



5th WORLD SUMMIT ON ARTS & CULTURE MELBOURNE 2011

3 – 6 October 2011



Marcus Westbury

Marcus Westbury founded Renew Newcastle (www.renewnewcastle.org) in late 2008 with his credit card. It's a low budget, not for profit, DIY urban renewal scheme that has brokered access to more than 30 empty buildings for more than 70 groups of artists, creative enterprises and cultural projects in his hometown of Newcastle, Australia.

In 2011 Lonely Planet declared Newcastle, Australia one of the top 10 cities in the world to visit in 2011 – the first Australian city ever to make the list – declaring that the “dozens of disused city-centre buildings occupied by photographers, fashion designers, digital artists and more as part of the inner-city regeneration scheme, Renew Newcastle” had transformed Newcastle from a steel city to a creative hub.

The Newcastle Herald has described Renew Newcastle as “the miracle on Hunter Street“, the transformation of the dead centre of town as “nothing short of outstanding“ declaring that “AFTER years of depression and desperation about Newcastle’s decay ... Young and creative people have helped make the Renew Newcastle project the signature move to get the city thinking positive again.”

Renew Newcastle was awarded AbaF’s Partnership of the year and Community Partnership of the Year awards in 2010 and has inspired similar initiatives in over a dozen other communities and led to the establishment of Renew Australia – a training, consultancy and support service.

Marcus’s background is as a broadcaster, writer, media maker and festival director who has been responsible for some of Australia’s more innovative, unconventional and successful cultural projects and events. He has also worked across a range of media as a writer, producer, director and presenter covering fields as diverse as culture, art, media, urban planning, sport and politics and directed festivals including Newcastle’s This Is Not Art Festival, Next Wave in Melbourne. He is currently also the director of ISEA 2013 (www.isea2013.org) in Sydney.