



Speech by

Hon. M. FOLEY

MEMBER FOR YERONGA

Hansard 30 November 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Regional Arts Development Fund

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeronga—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for The Arts) (9.53 a.m.), by leave: Last Saturday, I opened the 1999 Regional Arts Development Fund conference in Yeppoon. Entitled Re-visioning Regional Arts, this conference on Saturday and Sunday, 27 and 28 November was an historic occasion. It was the first time representatives of local government and regional communities from around Queensland have been brought together to determine how funding is spent on arts and culture at a grassroots level, by regional communities for regional communities.

The strength of Queensland's cultural life lies in its regional diversity. Art is not something solely for the winter palaces of the capital. It is the brilliance of the Mornington Island dancers, the rich tradition of outback bush poetry, and the innovative story-telling of the panels of tiles in the Innisfail River Reflections public art project.

The importance of regional arts funding was reflected in the high turnout of delegates from around Queensland at the conference. One hundred and fifty delegates attended from 50 local council areas in Queensland and 60% of speakers came from regional areas, indicating the level of regional support for this partnership between Arts Queensland and local government councils.

The RADF program was first introduced by Labor in September 1991, and one of the first acts in office of the Beattie Government was to honour this commitment to regional and rural Queensland by increasing RADF spending in 1998-99 from \$1.5m to \$2m. In 1999-2000 this Government again increased RADF funds, this time by \$250,000 to \$2.25m.

RADF has to date funded over 4,000 individual arts and cultural development projects across regional Queensland since 1991. Local government support for RADF is high and continues to rise. Ninety-three per cent of Queensland local councils lodged RADF bids in February 1999 for the 1999-2000 financial year.

The scheme is growing. In 1998-99, 107 local government councils and 14 community councils in far-north Queensland partnered the State Government in funding local and regional arts and cultural projects. In 1999-2000 that grew to 115 local councils, and it is hoped that a drive to include more indigenous community councils will see 18 participating across the State in 2000. This increase in State funds to regional Queensland was met by a 1999-2000 increase in local government funding of \$200,000 to \$872,171.

The Beattie Government's focus on regional development and the creation of jobs in our regional communities is nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in our commitment to those who live in and foster the arts and cultural life of Queensland's regions. Through forums such as this recent Yeppoon conference, this Government is giving those communities a say in their own future growth.
