with apartments, cafes and a strong student culture, connected to the nearby university) were the two most commonly identified locations for cultural assets. And within them established arts and cultural infrastructure were repeatedly identified as sites of vernacular creativity activity. At the same time, however, the interviews revealed a scattered and diverse suburban geography of cultural and creative activities. Although the city centre and nearby North Wollongong were the most commonly drawn places on the map, they made up only 18 per cent of all responses. The remaining 82 per cent of sites for cultural assets were outside the city centre. Among the top ten 'cool' or 'creative' places were

older, established middle-class localities (Gwynneville), working-class industrial suburbs (Port Kembla, Fairy Meadow) and tiny beachside villages to Wollongong's extreme north (Wombarra, Coledale). These top ten suburbs accounted for 55 per cent of all responses. The remaining 45 per cent of cultural assets (over 1,000 identified cases in total) were scattered across 65 other suburbs in the region.

Beyond an obvious concentration in the city centre is another, substantial, and decidedly suburban geography of cultural assets, with an accordingly heterogeneous mix of activities and attachments. There were numerous examples of vernacular, amateur, unusual and everyday, unheralded creativity: buskers, choir groups, writers' clubs, community gardens, markets, fire-twirling, belly dancing, linedancing, bluegrass nights, the local hardware megastore (a parallel to our earlier research in Darwin, where it too showed up as a creative networking place, specifically its paint aisle, a well-frequented place among visual artists), full-moon parties, sculpture gardens, garage bands, scrapbooking, graffiti-art (especially unsanctioned graffiti), the Nan Tien Buddhist temple, bike tracks, art shops and even a doll collecting club. Cultural activities and the contours of people's everyday relations to place are networked across city spaces, from central arts precincts to public housing estates, into hinterlands and leafy suburbs, beaches and national parks.

Sites of informal, prosaic creativity were documented and described by participants in response to the 'creativity' question (beachcombing for refuse to be used in garden sculptures, for instance); but, curiously, in face-to-face interviews some participants only cited examples of vernacular creativity in answer to the 'cool' places question, where they talked more freely and confidently:

The community garden at North Wollongong's pretty cool... actually it's creative. I guess it's something out of the ordinary, a creative idea. They do create things using interesting materials.

They don't have a lot of funding or anything. They have to be creative and use recycled stuff that they go and find or source for free...wood and whatever, for garden furniture. (Female, 29)

Others were cranky with the concept of creativity, for its implicit elitism:

Interviewer: We're asking people where they think the creative places are in Wollongong, where's Wollongong's creative place?

Respondent: What a dreadful question. How elitist are you? I worked in Cringila for years – and I'll tell you what, when it came to creating the home grog and the vegetable gardens, even though it was grown in soils full of lead, it was extremely creative, right? Wherever there's human endeavour there's creativity. (Female, 54)

While many forms of creativity in everyday experience were captured by our map interview exercise, so too were critical voices questioning the very utility of 'creativity' as an analytical category.

On the whole, participants were more likely to identify their own suburb as 'cool' than 'creative', except for those living in the 'creative' hotspots of Wollongong, North Wollongong, Thirroul and Austinmer – who voted for their own suburbs as creative. Creativity was for many an abstract activity, associated with established cultural infrastructure in the city centre, whereas 'cool' places were closer to home, and in many ways more closely fitted with a broader, more inclusive concept of what constitutes cultural assets. There was also evidence of specialisation in the city – some suburbs were iconic 'cool' places on a regional scale, more so than they were 'creative' places, and vice versa. North Wollongong – with a historic pub popular with young people, a scenic beach, student share-house scene, cafes and nightlife – was a regional-scale 'cool' place, drawing people from across the entire city.

An almost perverse contrast was that of Port Kembla, which was the focus of much discussion as a cultural asset – but in

ways cut across by class and place. Port Kembla is adjacent to the city's main steelworks, which has fallen into disrepair since the 1980s, following cutbacks at the steel plant, migration of working-class communities to new estates, and decentralisation of retail to large undercover malls on the city's edge. Shops in Port Kembla's Edwardian-era main street were abandoned and the area harboured unregulated street sex work, and had a reputation for madness, addiction, homelessness and dirt. There have been numerous attempts at revitalisation through place-making, public art and community schemes. In our research, Port Kembla showed up regularly as 'cool' and 'creative', but with a very peculiar twist. No one who rated Port Kembla as 'creative' lived there, and only two people (out of twenty) lived within adjacent suburbs. The remaining 90 per cent rating Port Kembla as creative lived to the (more affluent) north, especially from those suburbs – Wollongong, North Wollongong, Thirroul and Austinmer – that were rated the 'most creative' overall. No one from the working-class south side rated Port Kembla as 'creative' or 'cool'. Interview narratives provided an explanation: after attempts to reinvent it as a cultural hub, the idea of Port Kembla's creativity-led transition has permeated into some people's consciousness – but only, apparently, those who live in the more 'arty' parts of Wollongong. Creativity both amplifies and transgresses long-held geographical imaginations of the polarised city.

Making (and re-making) things: Surfboards and custom cars

In a city known for its manufacturing history, it should come as no surprise that discussions of cultural assets in Wollongong considered the physical making of things. We explored two sectors in detail, as sub-projects: surfboards and custom cars. The researchers already knew both of these anecdotally – but neither sector had been the focus of empirical research, nor considered as legitimate

cultural assets in previous civic policy-making. The Illawarra region is home to a thriving surf culture, which is supplied by a smaller concentration of about a dozen local surfboard workshops, several of which have international reputations and export markets. Meanwhile, the region is a particular hotspot for custom-car enthusiasts, with a critical mass of automotive workshops, repair yards, mechanics and avid car users. How might these two examples of the material making (and re-making) of things come to be thought of as cultural assets in an industrial city setting?

Critical to understanding surfboard making as a vernacular cultural asset is the continued importance of craft-based forms of manufacturing, notwithstanding considerable challenges from automated production techniques and cheap, mass-produced imported surfboards. In Wollongong, as in other global surfing hubs, surfboards are still made by hand, by expert 'shapers' who plane and sand foam 'blanks', and 'glassers' who seal them against the elements. Because they are customised to local waves and body size, most Australian surfers ride boards made locally – even when cheaper imported boards are available. Surfboard making is a cultural asset in terms of the makers and their embodied skill: it is a tactile process, drawing on haptic skills by experts using their hands. Hand-based production is necessary to produce boards tailored to the surfer's individual body size, shape, preference, and local wave type. In interviews, shapers and glassers (who were universally men; women were employed in office and administrative positions) emphasised this system as craft, as art form, as well as production of a specialised sporting good. Such activities supported a local niche industry, but crucially, should be considered as a future *cultural* asset for Wollongong too.

Surfboard shapers learned their work informally, as low-paid helpers in workshops initially, then slowly graduating to more complex production tasks. Phil Byrne from Byrne Surf explains:

We learnt from scratch, there's no formal training in shaping. I was able to go up and watch a shaper in Sydney who was making some

boards for me and he showed me what to do for a few hours and then it was trial and error. We started shaping in our grandparents' garage before I started working for John Skipp...after a while certain elements led us to starting our own business, around 1976... Everyone learns from scratch, no TAFE or formal stuff...It really is like that in most places – watch, listen and learn, all on the run.

In the surfboard making scene, craftsmanship, customisation and relationships between shapers and their customers are all sources of credibility and cultural capital. They are also important intangible assets for future cultural planning.

In custom car design, male and female participants from blue-collar backgrounds developed specialised knowledge about how particular custom parts (suspension systems, wheels, body skirting and engines) could be fabricated both to add unique visual appeal and to dramatically improve driving performance. At one level a set of practical skills with car parts, this was also revealed as an important set of cultural assets within working-class areas of Wollongong previously denigrated as 'uncultured' or 'bogan'. Car-customising knowledge was often only disseminated and accessed socially within a specific sociocultural scene. Thus what emerges is a form of design and production that is not just throwing parts together and attaching them to a car. Instead, work was a careful and richly creative process: ideas and designs were firstly hatched amongst social groups, informed by personal tastes and feelings; then, in performing custom car work, technical knowledge about mechanics, electrical wiring, restoration, painting, metal fabrication and upholstery became requisite – but only towards ends that emphasised idiosyncratic personal expressions and aesthetic preferences. Automotive industries may be archetypically blue-collar, yet they also enable rich forms of vernacular creativity: as talents, skills, knowledge and abilities are assembled to generate head-turning designs. This creativity was a quality developed through personal interests and refined by daily practices and social interactions working on them.

Whether aiming to produce a show car or customising as a hobby, local automotive workshops in Wollongong were central spaces. Business networks directly assisted fabrication of show cars, while enabling hobby car enthusiasts to source required parts, materials, and specialised knowledge. The businesses sought by participants to assist with production (and where participants were themselves employed) had very particular spatial tendencies, concentrated across Wollongong's light industrial estates. This shaped particular kinds of jobs and circuits for custom car production. A distinct regional geography of creativity was also revealed. If conventional categories of creative industries are mapped for Wollongong, work is concentrated in the inner city and wealthier northern suburbs. These are locations for the university, regional art gallery, performing arts and entertainment centres, and several music and visual art studios. By contrast, automotive employment and circuits of custom production were concentrated in older industrial estates close to the city's central business district, as well as low-density, suburban working-class, industrial areas to the city's south and west. These are the blue-collar neighbourhoods typecast as 'bogan', with high rates of youth unemployment, but which are central to the creative production of custom rides in Wollongong. Cultural assets were revealed in the seemingly most unlikely of places – car parts shops, paint shops, grimy and noisy automotive workshops – outside of the bourgeois creative city agenda.

A space for otherness: The Oxford Tavern

Our final example is of the Oxford Tavern, which for two decades was the central venue for Wollongong's alternative and punk music scenes. It was unambiguously a key cultural asset – even though it was frequently overlooked in the city's official creativity and innovation strategies. It illustrates the importance of documenting vernacular cultural histories of subcultural

places within Australian cities and regions, taking seriously the forgotten venues where marginal social groups find meaning and community. Resonating are more universal themes in Australian cultural life: the formation of cultural scenes with dispositions towards accommodating, rather than resisting, difference; finding a space for otherness; and the importance of music and a physical performance venue in shaping a time and place of life transition from youth to adulthood.

Live music venues that are pubs often fall outside traditional policy structures and meanings of the arts, their fate determined less by formal cultural policy administration than by local regulations that diminish viability and by neighbouring urban processes of gentrification and noise pollution. Pubs as live music venues are frequently overlooked in creative city strategies, or, when present, construed as 'risks' to be managed.

One of the city's earliest pubs, The Oxford was originally built in 1845 as Elliot's Family Hotel. In the 1930s, its ornate Victorian frontage was replaced with an austere Art Deco exterior. The venue began hosting bands in 1989, and despite misguided revamps and lethargic management (at times bordering on neglect), it survived more than twenty years as the focal point for the city's underground, avant-garde, oppositional and left-of-centre music scenes. A participatory and communal philosophy present at the Oxford created a 'haven' for subcultures. This was not particularly the intention of the venue management. Indeed, throughout most of its history as a live venue, pub management reticently accommodated the music scene. Rather, a music scene colonised the available space, and in so doing, engendered a sense of belonging and community.

The Oxford stood in stark contrast to the city's other pubs and clubs, caricatured by members of the alternative and punk music scenes as crass 'beer barns', dominated by a monopolist company, the RDL Group, who owned/operated over half the city centre's licensed drinking venues. Musical diversity was part of the ethos of the Oxford Tavern – and upheld by key gatekeepers at the

venue, fostering intense localism within the scene. In 2010, when we conducted our research, the Oxford advertised no fewer than eight musical genres: rock, acoustic, blues, metal, punk, groove, hip-hop and world. In interviews for this project, ninety-six different descriptors were used for those who went to the Oxford and what music was played there. Its true significance to supporting vernacular cultural diversity in Wollongong was perennially underestimated.

Exactly how this significance was achieved was by proactive and intensely pro-local decision-making on the part of the venue's booking agents. These agents acted on subcultural knowledge to include and exclude bands based on their allegiances to the 'scene'. Even more prominent in recollections was the extent to which band bookers also enabled forms of local creativity. They did so by establishing principles upon which decisions were made to book bands (or not), creating 'rules' that skewed booking practices in favour of local and original live music. Their ethos was to develop a musical performance space for emerging local bands unable to perform elsewhere. Bands were rewarded for their attachment to the Oxford, and for the sense of community and solidarity their continued attendance at the venue fostered.

Although associated most strongly with punk and alternative rock, the Oxford was home to a diverse range of subcultures and musical genres, enabling marginal groups to connect by collectively demonstrating their 'otherness' to mainstream Wollongong. In a small city setting, a single alternative venue accommodated sub-cultural difference and exchange, a force of necessity in a culturally conservative place with limited scope for venue specialisation.

Sadly, the Oxford Tavern closed its doors in 2010, during the conduct of this research, as part of a planned (and subsequently indefinitely delayed) urban redevelopment scheme that included the demolition of the historic hotel to build an apartment/shopping complex. At the time of writing the building still stands, empty and unused, in an increasingly dilapidated state. Although the Oxford was much loved and is fondly remembered by members

of the local music scene, its demise remains a reminder of the gulf that still exists between the whim of real estate developers and aspirations to incorporate vernacular cultural assets into mainstream planning.

Conclusions

Looking back on research experiences, it becomes clearer why vernacular creative activities such as surfboard making, custom car design and punk music have until now been absent within formal civic cultural planning processes. In the past, certain creative cultures and endeavours (especially museums, theatre, visual arts) have had full-time employed managers who served as crucial gatekeepers interacting with civic gatekeepers of cultural policy and planning. What passes as legitimate within the sphere of cultural planning has been informed by societal perceptions of what counts as 'arts', or what counts as 'creative' – but is also a product of the professional networks within which policy discourses circulate. Other forms of vernacular creativity might be equally 'artful' but have remained invisible. This project sought to begin the process of breaking out of that cycle. Vernacular diversity and a small number of select forms of cultural assets were documented and are now on the radar.

Nevertheless, other forms of creativity were downplayed by participating community members: people doing custom car design, for instance, rarely perceived what they did as creative or artistic and were dismissive of council initiatives at inclusive cultural planning practice as being 'irrelevant' for them and their pastime. Customising cars was an outlet for personal expression, an avenue for doing something that was interesting outside the confines of boring, repetitive and tiring work in a blue-collar industry. Custom car designers could pull together different people and skills – friends they had in the local area – in ways that perfectly match academic descriptions of the network sociality

present in creative industries. And yet they didn't see custom car design as particularly creative, or as a legitimate form of art. Thus a form of self-exclusion accompanied actual exclusion from previous policy discussions of art and creativity.

In the case of the Oxford Tavern, the city ultimately failed to view the venue as necessary or valuable cultural infrastructure, even though the city had sought to embrace discourses of creative city regeneration. Views about cultural assets from within music scenes are tied up in history and cultural meaning; such assets cannot be 'invented' overnight but rather emerge and gain credibility slowly, as experience accumulates over the years. Attachments to place provide cultural infrastructure with critical meaning as cultural assets through repetitive use, resulting in familiarity with a venue and its participants.

Ultimately, to engage with working-class people and places requires a reshaping of thinking about ways to encourage or develop community arts and creativity. It requires some measure on the part of local government towards breaking outside the 'enclosures' that form over time around policymaking spheres, as well as questioning accepted wisdom and existing regulatory practices where appropriate: such as with live music or handling community resistance to the staging of car shows in public spaces; issues to do with insurance, risk management, local traffic plans and waste management – all the bureaucracy that surrounds urban planning, festivals and events. From our work it becomes clearer that cultural planning outside the predictable frames needs action on quotidian themes such as these, which rarely feature in creative city strategies.

Regeneration Redux: Hobart and MONA

Justin O'Connor

Introduction: A chance encounter

June is the cruellest month in Hobart, at least for the tourist industry. The city is the closest Australia gets to those dark Scandinavian winter nights, when the sun is on its way down as you come out of work, and it's dark before you get home. Last year, towards mid-winter, a beam of white light shot up into the grim clouds coming in from the ocean. Ryoji Ikeda's *Spectra* could be seen from all over the city, evening strollers lifting their heads from the rainy pavements to gaze. Tethered to the grounds of the War Memorial on the edge of the city centre, *Spectra* represented a new level of collaboration between the Museum of Old and New Art – MONA – and Hobart City Council. On the Salamanca waterfront, bonfires were lit and huge slabs of meat hauled over fires on machines of medieval torture, nobody noticing the absence of the Health and Safety inspectors, their acquiescence a part of the invisible stitching of the event. On the solstice, a naked swim event was snatched back from the