

media release

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Alice Springs arts leader takes helm of 2008 regional conference

Well-known and respected Alice Springs arts leader, Kieren Sanderson, has taken the helm of Regional Arts Australia's national conference **art at the heart**, the President of Regional Arts Australia, Ms Suzie Haslehurst, has announced.

"This is a giant task, because the conference keeps growing and growing - in 2006 in Mackay there were 800 delegates and it is likely this event, to be held in Alice Springs next October, will be as big or even bigger," Ms Haslehurst says.

"Holding a conference of this size in a remote centre like Alice Springs poses a unique set of challenges. That is why we are delighted that Kieren has agreed to take on the role of conference coordinator.

"She is a highly-respected arts practitioner and has strong links with the broader Alice Springs community. She has a most varied work history that includes tutor at a correctional centre, creative director of the EarthDance Festival in Cairns as well as other festivals, and curator of several exhibitions.

"Until joining our team, she was program manager of Watch this Space in Alice Springs, an artist-run gallery and studio," Ms Haslehurst says.

Kieren says she believes the conference will be extremely positive for Alice Springs. "I have lived in Alice Springs for four years. Living here inspires me endlessly as an artist and member of the community."

"I am really keen to show what Alice Springs can do and to watch it rise to the task. It's a wonderful opportunity for me and for the town," she says.

Her appointment has been welcomed by the Assistant Director, Arts NT, Christine Silvester. "I am thrilled that Kieren is taking the reins. She is a highly-skilled operator and comes with great energy."

art at the heart will run from 3 to 5 October 2008. It is Regional Arts Australia's sixth national conference and will be hosted by the Northern Territory Government through Arts NT.

It is expected to attract delegates from around Australia and the world for three days of talk, art and festivities under the banner **part conference, part festival – all art!**

Regional Arts Australia promotes the development of the arts for the one in three Australians who live in regional, rural and remote parts of the country. It gives a voice to artists and puts culture at the heart of community life across country Australia.

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