

## Reggae hits the spot

Jessica Machin<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Country Arts WA

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Jessica Machin is the Chief Executive Officer of Country Arts WA since May 2008. Jessica has a long history in the arts, particularly areas involving work with children and young people and working with Indigenous Artists and communities. She has been recognised nationally and internationally as a successful advocate and fund raiser for the arts, has founded three independent theatre companies and has produced works for major festivals in Australia and two international collaborations. As Artistic Director at Carclew Youth Arts in Adelaide, she hosted the 16th ASSITEJ World Congress and Performing Arts Festival, one of the world's most important cultural events for young people.

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Country Arts WA is a dynamic and flexible not-for-profit, membership based organisation focused on supporting arts and cultural development across regional Western Australia. The role of Country Arts WA is to enable and empower regional Western Australians to develop and enrich their communities through engagement with culture and the arts. Country Arts WA's *Out There* is a youth arts development program which helps regional communities develop the skills and confidence of young people through the arts. The Regional Youth Arts Development Officer from Country Arts WA and a range of artists works alongside a community for a sustained period of time in the creation of an arts project which is driven by local young people and community members.

This session will explain the key elements of the *Out There* program and how it impacts on the health and wellbeing not only of the individuals that take part but the community. The highly successful Walkabout Boys, which formed as part of the *Out There* residencies in Yiyili, will talk about the impact the program has had on their lives and how they have used music to foster positive relationships with their community and what it means to be leaders within their community and for Indigenous young people across Australia. The Walkabout Boys will be joined by Country Arts WA's Regional Youth Arts Development Officer and artists who have worked on the program to deliver various perspectives on the program and how other regional communities across Australia can use the arts to work with young people from regional communities in addressing health issues.