The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Of Australia

Report by Steve Grieve
2008 Churchill Fellow

An investigation of successful examples of arts + cultural infrastructure in cities which have been part of the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) programme

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Dated 10th August 2009
INTRODUCTION

The European Capital of Culture (ECOC) program has been running since 1985 with the following broad aims:

To open up to the European public particular aspects of the culture of the city, region or country concerned, and
To highlight the richness and diversity of European culture and the features they share as well as to promote greater mutual acquaintance between European citizens (EU Resolution 85/C153/O2)

In addition to arts and cultural programs a major component of the ECOC is the development of infrastructure facilities to house arts and cultural activities. In relation to this component the principal concern is that these facilities should be leave a lasting legacy and most importantly be sustainable. In its 25 year history with 43 host cities and regions the program has amassed a large body of knowledge about the kinds of factors that help to achieve this aim in different contexts.

In 2008 the South Australian government initiated a Regional Centre of Culture Program which is broadly based on the European model and is the first of its kind in Australia. My study tour was therefore designed to learn from the European experience about the kinds of factors that contribute to sustainability to inform the development of such initiatives in Australia.

This report documents the activities undertaken during visits to five of the ECOC host cities and the key lessons learned about the factors that determine success and sustainability of arts and cultural facilities in those sites: Glasgow, Lille, Luxembourg, Stavanger, Thessaloniki.

I am grateful to the Churchill Trust for the fellowship which provided the opportunity to visit a wide range of facilities and meet with a variety of people in a dedicated period of time. A number of people assisted in the identification of sites and key contacts. I am particularly grateful to Robyn Archer for her invaluable advice about the program as a whole, to Brian Debnam for contacts in Scotland and to Mike Rann, Premier of South Australia for introductions and recommendations.

In particular I wish to thank my wife Christine Putland for her wonderful support, great company and insightful analysis throughout our travels.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
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The Project:
This Report documents the results of the study tour comprising visits to five cities which have hosted the European Capital of Culture program to examine significant arts and cultural infrastructure and facilities. It involved meeting with designers, managers of facilities and staff from the ECOC program in each city as well as site visits to key buildings and developments, and analysis of relevant documentation. The purpose was to identify in each case the factors that facilitated or impeded sustainability and determined the success of the infrastructure investment.

Highlights:
In Glasgow Charles Bell provided invaluable insights into the impact of the ECOC on the development of confidence among the performing arts community and the city’s sense of itself as an international arts destination. The long-term legacy of the ECOC is evident in the continued use for inventive arts purposes of previously disused buildings like churches.
In Lille the transformation of the dull industrial urban landscape into a lively environment was striking. The ‘Maisons Folies’ remain as tangible and visible evidence of the year’s activity in recycling and renewing disused buildings for continued use by artists and residents as places where people can meet, create and exchange ideas.
Luxembourg’s focus on creating ‘new, unusual spaces and places’ resulted in the development of some surprising sites; Robert Garcia’s guided tour of the extremely ambitious use of the former steel mill at Esch-Belval for a major visual arts exhibition was a highlight.
In Stavanger the emphasis on the unusual physical geography of the place as well as making links with the history and heritage of Norway demonstrated the enormous scope for creating temporary venues for projects that leave a lasting impression.
In Thessaloniki the mix of contemporary visual arts organizations co-located in The Port precinct provided a rich contrast with the ancient and early 20th century architecture; the tour of the restoration of parts of the city by the heritage architect was a unique and valuable opportunity.

Major lessons:
Each of the sites visited offered a different perspective on the issue of sustainability and had defined success in terms that were appropriate to the cultural, social and economic context. Common features included:
• Strategically located, multiple-use precincts offering mutually reinforcing cultural experiences
• Designs for spaces which are adaptable to different uses over time and flexible for simultaneous multiple purposes
• Inventive use and re-use of existing buildings employing simple, low-tech solutions
• Long-term planning for sustainability and community involvement.

Dissemination and Implementation:
The findings from this investigation will be reported directly to the South Australian Government through my role as Chair of Country Arts SA, and more broadly as President of Regional Arts Australia I will be advocating for a similar initiative Australia wide. I will be presenting at conferences and forums, starting with the Australian Performing Arts Centres Association Conference in NSW in September 2009.
FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

It was difficult to choose just 5 cities from the possible 43 which have hosted the ECOC over 25 years as each is unique to its cultural, geographical, social and political context. The final selection was based on a review of available published reports and evaluations of the ECOC (prepared by Palmer-Rae Associates for the European Commission, 2004) and through consultation with Robyn Archer who for a time had directed the Liverpool 2008 ECOC. It was important to include facilities that had been developed over a range of time periods to gauge how the legacy changed over time. I started with Glasgow 1990 which has long been regarded as one of the most successful ECOCs and where the facilities developed at the time have continued to provide valuable indicators of success and failure for other programs. Lille 2004 and Luxembourg 1995 and 2007 are also regarded as success stories in their different contexts. Although there were mixed messages about Thessaloniki (whether or not it was successful) I was attracted by reports that that city had embarked upon an extensive program of infrastructure development. Stavanger 2008 was of interest for a number of different reasons. It was the most recently concluded ECOC (with Liverpool) and it was in a small regional city which was relevant to the South Australian program.

Saturday 25th April – Saturday 2nd May 2009
Glasgow, Scotland
Centre for Contemporary Art
Òran Mór
Tramway
The Arches
Citizens Theatre
Glasgow School of Arts
**Key contacts:**
Charles Bell, Arts Manager
Culture and Sport Glasgow, charles.bell@csglasgow.org
Kim McPhie, House Manager, Tramway, kim.mcphie@csglasgow.org

Monday 4th May - Saturday 9th May 2009
Lille, France
Tri Postal
Maison Folie Wazemmes
Maison Folie Moulins
La Gare Saint Sauveur
La Piscine at Robaix
Musee des Beaux Arts
**Key contacts:**
Lucie Pollet lucie.pollet@lille3000.com,
Didier Fusillier Director Liille 3000 didier.fusillier@lille3000.com

Sunday 10th May – Sunday 17th May 2009
Luxembourg
Rotondes 1 & 2
Casino Luxembourg - Forum d’art contemporain
Belval Steelworks
Musee National d’histoire et d’art Luxembourg
Musée d’Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Mudam Luxembourg
Musée d’histoire de la Ville de Luxembourg
**Key contact:**
Robert Garcia > Directeur Luxembourg2007 roga@rotondes.lu
Monday 18th May – Saturday 23rd May 2009

**Stavanger, Norway**
- The Science Factory at Sandnes
- Erland Braein at Sandnes
- Grete Kvinnesland – Architect for the Norwegian Wood Project
- Stavanger Petroleum Museum

**Key contacts:**
- Mary Miller Director Stavanger 2008 [mary.miller@stavanger2008.no](mailto:mary.miller@stavanger2008.no)
- Erland Braein, Cultural Manager, Sandnes Kommune Kultur [erland.braein@sandnes.kommune.no](mailto:erland.braein@sandnes.kommune.no)

Monday 25th May – Monday 1st June 2009

**Thessaloniki, Greece**
- Archeological Museum
- Ano Poli
- Telloglio Museum
- Ladadika
- Byzantine Museum
- White Tower
- Vergina
- Rotunda
- Contemporary Art Museum
- Cinema Museum

**Key Contacts:**
- Mr Panayiotis Psomiadis, Prefect of Thessaloniki [m.vergoti@nath.gr](mailto:m.vergoti@nath.gr)
- Mr Vassilios Papageorgopoulos, Mayor of Thessaloniki [mayorsal@otenet.gr](mailto:mayorsal@otenet.gr)
- Miltos Mavromatis, Architect 4 Lisiou St, N Krini, Thessaloniki
- Panayiotis Mpikas, Curator, Teloglion Foundation of Arts [mpikasp@yahoo.com](mailto:mpikasp@yahoo.com)
Glasgow, Scotland

Glasgow was the host ECOC in 1990 and developed a number of standout facilities as part of the program. Some have stood the test of time and have not only survived but also been enhanced and become more successful (Tramway is one), while others have taken on new functions (Arches) to ensure survival.

Tramway

The building began life in 1893 as the Coplawhill tram shed and, in the early years of the twentieth century, it served as the city’s main tram terminus, depot and factory. Following the demise of the trams in Glasgow in the early 1960s, the building was transformed into the Museum of Transport. In 1986, the Museum of Transport was relocated. Consequently, the vacant building faced demolition until plans were developed during the late 1980s in preparation for Glasgow’s year as ECOC in 1990.

Tramway was launched as a direct result of the search for a venue that had the capacity to house what would be, in 1988, the only UK performances of Peter Brook’s Mahabharata. The scale of the building (a clear height of approximately 8 metres to the bottom chord of the roof trusses) and the flexibility offered by its industrial architecture, meant that the building was well placed to house such an important production. In 1989, the British sculptor Andy Goldsworthy staged his now internationally renowned project Snowballs in Summer in what would become Tramway’s principal gallery space.

This early program was consolidated during 1990 with the return of Peter Brook, and an international performing arts program under the direction of the ECOC 1990 Director Bob Palmer. The Independent noted that ‘The brightest legacy of Glasgow’s year as City of Culture is surely the survival of Tramway’.

From 1990, Tramway has given equal focus to work by international as well as Scottish based artists. Both the performing and visual arts programs have commissioned new work and created opportunities for local artists to present their work within an international context.

Following a further upgrade in late 90’s the venue re-opened in June 2000 with improved and better-equipped theatre and exhibition spaces and – in the newly opened ‘stable’ spaces on the first floor (originally used as stables for the tram horses) – a café bar and residency, rehearsal and workshop spaces.

In 2003 a ‘sanctuary’ garden was established at the rear of the building. It incorporates sculptures and is used arts events and workshops.

Tramway has three main arts spaces:

Tramway 1 – a flexible flat floor performance space measuring approximately 30 X 40 metres. It seats up to 600 (400 flexible + 200 fixed seats on an upper level balcony). This space is particularly interesting because of the retention of a vast masonry free-standing wall. This wall was constructed as part of Peter Brook’s 1988 production of Mahabharata and is now deemed to be ‘sacred’ (even untouchable?). Fortunately it forms an excellent backdrop to the most often used ‘acting area’. Two side walls (also free-standing masonry) provide masking to the ‘wings’. The major draw back to a venue like this is that while it provides for great flexibility production companies...
are often faced with significant ‘set-up’ costs – especially when the boundaries are pushed.

Tramway 2 – a vast exhibition space of approximately 1,030 square metres with a height of 8 metres. The space retains some of the original tramway features such as tram tracks as an appropriate reminder of its former use. These tracks were given a gold leaf treatment in a recent exhibition – the gold leaf has been left as a reminder of a more recent history. These historic overlays give the building an unusual richness – a living palimpsest. The exhibition at the time of my visit featured a variety of created spaces within the gallery. It gave an indication that the gallery could take on vastly different guises for each exhibition.

Tramway 4 (it is unclear what happened to Tramway 3) is a smaller flat-floor flexible performance space (seating around 100). It has a sprung floor and measures 8 X 25 metres with a low lighting grid (4.4 metres high). This intimate theatre is notable for the unusually deep stage which could be used to great effect.

Tramway also has a range of ongoing residents in the building including its own youth group, Junction 25, a creative outlet for teenagers aged 13-17, driven totally by the young people themselves; and Time for Art, a practical art workshop for women over 55.

At the time of my visit alterations were being carried out to house the new headquarters for Scottish Ballet, in a development of the remaining derelict parts of the building.

Charles Bell, Arts Manager, Culture and Sport Glasgow, feels that Glasgow has an embarrassment of riches in terms of performing arts venues. It also has the greatest concentration of professional companies (200 in total across the art forms). According to Charles Bell, Glasgow has generated confident artists that have who have remained in Glasgow which has established Glasgow as the Arts Capital of Scotland.

The Arches

Situated under Central Station, this venue was created for the 1990 ECOC as a visual arts exhibition gallery. According to Charles Bell, Arts Manager, Culture and Sport Glasgow there was considerable debate at the time concerning the high costs associated and the relatively poor attendances (it should be noted that an entrance fee of ten pounds was charged). Following the 1990 ECOC a performance group established itself. The venue is now a place for hire and is extremely successful as a night club.

The Arches is an excellent example of creative adaptive re-use of a building that would have otherwise been left to deteriorate. The venue consists of seven bays each featuring barrel vaulted brick ceilings. One of the bays contains a small performance space (seating around 150) while the rest are used as flat floor venues either individually or together depending on the size of the event.

Centre for Contemporary Art

Located close to the Macintosh designed Glasgow School of Arts, the CCA has a range of excellent and flexible spaces and facilities. This is another example of adaptive re-use of a heritage listed building. It contains a flexible foyer cum shopfront exhibition space (called CCA 1) which leads to a wonderful two-storey high gallery-bar (Tempus Café). This space is formed by the facades of surrounding buildings that have been retained to ensure that the rich history of the place is
permanently featured. It has acoustic panels to enhance sound for
music performances.
Two gallery spaces (CCA 2 and CCA 3) are often used in conjunction
with CCA 1. Although CCA 4 is usually set up and used as a cinema it
is a completely flexible space. The screen and seating can be removed
and the space used as a gallery (the lighting is appropriate for visual
arts exhibitions). The final space CCA 5 has a sprung floor to provide
for dance and theatre performance. It is also an intimate, modern,
acoustic space with sound studio quality acoustics.

The CCA is remarkable for its diversity of spaces and facilities and the
decision to have a multipurpose space at the front is particularly clever.
As a reception area, a bookshop and a gallery this space is always
buzzing with activity which gives the whole facility a liveliness often
missing from visual arts venues. Its range of intimate but very flexible
and well equipped spaces ensure a broad appeal to performers and
exhibitors.

Óran Mór
There are a number of former churches in Glasgow that are now being
used for arts and/or cultural purposes. One of the most successful is
Óran Mór, in Byres Road. Meaning the ‘great melody of life’ or ‘big
song’, Oran Mor is a cultural centre and meeting place with two bars,
two restaurants, a nightclub and a private event space.

Óran Mór’s lunchtime theatre programme, ‘A Play, A Pie and A Pint’
(all three for £10!), runs twice a year during spring and autumn. Plays
by some of Scotland’s best-known playwrights dovetail with works
by emerging talent, and feature some of Scotland’s best known stars
(Robbie Coltrane for instance). Performances last approximately 50
minutes, Monday to Saturday, and the ticket price includes a pie and a
pint.

I was fortunate to attend a promenade performance to a packed house
celebrating the 150th production at Oran Mor.

The Glasgow Royal Concert Hall
The Glasgow Royal Concert Hall (with seating for 2,475) opened in
1990 and was the largest facility developed as part of the ECOC. It is
a highly flexible – suitable for a range of uses including music events,
exhibitions, meetings and conferences. It is a well used venue annually
holding 400 concerts and over 1,000 corporate events.

The GRCH is operated by Glasgow’s Concert Halls, which also
manages Glasgow’s City Halls and the Old Fruitmarket City Halls
has a traditional shoebox style auditorium (renowned for its excellent
acoustics) with raked seating and a balcony. It accommodates up to
1,036 people and the stage can accommodate an orchestra of over 90
and a choir of up to 110. The Old Fruitmarket (located next to City Halls)
can hold 1,600 people standing, 450 cabaret style (plus 300 standing)
or 550 theatre style (plus 300 standing).

The management of these three separate facilities by one entity allows
for coordinated programming and has, according to Charles Bell,
contributed to Glasgow being named UNESCO City of Music in August
2008.

Glasgow is home to four of the five National Companies (including
Scottish Opera and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra) alongside
other national organisations including the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, BBC Scotland, National Youth Orchestra of Scotland, Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (RSAMD) and the Scottish ensemble.

**Lille, France**

Lille was the host ECOC in 2004 and developed a highly innovative and ambitious program which is generally regarded as being very successful. Its goals were expressed in terms of an expansive vision of transforming the dull industrial city landscape. I have selected five facilities that were created as part of Lille 2004.

**Tri Postal**

This is a major contemporary arts facility in a former mail sorting facility. It is centrally located adjacent to Lille’s main railway station and shopping precinct. The building has approximately 6,000 square metres of floor area over three main levels. Tri Postal was fortunately saved from demolition and has now developed an international reputation in contemporary art and creativity.

The building renovation was minimal. It was stripped of evidence of its former use and is presented as a series of ‘raw’ industrial spaces. A large bar area is prominent at ground level which, at the time of my visit, allowed direct access to the exhibition space. Lucie Pollet, assistant to the Lille 2004 Director, described Tri Postal as “an artspace for hire”. She explained further that while the building had no collections or art of its own it had an open exhibition policy. The exhibition program is driven by artists wishing to exhibit rather than management sourcing exhibitions. It is also an excellent venue for festivals such as the Voix Magnétiques Festival, the Chants Mécaniques and Audioframes festivals – which incorporated exhibitions, concerts, initiation sessions about new musical forms plus machines to listen to.

In addition to these festivals, artists in residence are welcomed for periods of work in situ.

**Maisons Folie**

An important development as part of Lille 2004 was the establishment of twelve ‘Maisons Folie’. These are modest arts facilities in communities that were seen to be lacking in cultural amenity. While the majority of the ‘Maisons Folie’ were located in nearby regions two (which I visited) were in suburban Lille. These were Maison Folie Wazemmes and Maison Folie Moulins.

“The idea for Maisons Folie sprang from the desire of the municipality to work differently by involving the population. This led to the creation of quite modest facilities in the region and in the suburbs rather than the centre, and in converted spaces — locations that already had a history so that inhabitants would take to them fairly quickly”.

Jean-Baptiste Haquette, Maison Folie Moulins Director

**Maison Folie Wazemmes**

The former Leclercq factory, a 19th century textile mill closed in 1990, is composed of two main buildings, separated by an alley. Its conversion (designed by Architects NOX/Lars Spuybroek collaborating with Francois Andrieux) includes the construction of a new theatre, the
creation of a new street and a new square. The theatre is distinctive as it is ‘wrapped’ with a stainless steel mesh structure giving the amorphous forms a translucent quality. Lighting from behind the mesh gives a spectacular effect and a sense of difference and excitement. To quote the Architect Lars Spuybroek:

“This glowing, almost holographic dress incorporates all the pulsations of art and life. The articulation of the façade is generated through a continuous variation and modulation of the vertical tectonics of the façade of the old factory: bending vertical lines in a complex pattern that produce a whole range of effects when walking or driving by, enhanced by the position of the sun.”

While the architecture in this instance is very arresting and attention grabbing the building (in particular the stainless steel mesh) was showing signs of deterioration – possibly from vandalism. This lack of robustness raises an important issue in relation to sustainability. The designer’s wish to ‘push the envelope’ has to be tempered by the use of sensible, long life and low maintenance materials.

**Maison Folie Moulins**

Another example of adaptive re-use, this facility is housed in a former 18th century brewery and malthouse and is made up of several main buildings built around two inner courtyards. The Flemish architecture has been well restored and cleverly adapted to provide an excellent community focal point and meeting place. There is a small theatre (seating about 100) which is frequently used as a night-club, a gallery and workshops for artists-in-residence.

Maison Folie Moulins is in a relatively depressed neighbourhood (an explicit aim of Lille 2004 was to place much needed facilities in ‘culturally deprived’ areas).

**La Gare Saint Sauveur**

Formerly a railway station built in 1858 it is now a multifaceted arts facility containing meeting places, café restaurant, theatre space (doubling as a cinema) and outdoor areas for community uses such as fares, games (hopscotch and soccer) and markets. The facility was designed by Franklin Azzi Architecture, and covers approximately 11,000 square metres and was completed within the budget of 5.7 million euros ($10M).

La Gare Saint Sauveur has all of the ingredients for sustainability – a good mix of venues that will support different art forms, generally low-tech infrastructure which should keep overheads down and an attractive and from observation a well patronized bar/café/restaurant facility that should continue to provide a healthy income stream.

**La Piscine Musée d’Art et d’Industrie at Robaix**

Situated 12km northeast of Lille-La Piscine is an excellent and extreme example of adaptive re-use of a building. In this case an Art Deco municipal swimming pool (built 1927-32) has been converted to for use as a museum that showcases fine arts, applied arts and sculpture in a delightfully watery environment. The former use is celebrated throughout this wonderful facility. Highlights include the inventive use of the former showers and changing cubicles (without destroying their integrity) and the incorporation of the former plant equipment (used for
filtration and water heating) in the retail sales area.

An important lesson here is that a well liked community facility has been given new relevance with the chance of building a new following. It is also important to acknowledge that appropriate resources were allocated to the project so that the finishes and standard of construction are of a high standard. This will assist the facility to be sustainable by keeping maintenance costs down.

Luxembourg

Luxembourg has hosted the ECOC on two occasions 1995 and 2007. Investment in arts and cultural infrastructure had begun in 1995 and was continued in the lead up to Luxembourg 2007. Across the greater region of Luxembourg 2007 invested in ‘new, unusual spaces and places’ – including many former industrial sites – which become arenas of production, of creation and of broadcasting. These places were quickly adopted by the public and are likely to have a lasting impact. For example Rotunda 2 is the first cultural space in Luxembourg completely dedicated to young audiences, and it welcomed audiences of approximately 60,000 during 2007. A number of large spaces for temporary exhibitions also opened their doors: Rotunda 1 with its four exhibitions of international contemporary art, the former Steelworks of Dudelange (‘Retour de Babel’ on history of migration) and the Esch-Belval event ‘All We Need’ on the advent of globalization.

Esch-Belval

Perhaps the most adventurous was the use of the former steel mill at Esch-Belval for a major visual arts exhibition ‘All We Need’. While the use of the building in 2007 has not yet led to the building’s renovation plans are in place and the project has solid support.

The population of the City of Luxembourg expands and contracts by approximately 100,000 people each day as workers travel in and out from nearby Belgium, France and Germany. Esch-Belval is to be the location of a major new population centre incorporating a new university, major corporate businesses and cultural facilities.

Part of the former steel mill will be adapted for use as a major contemporary art space (rivaling the scale of London’s Tate Modern).

Rotunda 2

This former railway building is now being restored for use as a permanent performing arts and cultural space. At the time of my visit the restoration works were about half finished. The Rotunda will be incorporated in a major new upgrade of the adjacent main railway station. Rotunda 1 is still in the same state of disrepair as it was when used during 2007 for the abovementioned exhibitions. It is expected that it too will be restored following the completion of the works to Rotunda 2.

Casino Luxembourg – Forum d’art contemporain

This building has a rich and interesting history as noted in the gallery’s information booklet:

The ‘Casino Bourgeois’ was built in a central area of the capital by architects Pierre and Paul Funck in the years 1880 to 1882. It soon became a cultural and social hotspot in the city. In addition to the
gaming rooms, it also had a reading room and a restaurant. Its vast halls were used for all kinds of functions, including lectures, masked balls, plays and cabaret shows, concerts and the ‘salons’ of the Cercle Artistique, and many societies held their meetings there too. The first highlight to this activity came when Franz Liszt made his last public appearance on 19 July, 1886. Among the other landmark events in its history, we may further mention the presence of Winston Churchill in the Great Hall on 15 July, 1946. While the ‘Société du Casino Bourgeois’ was wound down in 1959 it was only during the preparation of a programme for ‘Luxembourg, European Cultural Capital 1995’ that the wish developed to convert the old Casino Bourgeois into an exhibition space. The conversion to a gallery presented the architect Urs Raussmüller with a challenge that is not uncommon in my own experience. While the size and height of the spaces were well suited for exhibitions the walls provided little continuous hanging space due to doors and windows. The solution was to build new walls within that provide sufficient height for hanging without losing the sense of the original spaces. Other Museums and Galleries visited in Luxembourg included

**Musee National d’histoire et d’art Luxembourg**

**Musée d’Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Mudam Luxembourg**

**Musee d’histoire de la Ville de Luxembourg**

Each of these fine contemporary museums were designed to blend with and acknowledge the important history of the place. Each of these were built on important historic sites and each succeeded in respecting the past without compromising the contemporary uses.

**Stavanger, Norway**

This program in 2008 placed sustainability at the forefront as Mary Miller, Director Stavanger 2008 explained:

“The mission was to create an Open Port – a state of mind where curiosity, openness, tolerance and the fearless sharing of ideas would flourish for the future, where Stavanger Region would take its place with confidence as a truly European Capital for artistic collaboration and as a laboratory for creativity between nations. The long-term was critical – we wanted to build a powerful platform for posterity.”

So while earlier ECOCs focused on the creation of infrastructure and city renewal (particularly the post industrial cities such as Glasgow and Lille) Stavanger focused firmly on culture which would, it was hoped, create the environment in which new facilities would be developed.

It is too early yet to be able to measure the outcomes. It was however undoubtedly the case that Stavanger 2008 developed and used new and unusual venues for projects and events. It also linked projects to the physical geography of the place as well as making links with the history and heritage of the city and the region.
The use of unusual places or using familiar places in unusual ways has a particular interest for me following years of involvement in the Adelaide Fringe and Festival.

Vitenfabrikkene* (The Science Factory) at Sandnes
This was one of the few conventional infrastructure projects associated with the Stavanger ECOC. An excellent museum, it opened in May 2008 following an architectural design competition in 2003.

The museum has extensive collections of agricultural implements, which document technological developments in Norwegian agriculture in the 1900s in particular. Documentation of the mechanised and mechanical implement culture in Norwegian agriculture is one of the museum’s main tasks.

The museum has more than 100,000 photos in various collections. The largest collections are part of the industrial archive.

It includes a new café, exciting exhibitions and a planetarium, one of 6 in the world.

This facility has a strong youth and education focus which are both important strengths leading to sustainable outcomes through long-term audience development.

Former Cinema at Sandnes
This interesting cinema building built during the Second World War is undergoing refurbishment to create an extensive visual arts exhibition space and a refit of the Art Deco auditorium. The arts community of Sandnes has been working towards this refurbishment project for several years. According to Erland Braein, Cultural Manager of the Sandnes Kommune, there has been a significant “mind shift” towards support for arts and cultural projects following the success of Stavanger 2008. Braein felt that this “shift” is a significant legacy of the ECOC.

Norwegian Wood
Norwegian Wood was the name of a significant architectural project that was part of Stavanger 2008. It was aimed at raising the awareness of the intrinsic values of the use of timber in construction while simultaneously celebrating the use of timber in Norwegian buildings. Stavanger is proud of its traditional timber buildings and is generally regarded as being “the timber building capital of the world” according to Mary Miller. The project was designed to lead the Norwegian building industry in a more sustainable direction.

I met with Grete Kvinnesland, an architect and the project manager for Norwegian Wood. She explained that several projects were developed as exemplars to demonstrate the excellent qualities of timber construction – particularly in terms of energy efficiency and the low carbon footprint attributable to timber projects. These included the Lanternen Open-air Stage in Sandnes and the Preikestolen Mountain Lodge by Architects Helen & Hard Arkitektfirma AS. This project is particularly notable for its careful and well resolved relationship with its site and its efficient structural design which tests the limits of both the geometry and structural capacity of the materials.
Norwegian Wood sought to bring together several basic tenets of sustainability:

- Respect for heritage and history
- Maintenance of traditional building methods
- Respect for traditional building materials
- Renewable materials
- Low carbon footprint.

Thessaloniki, Greece

Thessaloniki was Greece’s second ECOC, following Athens in 1985. Thessaloniki is the second largest city in Greece with a population of a little more than a million. This coastal city has a rich history having been founded in 315 BC. Today the city is a mixture of the worst that the twentieth century offered (street upon street of eight storey apartment buildings), great Byzantine buildings and fortifications, remnant late 19th century industrial buildings (particularly at the port) and large pockets of traditional low rise housing (particularly in the precinct of Ano Poli).

Leading up to the 1997 ECOC the City recognized opportunities to raise the profile of Thessaloniki, enhance civic pride, improve social cohesion and develop arts infrastructure and opportunities for artists.

Infrastructure projects focused on three main areas – the Port, Ladadika (one of a few districts of the inner city not destroyed in a catastrophic fire in 1917) and Ano Poli.

I was accompanied for two days by Meltos Mavromatis the architect responsible for much of the restoration work in Ano Poli and Ladadika. Largely through his efforts Ladadika is a vibrant, cohesive precinct with a mix of cultural institutions, galleries, restaurants and entertainment facilities.

The suburb of Ano Poli is located on higher ground immediately behind the city centre. The traditional housing stock is progressively being restored where feasible (many of the buildings have been neglected for long periods and suffered significant structural damage). This is augmented by careful and compatible infill development – mainly housing built using traditional materials and details on an intricate web of streets, laneways and walkways. The result is a vibrant and dense neighbourhood that is quickly developing into one of the most sought after places to live in Thessaloniki.

The Port

Several disused warehouses at the Port were adapted for use as arts facilities as part of the ECOC. This has created a vibrant arts precinct consisting of facilities for Cinema, Visual Arts, Drama and Photography. The precinct is further enriched by the development of an excellent restaurant/bar/function business in one of the larger warehouses. The sustainability of this precinct is underpinned by the wonderful maritime location which will continue to be a major attraction in its own right. Two of the facilities were of particular interest:
**Thessaloniki Centre of Contemporary Art**
A two storey former warehouses that have been carefully adapted to house several excellent gallery spaces. The Centre for Contemporary Art is very active within the artistic community and is involved collaboratively with artists. It is not merely a place for exhibition (although an important aspect) but a nurturer and an active enabler of art practice. I saw this as an important contributor to the Centre's long term viability and sustainability. It is very much a place that fosters the visual arts community in Thessaloniki.

A strong connection with a community is an important contributor to sustainability.

**The Thessaloniki Cinema Museum**
This museum is housed in another one of the former warehouses at the Port. The Thessaloniki Cinema Museum was founded in 1997 as part of the ECOC. This initiative coincided with the worldwide commemoration of the centenary of Cinematography. The Museum operates under the supervision of the Greek Ministry of Culture and is an independent part of the Thessaloniki International Film Festival. This festival has an excellent reputation and continues to grow in importance which should ensure its long-term viability.

According to its charter, the Thessaloniki Museum of Cinema exists to collect, preserve and display cinematographic artefacts in Greece. For that purpose, the museum organizes educational and research programs in collaboration with other museums to study and document any artefacts in some way related to cinema.

Thessaloniki has a wealth of outstanding museums and galleries. Of particular note are the Archeological Museum, Byzantine Museum and the outstanding Vergina Museum inside the Great Tumulus which contains the tomb of Philip II, Alexander the Great's father.
CONCLUSIONS

The sites visited on this tour were intentionally diverse in order to capture a range of experiences in context. As a result the factors identified as relevant to overall success and sustainability were also extremely varied and dependent on issues such as political will, resources available and existing levels of infrastructure. There were a series of characteristics that emerged as influential in the assessment of the legacy of the facilities developed as part of or following the ECOC year, however, which can be summarised as follows:

**Multi–use** - facilities that incorporated a range of uses (gallery + cafe + workshops for instance) were generally found to be busier, more popular places.

**Co-location** in a precinct of different arts organisations with different hours of use was beneficial to a precinct.

**Adaptable** facilities – this is very important in terms of long term sustainability for it allows for a complete change of use of a building or spaces within a building. Qualities that contribute to adaptability include generosity of space (particularly height), column free space and simple structural building systems and appropriate services infrastructure.

**Creative**, adaptive re-use of existing (often heritage) buildings for the arts has been invaluable to many communities by maintaining linkages with the past while celebrating the present and mapping the future.

Use of sustainable **simple technologies** – high tech facilities (particularly community facilities) are never ‘future proof’, often require trained and/or specialist staff for operations and maintenance, replacement parts can be expensive and difficult to procure quickly - this also relates to the ‘keep it simple’ principle of design.

**Low recurrent costs** – sound energy strategies, careful planning to minimize inescapable staff numbers, use of low maintenance materials

**Accessibility** - code compliance in Australia ensures that this is catered for appropriately

**Appropriate architecture** that is exciting and interesting has a direct bearing on sustainability in the long term - community pride engenders better maintenance regimes and continued development

**Engaged communities** - well managed honest community consultation can lead to raising the sense of community ownership.

The importance of **adequate budgets** for both capital development and operating costs cannot be over-emphasised

Use of **robust materials** - preferably locally sourced

Careful and **long term planning** - most of the European examples were planned several years in advance

**Consultation** with facilities management and end users

Preparation of sound **business plans** - economic sustainability is fundamental to the long term success of all enterprises.

There are a range of opportunities for dissemination of this information including:

The findings from this investigation will be reported directly to the South Australian Government through my role as Chair of Country Arts SA, and more broadly as President of Regional Arts Australia I will be advocating for a similar initiative Australia wide. In addition I will be presenting at conferences and forums, starting with the Australian Performing Arts Centres Association Conference in NSW in September 2009.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1
That the Australian Government conducts a feasibility assessment of the introduction of a Regional Centre of Culture programme based on the European Capital of Culture model.

Recommendation 2
Such a program should prioritise the following:

- Ensuring adequate political support from the host regions to drive the program and provide adequate resources

- Incorporate sufficient lead time for consultation, community engagement and the preparation of comprehensive briefing documents

- Incorporate achievable and explicit sustainability goals in terms of Ecologically Sound Design (ESD) principles and long term operation and use of the facilities

- Recognise the valuable role of arts and cultural development in regeneration and revitalisation of communities by adaptive reuse of sites and celebrating local characteristics

- Low-tech solutions which address the needs of communities and are more readily sustained.