



*dealing with complexity - the pathway and gateway can be one and the same*

6th December, 2005

**Councillor Sonia Phillips Mayor, Baulkham Hills Shire Council**

**Dear Sonya,**

Thank you for visiting my studio in the Vale and spending time listening and sharing thoughts about recent artwork, its context and its relationship to the North Ward.

I appreciate your acknowledgment of my passion for creative exchange, history in cultural mapping and the resilience of my work in this community.

Over the past few years I have applied and tested the tools for a less adversarial, integrative cultural structure (which includes words and numbers) around Australia. In a modified form it was applied within the Chile Cultural Platform and Creative Medicine Exchange program.

I would like to follow through with you the idea that I might be in a unique position to effectively supplement Council's Cultural Planning process. As you said on your recent visit, I have an extensive cultural knowledge which may be helpful.

Mindful that it is not normal procedure, I am asking whether Council would consider creating a trial position for me to supplement the work of your Cultural Planner.

For Council to be able to draw maximum benefit from my skills, knowledge and experience, I would be keen to work within a team on a contract basis and share my professional abilities.

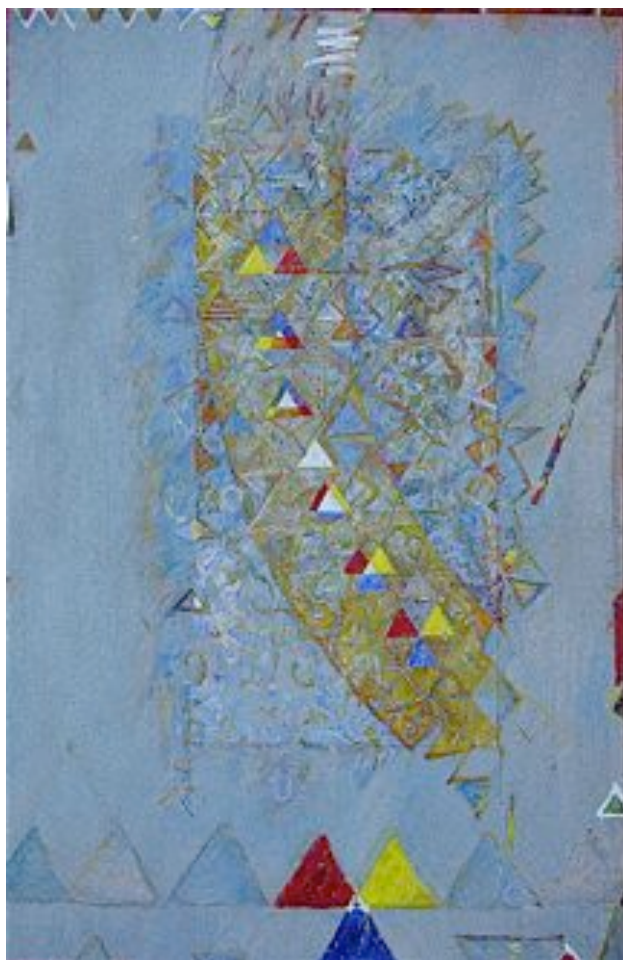
I am looking forward to an opportunity to discuss this proposal with you in more detail.

Yours Sincerely,

Geoff Buchan

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## Change is immutable.

Active communication can generate options and ease the trauma of inevitable transition in a non-adversarial way.

This activity is an often unclaimed pervasive role for artists in modern society.

The painting is a story without words.  
It shows a pattern of 3▲'s changing  
from a closed to  
an open arrangement.

Imagine such a change in societal terms.  
These 3 ▲'s help picture an interactivity towards  
- innovation and creativity and participation.

The transition symbolizes  
an involving and eclipsing and evolving  
shift away from  
a segmented, either/or hierarchical ▲ emphasis.

This is a visual framework for the corporate cultural mapping and community cultural processes and is used within Creative Medicine as a non-adversarial approach to problem solving.

The painting can be a generative public engagement trigger for exploring open systems.

*Open Systems (acrylic on canvas 1300 x 1800)*

The following is a simply complex explanation of an interrelationship between *four paintings* and a cultural development opportunity in the North Ward of Baulkham Hills Shire, 1 hour north west of Sydney.

The painting - *Open Systems* helps to visualize the cultural structural change systems referred to below:

In summing up the 1994 STRATEGIC PLANNING DAY WORKSHOP at Sydney Town Hall,  
**"Local Government. Arts and Cultural Development in NSW for the 90s and Beyond"**  
keynote speaker Barbara Leparni, referred to the *Eastbend 4 Mechanisms for Integrated Planning*.

*Report Extract.....*

....."Barbara concluded by acknowledging the work of **Geoff Buchan**

**The idea of the visual emphasis** - not so much relying on text base means of communication but how to make communication more interactive how to move from consultation to participation. Consultation, she suggested, is a way of selling an already decided strategy to a group of people. The only way they can empower themselves is to oppose your strategy. What you need is participation not consultation.

**The concept of community action research teams** - so that research becomes linked to community action rather than a bunch of experts beaver away in one room and then taking those result to the decision makers who then sell it to the community.

**The concept of cultural agency roles** - how people like ourselves become umbrella agents or social entrepreneurs. So mixed with business entrepreneurs one of the most important group of people we need to develop in our system are social entrepreneurs.

**Learning precinct strategies** - linking education, arts, employment in cooperative regional development fabrics.

..... by saying that, the kind of strategies discussed today are a fundamental part of increasing the sophistication of that regional leadership away from the old concentration on roads and bridges to the point where local government can truly respond to its aspirations to be the voice of people at the local level. So long as it only concentrates on physical infrastructure and protecting real estate values, it cannot fulfill this role.

One of the main voices by which local government will be able to move out of the strictures of that historic role is its engagement with arts and cultural strategy."

### ***The Second Painting***

#### ***"No Place to Hide"***

*acrylic on canvas 1800 x 1350*

is a painting  
visualizing the web  
of  
connection  
&  
exchange  
possible  
in the  
learning precinct



**Creative Medicine** is a collaborative project between the painter Geoff Buchan and the filmmaker and journalist Trudi Latour. It explores the roles of artist and the media, and links issues at the nexus of health and mental health within our socio-political context.

It is about the  
simply complex  
mesh of life  
(the big  
within small  
within.....)

We put forward the view that human creativity is our most promising universal problem-solving tool. Working within the framework of participative management, we strive towards community engagement. Within this open system approach we envisage further long-term collaboration with artists, scientists, medical practitioners, health, educational and government agencies.

Trialling interdisciplinary creativity as a healing method in itself, we aim to shape a set of strategic and artistic tools that can be employed by the individual, the community, business and government





***“Three Fauves  
talking about  
the future of  
Maroota Forest.”***

This work relates to a proposal put forward in the early nineties to create an integrated Rock Art and Flora Park in Maroota Forest, submitted in writing and presented to a forum at the former Darug Aboriginal Land Council. In this one geological area are the largest galleries of Rock Art near Sydney, and has more genera of flora than anywhere else in the world [quote Sir John Proud in Australian Geographic].



A test case educational visitation concept, with practical examples relating to the above was developed by myself with the Sydney Children's Museum, Maroota Public School and Eastbend.

It was portrayed in the Totally Wild Program, Channel 10.

CES Consultant Paul Bacon wrote a multi-heritage visitation employment strategy, to be based at the "Slab Hut" on Haerses Road. The funding for facilities, de-mountable offices and integrated training schemes were

approved but immediately reversed without trace through a change of Government.

The enormous viability of this heritage industry potential reemerged for me recently when I heard Geraldine Doogue on ABC Radio National three weeks ago. Geraldine produced a program about the *Eden Project* in an abandoned quarry in Cornwall. It now has two huge Flora domes (biomes) and is the 5th largest paying visitor site in the UK.

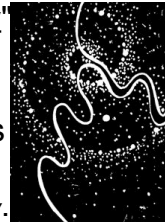
Googled on the Web, it says that it was established in 1998 as an educational charity through a Millennium Grant. The website states "and in our first year of trading put around £150 million of additional revenue into the local economy"

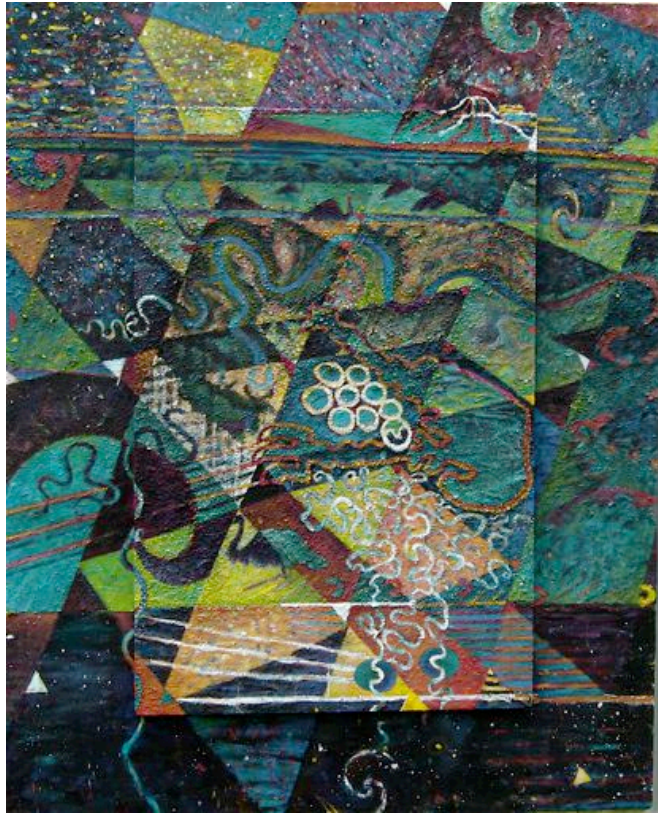
It was just a quarry site, imagine what Maroota could become with its unique package of endemic flora, springs, geology, colonial history, rock art galleries and proximity to Sydney.

*This is an evolving Eastbend dream and an open opportunity.*



The painting *Yellow Holes?* was presented before BHSC Mayor Geoff Brooke-Cowden at a Council meeting to show a similar proposal to the *Eden Project* with Eastbend as an integrated sand mining and water catchment education and visitation strategy.





The Fourth Painting

*"Emu protecting Eggs - are we playing God with fertility?"*

The story of seeing the Maroota landscape as having only one overriding industrial option is the subject explored in this complex painting.

It is about the Precautionary Principle, and visualizes the flow of life as essentially resonating through a clutch of options. The emu image is hanging on by a claw, and guarding the continuum of life in a clutch of eggs as sand mining eliminates the unique high aquifers around it.

This one exclusive industry (a sand mining egg) argues it is taking precautions by mining in an ecologically sustainable way, leaving options for a viable future. Metaphorically illustrated is their precaution, two remaining eggs. To me there is no precaution, it is a sustainability fiction. They could be both male or both female, meaning the creativity, the potency, and the flow of life could be expunged.

*Shifting lines of fiction? 1020x1830 Acrylic on paper on board*

The painting is about lines of approach transforming from a closed to an open arrangement.

Can we open up the approach to sand mining at Maroota from the closed system to a win/win/win situation, like in the Eden project?

Can the public access some of the \$50 mill+ Sect 94 levy to activate a parallel strategy to the Eden Model in a sister/mentor venture?

At a mediation hearing prior to the Diamond/ Dixon Sands/DUAP Court Case for which the *Emu and Eggs painting* was created, mediator Trevor Morling QC said it was all here... (clause 3.8.3 Sect 94 ) "why don't you, Dixon Sands and Dept of Planning get together with Mr Buchan and sort this out?". I responded, also submitting a non-adversarial proposal to the BHSC Rural Land Study which may resource a Maroota/ Eden Model.

There are three lines opening up from a closed \ into an open form





I have added a fifth painting, a participative portrait called *the Placental Poet*. It features in an interdisciplinary multi-arts production for the Chile Cultural Platform and Creative Medicine Exchange project. A DVD Player is inserted in the dyptych for viewing Trudi La-tour's film, *Poetic Politics*. This production contains many concepts explained during the visit of to the studio in Maroota where most of the interactivity for the painting and filming occurred.

Using this work as an indicator, I would like to be considered for a possible commission by Baulkham Hills Shire Council to paint a traditional portrait of you as Mayor. In my painting practice there is a further option for telling your story more richly in a participative portrait format. \_

The fifth painting can be seen collaged below in the inside of the triptico for the Creative Medicine Exhibition and video showings in Chile.

The following article is one of the many press references, including TV coverage which publicised Creative Medicine