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“Come and enjoy a billy of tea and damper, have a yarn with a Wedjela or Nyungar”: The Practice of Listening and the Emergence of Active Citizenship at Kodja Place, Western Australia

In this paper we wish to draw a link between the practice of ‘listening’ across difference and new understandings of active forms of citizenship (Sassen 2003) by focussing on the potential role of local museums as sites of social democracy in action. The paper will focus on Kodja Place, a small interpretation centre in Kojunup, Western Australia which has become known for its efforts in crossing cultural differences. By analysing its development and interpretation strategies, we hope to point to the ways in which the practice of listening across difference facilitates the emergence of active forms of citizenship in the most unlikely of locations – in this case rural Western Australia. In doing so, the paper has two aims. The first is to contribute to the growing literature of active and cultural citizenship by looking at rural communities rather than global cities and the second is to contribute to a growing debate about the role of cultural institutions in the renovation of citizenship.