



# **THE ARTS RIPPLE EFFECT**

## **VALUING THE ARTS IN COMMUNITIES**





Mouth to Mountain (2009) Fire pit installations You Yangs Photo: Glenn Romanis

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# THE ARTS RIPPLE EFFECT

## VALUING THE ARTS IN COMMUNITIES



# THE ARTS RIPPLE EFFECT – VALUING THE ARTS IN COMMUNITIES

The arts are an essential public good that create a ripple effect of benefits felt throughout our community. They provide a unique expression of what it means to be human, that is fundamental to our nature and affects us all, through all the possibilities of participation in roles as artists, arts workers, practitioners, teachers, students, critics, supporters, and consumers.<sup>1</sup>

There is now a well-established empirical evidence base supporting the view that the arts can make a vital contribution to our wellbeing. This can occur across a range of dimensions, from cultural to social and economic, at an individual, community and broader society level. The arts have the potential to bridge our worlds, harness the wisdom of our different views, engage our imagination to explore new ways of thinking, and create experiences that can be shared by all people in our community.

In part, it is the understanding of this wider community benefit that has fueled a sharper increase in Victorian local government investment in cultural activity in recent years.<sup>2</sup> Local governments across the state invest 20% of total government expenditure on cultural activity, and combined employ more than 550 staff in the sector,<sup>3</sup> making their contribution a critical element in the growing cultural vitality of our communities.

There is an increasing recognition that even a modest investment in the arts can deliver a significant return on investment for government agencies and the private sector. Arts-based initiatives are being adopted to engage public debate, to create vibrant public spaces, to connect and inspire communities, and increasingly, to provide skills development and employment opportunities.

*The Arts Ripple Effect: Valuing the Arts in Communities* draws from the evidence base to demonstrate the value of investing in the arts at a local level, and showcases a number of arts initiatives that illustrate success.

The information is presented in six themes, with many of the example projects demonstrating outcomes across several themes:

1. Building Community Pride and Identity
2. Inspiring Community and Civic Participation
3. Creating a Culture of Inclusion
4. Contributing to Resilient Local Economies
5. Promoting Health and Wellbeing
6. Liveable Cities, Liveable Towns

This publication has been produced by Castanet with the support of Arts Victoria and the Australia Council for the Arts. Castanet is a network of government agencies, arts organisations and artists that work to increase arts participation in the community. It offers professional development programs as well as access, advocacy and information services to individuals and organisations interested in developing community arts projects.

[www.castanet.net.au](http://www.castanet.net.au)

<sup>1</sup> Jackson M, Kabwasa-Green F & Herranz J. (2006). *Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretation and Indicators*. USA: The Urban Institute. Available at <http://www.urban.org/publications/311392.html>

<sup>2</sup> A 10% increase in Victorian local government expenditure during the 2009/10–2010/11 period, Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2012). *2010–11 Cultural Funding by Government*, catalogue no. 4183.0, p.36, Available at [abs.gov.au](http://abs.gov.au), accessed April 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Dunphy K, Tavelli L & Metzke L. (2013). 'Cultural Planning Processes in Local Government in Victoria.' *Proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Local Government Researchers' Forum*. Sydney: University of Technology.

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# BUILDING COMMUNITY PRIDE AND IDENTITY



Flybz performing at the Napier St Block Party (2013)  
Photo: Jesse Sullivan Source: Artful Diggers Studio

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# BUILDING COMMUNITY PRIDE AND IDENTITY

Technology is changing the way we construct our social relationships but it has not done away with our very human need to form physical communities that we feel connected to. Research from the US, UK, and Australia has found that the arts can help create social and cultural bonds within communities.<sup>4</sup>

Arts-based engagement can promote cooperation, awareness of local issues and the reduction of social isolation, all of which contributes to a shared sense of community pride and identity.<sup>5</sup>

*“Creative projects aimed at enriching a sense of community identity...can not only affirm the value of social and cultural diversity but also allow for an avowal of the importance of community in an uncertain world.”<sup>6</sup>*

The research indicates the value of acknowledging different ‘community identities’. Communities that are able to embrace diversity, creative expression and cultural activity are richer, stronger and more able to deal with social challenges.<sup>7</sup>

The community’s need to engage can be illustrated in many ways, such as the explosion of community festivals,<sup>8</sup> the enormous popularity of community and live music events, cinema, public libraries and other cultural institutions.<sup>9</sup>

*“Festivals are pivotal dates on the annual calendars of towns and villages: they bring together scattered farm folk, young and old and disparate subcultures: they blend attitudes, enlargen social networks and encourage improvements in social cohesion.”<sup>10</sup>*

## CREATING BELONGING: ANTI-RACISM ACTION BAND (A.R.A.B.) – NORTHERN TRAX

Anti-Racism Action Band (A.R.A.B.) was established as a creative outlet for Arabic young people in Melbourne’s outer north. It aimed to challenge racial tensions and promote social inclusion while imparting performance, event management, social and life skills and crucial employment pathways for participants. A.R.A.B. quickly opened its door to youth from all cultural backgrounds as a proactive way to address racism. The area was lacking in opportunities for young people to engage with the performing arts and local young people were really enthusiastic to get involved. A.R.A.B. participants were given the opportunity to share positive representations of their culture and social lives.

A.R.A.B.’s major production in 2010 was Northern Trax, a series of performance events in and around Melbourne’s Flinders Street Station. Northern Trax was staged as part of the 2010 Melbourne International Arts Festival. The centrepiece was an original theatre piece performed in Degraives St underpass that told the story of a contentious cross-

cultural marriage. Northern Trax also included a series of seemingly spontaneous ‘flash mob’ dance and music performances around the northern train line platforms and concourses at Flinders Street Station.

*“They’ve given me the chance to go places I never thought I would go, I’ve performed places I never thought I’d perform. I was one of the trouble makers and now one of the stars of the show” (Northern Trax Participant)<sup>11</sup>*

The show involved public rehearsals with 150 teenagers, representing 50 different cultural groups and 40 different religious identities. The young performers were required to work together as a group, and the interaction between participants from a wide range of cultural backgrounds was an important outcome of the project.

*“We’re all different people but when we’re together we love the same thing, you know, like dance” (Northern Trax Participant)<sup>12</sup>*

An earlier evaluation of the A.R.A.B program found that participants reported they had a better understanding of people from other cultures and backgrounds after being involved in A.R.A.B. productions.<sup>13</sup> One of the major successes of A.R.A.B initiative was found to be the noticeable difference in levels of self-esteem and confidence among the participants, along with a new understanding and tolerance of difference as reported by the staff at their schools, tutors, school partners and the students themselves.<sup>14</sup>



A.R.A.B. performers dance installation Flinders Street Station, Northern Trax (2010) Melbourne Festival

<http://arab-vass.com/main-work/northern-tracks/>

<sup>4</sup> Bamford A. (2006). *The Wow Factor: Global research compendium on the impact of the arts in education*. Germany: Waxmann.

<sup>5</sup> McQueen-Thomson D, James P & Ziaguras C. (2004). *Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing Through Community and Cultural Development: A Review of Literature Focusing on Community Festivals and Celebrations*. Melbourne: VicHealth & RMIT University.

<sup>6</sup> Mulligan M & Smith P. (2009). ‘Art, Governance and the Turn into Community: Putting Art at the Heart of Local Government.’ *ReGenerating Community Conference Papers*. Melbourne: Globalism Research Centre, RMIT University. Available at <http://mams.rmit.edu.au/fc1d0uu0zhpm1.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Arts Victoria. (2013). *Making Art With Communities: A Work Guide*. Melbourne: Arts Victoria, VicHealth, & Castanet.

<sup>8</sup> Phipps P & Slater L. (2010). *Indigenous Cultural Festivals: Evaluating Impact on Community Health and Wellbeing: A report to the Telstra Foundation on Indigenous Festivals 2007–2010*. Melbourne: Globalism Research Centre, RMIT University, p 8.

<sup>9</sup> Gibson C & Stewart A. (2009). *Reinventing Rural Places: The extent and impact of festivals in rural and regional Australia*. Wollongong: University of Wollongong, p 12.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p 5.

<sup>11</sup> Anti Racism Action Band. (2009). *Northern Trax A Snapshot of Anti Racism Action Band*. Available at <http://vimeo.com/21630655>

<sup>12</sup> Anti Racism Action Band. (2009). *Northern Trax A Snapshot of Anti Racism Action Band*. Available at <http://vimeo.com/21630655>

<sup>13</sup> Hallifax & Rodriguez. (2006). *A.R.A.B. Evaluation Research and Report* [online], p 29. Available at <http://arab-vass.com/wp-content/blogs.dir/18/files/2010/07/EvaluationDocument.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p 33.



## CASE STUDY: MOUTH TO MOUNTAIN

The **Mouth to Mountain** project was part of the City of Greater Geelong's *Connecting Identities* program developed under the artistic directorship of Meme McDonald.



Mouth to Mountain (2009) Fire pit installations You Yangs Photo: Glenn Romanis

<http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/connectingidentities/>

The project aimed to articulate a sense of place and identity through artistic processes; respond to the rapid change across the greater Geelong area; increase connectedness between Council departments and across the municipality; and develop and present expressions of local culture that inform and influence council planning and development initiatives.<sup>15</sup>

On 9 May 2010, from dawn at the mouth of the Barwon River to sunset at the You Yangs, twelve ambassadors representing the twelve municipal wards carried water in a 54km relay – kayaking, on horseback, by train, in utes, on bikes and on foot.

Approximately 2,200 people joined the relay at various locations along the way. Sculptures, artworks and music marked the journey through iconic locations arriving at dusk for a celebration at Big Rock, in the You Yangs mountain range. The dusk celebration culminated in a pilot performance of the **Mouth to Mountain** Contemporary Songline; an original 40-minute musical composition that reflected the changing landscape from the mouth of the Barwon River across country and city to the top of the You Yangs.

The **Mouth to Mountain** journey was built over a year of engagement between artists and communities throughout Geelong. It resulted in the creation of 30 artworks and six performances including fire pit installations by Indigenous artist

Glenn Romanis, dramatic large scale nests by Michelle Fifer-Spooner, a sculpture by lead artist Richard Thomas and 12 'story vessel' sculptures, each made by local sculptors, representing the twelve municipal wards.

More than 800 members of the Geelong community assisted in developing **Mouth to Mountain** on a voluntary basis. These included: 96 relay ambassadors, over 300 people from across the 12 municipal wards who participated in story-vessel workshops; 200 students from nine different primary schools who helped to create artworks and music for the event; and many volunteers and helpers who performed a multitude of tasks leading up to the day.

Participants reported that they felt inspired to be part of such a monumental public performance.<sup>16</sup>

Due to ongoing requests from many individuals, community organisations and artists, plans are now underway to develop the **Mouth to Mountain** pilot concept into a 24 hour biennial community arts pilgrimage, commencing in May 2014.

**Mouth to Mountain** reflected Geelong communities; honouring the past, acknowledging the present and visioning the future. It demonstrated that *"creative projects that can capture and celebrate a diversity of stories related to life in communities will build a more inclusive sense of community identity and also allow for many more voices to be heard."*<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/connectingidentities/project\\_objectives.html](http://www.geelongaustralia.com.au/connectingidentities/project_objectives.html)

<sup>16</sup> Mulligan M & Smith P. (2009). 'Art, Governance and the Turn into Community: Putting Art at the Heart of Local Government.' *ReGenerating Community Conference Papers*. Melbourne: Globalism Research Centre, RMIT University. Available at <http://mams.rmit.edu.au/fc1d0uu0zhpm1.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.



# INSPIRING COMMUNITY AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

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# INSPIRING COMMUNITY AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

A combination of our increasingly fast-paced lives and a highly competitive leisure market has meant that governments and organisations are looking for more dynamic ways to engage people in public debate, and to address the issues that their communities face.

Older style consultation approaches such as town hall meetings don't always capture public imagination across the community and there is a growing evidence base that supports the arts as a driving force for civic renewal.<sup>18</sup> This is because arts-based engagement has an inherent ability to inspire peoples' imagination, to draw out new perspectives, and to act as a vehicle for a diversity of opinions.<sup>19</sup>

Arts-based approaches to community engagement can be a powerful mechanism to produce new forms of knowledge by encouraging participation from people of all walks of life.<sup>20</sup>

*"The arts also support a strong democracy, engaging citizens in civic discourse, dramatizing important issues and encouraging collective problem solving."*<sup>21</sup>

The arts can draw people to a common narrative that inspires participation, empowers residents to come together and build relationships and the trust that is necessary to overcome major challenges within a community.

## CREATING COMMUNITY: ARTS RECOVERY QUICK RESPONSE FUND

The **Arts Recovery Quick Response Fund** was established by Arts Victoria in response to the community devastation that followed the 2009 Victorian bushfires. The fund which was delivered by Regional Arts Victoria, supported local artists to work with their communities, encouraging participation in a range of arts projects which contributed to the recovery effort. Local artists created initiatives that were inspired by the difficult circumstances communities were facing, and successfully brought together those people affected by the bushfires to express through art what could often not be expressed in words. It helped to galvanise community support and trust.<sup>22</sup>

47 projects received funding through the program, representing a broad range of art forms. 45% were in the visual arts, 30% featured music, 19% were photography, 17% were classified as craft, literature, multi-arts, sculpture and new media projects each comprised 15%, 11% were theatre and 4% were dance.

The program resulted in new connections and communities being formed with over 2,500 participants involved and nearly 20,000 audience members. A key driver to the success of the program was that projects were community driven.

*"It was crucial to involve communities in all aspects of decision making. The initiatives achieved this ... and people planned and implemented their own projects."*<sup>23</sup>

Benefits reported from the projects included skills development, improved confidence and increased social connections. The initiatives:

*"[provided] art as healer, increased people's self-confidence, contributed to new communities, brought order to people's lives, created living memorials to the bushfires, and allowed people to give to others."*<sup>24</sup>

The Triangle Steel Pan Band have sustained their activity and expanded to several community bands that perform regularly.



BMW Edge, Federation Square for the 2009 Bushfires memorial concert (2011) Source: *Pans on Fire*

<http://www.trianglesteelbands.com/the-bands/pans-on-fire.html>

<sup>18</sup> O'Shea M. (2011). 'Arts Engagement with Sustainable Communities: Informing New Governance Styles for Sustainable Futures.' *Culture and Local Governance*, Vol 3 (1-2). Canada: University of British Columbia, p 29-41.

<sup>19</sup> McCarthy K [et al]. (2004). *Gifts of the muse: reframing the debate about the benefits of the arts*. USA: RAND Corporation.

<sup>20</sup> National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. (2010). *Tools for Arts Decision Making – Why Should Government Support the Arts*. USA: State Policy Briefs: NASAA.

<sup>21</sup> Stern M J & Seifert S C. (2008). *From Creative Economy to Creative Society: A Social Policy Paradigm for the Creative Sector has the Potential to Address Urban Poverty As Well As Urban Vitality*. USA: Social Impact of the Arts Project & The Reinvestment Fund, University of Pennsylvania.

<sup>22</sup> NSF Consulting. (2011). *The Role of the Arts in Rebuilding Community – An Evaluation of Arts Victoria's and Regional Arts Victoria's Bushfire Initiatives*. Sydney, p 4. Available at [www.arts.vic.gov.au/Research\\_and\\_Resources/Evaluation\\_Reports](http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/Research_and_Resources/Evaluation_Reports)

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p 38.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p 51.



## CASE STUDY: MARYBOROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT

The **Maryborough Photography Project** was driven by a local interest in photography and funded through the Neighbourhood Renewal program and Castanet. Neighbourhood Renewal aims to narrow the gap between disadvantaged

communities and the rest of the State. It is an approach that brings together the resources and ideas of residents, governments, businesses and community groups to tackle disadvantage in areas with concentrations of public housing.



Photography workshop in progress with Maryborough residents (2011) Photo: Angela Bailey

The **Maryborough Photography Project** involved a series of workshops with a professional photographer, culminating in a group exhibition in a shop-front held in late 2011 in the main street of Maryborough. The photography group, who named themselves the Shutterbugs, volunteered in preparing, installing and staffing the exhibition, enabling greater access for the community.

The confidence gained by participants through the photography project – the training in photography and the recognition they received for their public exhibition – was vital in encouraging two members of the Shutterbugs to join the Neighbourhood Renewal Steering Committee.<sup>25</sup> This group aims to enable improved and more meaningful input directly from the community into government decision making.

*“Twelve months ago I didn’t think I’d be on a first name basis with the Mayor. It’s the photography that has brought it through.”* (Photography project participant)<sup>26</sup>

The photography project was the catalyst which motivated participants to become active citizens, encouraging them to work alongside government agencies on the Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal project, and shaping the future direction of their community by ensuring their voices were heard by local decision makers.

*“There is a lot of energy around it, people are loving it, just loving it...we’ve discovered some residents who’ve got real skill, have a real creative flair and they’re aware of that and that’s great, it’s giving them a lot of confidence.”* (Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal Place Manager)

One of the Shutterbug members went on to enter and win a state wide photography competition: the V/Line Escape Competition that asked people to submit photos from their favourite parts of the state. The photographer said the support from Neighbourhood Renewal for Shutterbugs was important.

*“It has given us a little bit of confidence to enter competitions. I would have never thought of entering a competition. I definitely didn’t have the confidence...I put my photo in just before midnight on closing.”*<sup>27</sup>

The winning photo was displayed on the side of a regional train.

Two of the Shutterbug members have started selling their photography online and one has done some wedding photography work. The Shutterbugs have been funded to take photos around the region that will be used as postcards to promote the Shire.

<sup>25</sup> Unpublished interviews with Maryborough Neighbourhood Renewal Place Manager and Community Development Worker, 2011 & 2013. Arts Victoria.

<sup>26</sup> MacDowall L, Dr Gilmour J, Dr Adams R J & Blonkamp E. (2012). *Agile Government and the Arts: An Evaluation of the Cross-Government Partnership Brokerage Model for Supporting Creative Communities at Renewal Sites*. Centre for Cultural Partnerships, Faculty of the VCA and MCM, University of Melbourne, p 35 (unpublished).

<sup>27</sup> Johnston K. (December 1 2012). ‘Train Coup for Photo,’ *Maryborough District Advertiser*, accessed 31 January 2014. Available at <http://www.maryboroughadvertiser.com.au/2012/12/train-coup-for-photo/>



# CREATING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION

**"It was crucial  
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NSF Consulting. (2011). *The Role of the Arts in Rebuilding Community – An Evaluation of Arts Victoria's and Regional Arts Victoria's Bushfire Initiatives*. Sydney, p 4.

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# CREATING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION

There is a common understanding that social policy must foster a culture that is inclusive if it is to deliver long-term benefits to a community. The arts do not offer a panacea for the complex issues that cause social exclusion, but it has been shown that they can be a significant part of the solution because they transcend barriers of language, culture, ability, and socio-economic status.<sup>28</sup>

An arts-based approach to community engagement creates an environment that ensures a diversity of voices is heard. This is especially important for people who experience difficulty expressing their thoughts and feelings verbally, or whose circumstances may hinder their ability to communicate easily with others.

Arts initiatives are now increasingly being used as a way to facilitate social inclusion of refugee and recent migrant communities and facilitate reconnection with Indigenous cultural practice.

Social inclusion indicators are highly tangible outcomes such as increased employment rates and improved educational performance.<sup>29</sup>

Place-based initiatives aiming to address disadvantage (e.g. Neighbourhood Renewal) also commonly adopt arts-based practices because they engender a culture of inclusion that shifts the emphasis from physical regeneration to the people who live in the community.<sup>30</sup>

## CREATING CONNECTIONS: STATEWIDE INDIGENOUS ARTS OFFICER IN PRISONS AND COMMUNITY PROGRAM

The Torch Project facilitates diverse, vibrant arts and community projects throughout Victoria, bringing Indigenous and non-Indigenous people together in collaborative arts events and workshops to address critical social issues. In 2011, The Torch Project completed an ambitious 18-month pilot program to address the over representation of Aboriginal people in our prison system which is currently 14 times higher than it is for non-Indigenous Australians.

The **Statewide Indigenous Arts Officer in Prisons and Community program** focused on generating opportunities for Aboriginal people as emerging artists while strengthening cultural ties to family, country, and the broader community. The Confined exhibition has become one of The Torch Project's annual highlights and in 2013 featured 65 artists, including a number of artists no longer in prison, who are keen to develop their artistic careers.

*"Having people care about the fellas and take an interest in what they were doing...well...it's given me hope to turn my life around, which I wasn't expecting."* (Program Participant)<sup>31</sup>

The program evaluation demonstrated the potential of the initiative to deliver measurable social change with recidivism rates reduced by 50% based on previously available data.<sup>32</sup> A key to achieving this has been the confidence developed by the participants through connections built with the arts industry. The Torch Project worked on giving inmates access to the knowledge and tools to engage in vocational arts activities upon their release from prison, connecting them to community arts networks and professional arts industry contacts to support their transition back to community life.

<http://thetorch.org.au/programsSIA.html>



Opening night, *Confined 5* Exhibition, St Kilda Town Hall (2013) Photographer/Source: Unknown

<sup>28</sup> Jermyn H. (2001). *Arts and Social Exclusion: a Review Prepared for the Arts Council of England*. UK: Arts Council England.

<sup>29</sup> Garner G. (2009). 'Belonging and Acknowledgement: Discussing Community-based Arts projects With Shahin Shafaei.' *Migration Action* No. 1, May 2009. Melbourne: RMIT University, p 30–31.

<sup>30</sup> Mulligan M & Smith P. (2009). 'Art, Governance and the Turn into Community: Putting Art at the Heart of Local Government.' *ReGenerating Community Conference Papers*. Melbourne: Globalism Research Centre, RMIT University. Available at <http://mams.rmit.edu.au/fc1d0uu0zhpm1.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> Hallwright M. (2012). *The Torch – Evaluation of Statewide Indigenous Arts Officer in Prisons & Community Program* [online], p. 20. Available at <http://thetorch.org.au/torchwebimages/IAOPEVALUATION2012.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p 7.



## CASE STUDY: ARTS PROJECT AUSTRALIA

Founded in 1974, **Arts Project Australia** was originally formed to promote and exhibit the work of artists with an intellectual disability as belonging to the broad spectrum of contemporary art, and to represent studio artists in mainstream art exhibitions and events.

An early pilot program was offered for three hours per week with interest in and demand for the program continuing to grow until, in 1990, it began operating full-time in rented premises. In 2003, it relocated to its own purpose-built building in the Melbourne suburb of Northcote.

The Arts Project studio is the first of its kind to be established in Australia and one of the earliest in the world. Since its inception, the Arts Project studio and gallery have supported and promoted its artists in creating original artworks and bringing them to increasingly wider audiences. **Arts Project Australia** support its artists, promotes their work and advocates for inclusion within contemporary art practice. **Arts Project Australia** has increasingly encouraged external artists to collaborate with its artists, most recently through the 'Knowing Me, Knowing You' project.

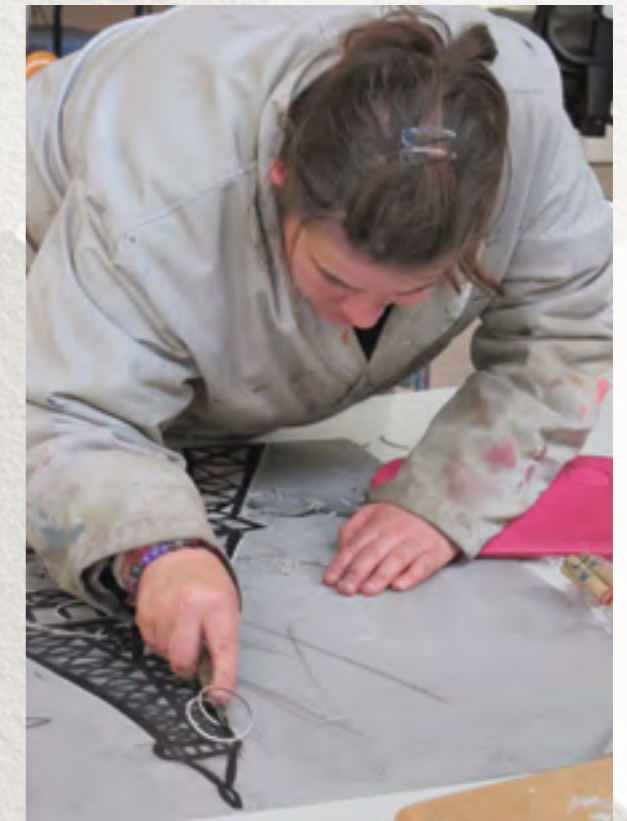
The project aimed to make wide and lasting connections between studio participants and contemporary artists and more broadly, to break down the barriers between artists with a disability and the contemporary art world. 10 pairs of artists worked together over ten months in various locations and media, which culminated in an exhibition in early 2014. The outcomes included the creation of ongoing mentorships and relationships beyond the life of the project, an increased awareness of the collaborative process and the development of a shared visual language that finds its voice somewhere between intellect and intuition.

The process and outcomes are documented in a blog<sup>33</sup> and cinematographer Shelly Farthing-Dawe is documenting the evolution of the project as a film journal that will later be edited into a documentary film.

Being able to exhibit work and collaborate with external artists connects the **Arts Project Australia** artists with a broader community with whom they may otherwise have limited contact, thereby increasing their sense of inclusion. **Arts Project Australia** plays a role in decreasing this community's sense of social isolation by providing opportunities for connecting with their friends, family and other artists and organisations. Research has also found that the impact of the work of **Arts Project Australia** is profound for the families and friends of artists as it provides them with a means of connection with a loved one.<sup>34</sup>

Three of **Arts Project Australia's** artists exhibited their work at the National Gallery of Victoria's (NGV) major contemporary art exhibition *Melbourne Now* in 2013/14. *Melbourne Now* experienced record attendances for the NGV, thus bringing their work to a significant audience and raising the artists' profile.

*Arts Project Australia* Fiona Taylor working on her collaborative linocut for 'Knowing Me, Knowing You' at Angela Cavalieri's studio (2013)  
Photo: Penelope Hunt



<http://www.artspjroject.org.au/>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.artspjroject.org.au/blog/knowning-me-knowning-you>

<sup>34</sup> Evans J, Bridson K & Minkievicz. (2013). *Branding the Arts: Demonstrating Impact – Four Case Studies of Public Art Museums*. Melbourne: Asia Pacific Social Impact Leadership Centre, Melbourne Business School, p 131.



# CONTRIBUTING TO RESILIENT LOCAL ECONOMIES

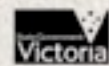
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# CONTRIBUTING TO RESILIENT LOCAL ECONOMIES

At a macro level there has been much discussion about the rise of the creative class and the capacity to transform a city's fortune through investment in creative capital. This thinking reflects an understanding that the skills associated with artistic practices – creative thinking, self-discipline, collaboration, risk taking, and innovation – are skills that are in great demand in our contemporary knowledge economy.<sup>35</sup>

Investment in cultural infrastructure and events contributes to local economies by providing a focal point to attract tourist dollars and help promote a city's image as a cultural destination and by attracting highly skilled and educated workers to communities.<sup>36</sup>

A recent study into the economic impact of the Victorian arts and cultural sector illustrates the ripple effects of investing in local creative industries.<sup>37</sup> Museum Victoria worked with small to medium business in Melbourne to develop interactive displays for exhibitions. The multimedia and interactive components of the touring exhibition have subsequently been purchased for use by other museums around the world, demonstrating how local investment can result in valuable exports.<sup>38</sup>

Involvement in arts-based activities has been shown to create pathways for personal and social development which increase prospects for employability,<sup>39</sup> particularly for young people and those from culturally diverse or disadvantaged backgrounds.

*"...people may learn new skills and feel more confident as the result of participating in community arts activity, and this, in turn, may increase their employability."<sup>40</sup>*

Arts businesses frequently operate within a model of social enterprise which contribute to local economies by gradually building capacity; developing pathways to the open labour market through traineeships; work experience placements and volunteering opportunities.

## CREATING GROWTH: WANGARATTA PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE



John McAll (piano), Gregory Porter (vocalist), Zvi Belling (bass), Danny Farrugia (drums) and Nick Lester (saxophone) entertain a full house at WPAC for the Wangaratta Festival of Jazz and Blues (2012) Source: Noisebox Productions /WPAC

The **Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre** opened in 2009, with a construction cost of \$8.5 million and provides a professional performing arts facility. It replaced the Wangaratta Memorial Town Hall which had very limited facilities for presenting professional performing arts.

An economic impact assessment of the centre found it has generated significant additional economic activity in the region. Regional visitation has increased by approximately 5,200 persons per year associated with arts performances, conferences and events. As a consequence, regional visitor spending has increased by around \$1.6 million (direct and indirect) per year, benefiting a wide range of regional businesses. The capital cost of the new centre will have been repaid, from additional economic activity in the region at the end of 2014, which is just over five years after completion.<sup>41</sup>

The increased economic activity has resulted in additional employment of 19.5 equivalent full-time staff, including 2.75 directly associated with the facility, and the balance involved indirectly through suppliers, visitor spending etc.

The study also identified a significant increase in volunteer levels (in comparison with the old venue) with volunteer hours increasing over tenfold from the predevelopment situation, generating the equivalent of \$28,000 in wages.<sup>42</sup>

A number of important non-quantifiable economic benefits associated with the **Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre** were also identified, including improved patronage to the broader arts precinct, with the Wangaratta Art Gallery in particular experiencing a considerable increase in attendance.

<sup>35</sup> Lynch R L. (2008). 'Creating a Brighter Workforce With the Arts: The Skills Taught by the Arts Will Contribute to Success in the Knowledge-based Economy of the 21st Century.' *School Administrator* (USA). March 2008, Number 3, Vol 65, p 26–28.

<sup>36</sup> Jeannotte S M. (2008). *Shared spaces: social and economic returns on investment in cultural infrastructure*. Canada: Centre on Governance, University of Ottawa.

<sup>37</sup> KPMG. (2013). *Economic Impact of the Victorian Arts and Cultural Sector*. Melbourne, p 14.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, p 14.

<sup>39</sup> Long J, Welch M, Bramham P, Butterfield J, Hylton K & Lloyd E. (2002). *Count Me In: The Dimensions of Social Inclusion Through Culture, Media & Sport*. UK: Department for Culture, Media & Sport.

<sup>40</sup> Jermyn H. (2001). *Arts and Social Exclusion: a Review Prepared for the Arts Council of England*. UK: Arts Council England.

<sup>41</sup> Essential Economics Pty Ltd. (2013). *Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre, Economic Impact Assessment, Final Report*. p 1. Available at [www.arts.vic.gov.au/Research\\_and\\_Resources/Evaluation\\_Reports](http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/Research_and_Resources/Evaluation_Reports)

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, p 3.



## CASE STUDY: THE AFGHAN TEA CYCLE

Research indicates that many refugees face barriers to language and employment in their settlement to a new country,<sup>43</sup> the **Afghan Tea Cycle** offers Afghan born residents an opportunity to build on social engagement skills, cultural identity, pride, English language skills and professional development in the area of hospitality.

The **Afghan Tea Cycle** captures an integral part of Afghan culture through the preparation and service of traditional Afghan Tea. The project demonstrates how an arts-led process can become an exemplar of cultural exchange and street activation, while also providing an employment opportunity for existing and emerging communities.

The project grew out of an exploration of the diverse aspects of art in public space and was created by Afghan artist Aslam Akram and fellow artist Ceri Hann, in a collaboration between City of Greater Dandenong Council and RMIT University. Interdisciplinary and intercultural practice has been a feature of this collaboration which has combined engineering, small business and fine art.



The Afghan Tea Cycle (2010) Photo: Jason Edwards

The **Afghan Tea Cycle** also acts as a social enterprise initiative by providing an employment platform for Afghan born refugees and migrants that extend the Afghan Bazaar experience of hospitality and generosity beyond the precinct's immediate vicinity.

Operators of the cycle undergo training and are registered with a Dandenong based catering employment agency which ensures that all standard employment requirements are met. Operating the cycle requires a range of hospitality skills, like customer service, public speaking and time management which enhance and contribute to the operators professional and personal development. The **Afghan Tea Cycle** has been hired on more than 60 occasions since 2010. The **Afghan Tea Cycle** contributes to intercultural exchange and encourages culturally inclusive practices whilst promoting Afghan culture. It has employed 10 Afghan born operators. Many of the Afghan Tea Cycle operators have gone on to full time employment and further education.

*"The Afghan Tea Cycle was great as a welcome and to break the atmosphere of lots of Afghan dignitaries meeting with media."*  
(Melbourne Museum)

The **Afghan Tea Cycle** is available for hire for festivals and events and offers a minimum 3 hours traditional Afghan tea service accompanied by sweet favours all prepared by an Afghan tea operator. By supplying an authentic Afghan tea experience, and in the process, promoting Afghan

culture through social practice and aesthetic impact, the **Afghan Tea Cycle** contributes to intercultural exchange and encourages inclusive practices that can be shared beyond the Afghan Bazaar in Dandenong, at events, festivals and private functions.



The Afghan Tea Cycle (2010) Photo: Jason Edwards

<sup>43</sup> Refugee Council of Australia. (2010). *What Works: Employment strategies for refugee and humanitarian entrants*. Accessed 4 February 2014. Available at <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/r/rpt/2010-Employment.pdf>



## **PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

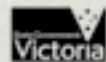
**"Involvement in  
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**VALUING THE ARTS IN COMMUNITIES**



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# PROMOTING HEALTH AND WELLBEING

There is evidence that participation in arts-based activity can contribute to strengthened social relationships and networks, which, in turn, increase the likelihood of good mental and physical health and wellbeing.<sup>44</sup> As a former editor of the British Medical Journal has commented:

*“If health is about adaptation, understanding, and acceptance, then the arts may be more potent than anything that medicine has to offer.”<sup>45</sup>*

There is now considerable evidence that the stronger a sense of belonging that people feel, the healthier they are.

*“Cultural celebrations and events may promote cooperation, bring new skills and capacities to communities, promote awareness of local issues and reduce social isolation, while promoting economic development. All of these outcomes are clearly linked to individual and community health”<sup>46</sup>*

The arts are a powerful mechanism available to us to create an inclusive sense of community wellbeing; since time immemorial people have turned to the arts to celebrate, to commemorate, to protest, to heal, and to unify.

## CREATING OPPORTUNITIES: HIGHWATER THEATRE RURAL YOUTH PROGRAM

**HighWater Theatre Rural Youth Program** started out of concern for the increasing numbers of young people who were not attending school in the Albury/Wodonga region. It is an intensive, arts-based education program for teenagers who no longer participate in the formal education system. It is long term collaboration between the arts, health and education. The three key players are Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company, Gateway Community Health Service and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.



Professional artists and post prison-release women work with participants to produce high quality theatre that gives voice to their stories. Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company has extensive experience working in women's prisons and staff include ex-prisoners who can personally relate to issues of violence, substance abuse and self-rejection. In the early 2000s when HighWater Theatre was getting started the Wodonga area had one of the highest instances of youth substance abuse in Victoria, was equal highest in terms of anti-social behaviour, and had one of the highest instances of reported suicidal behaviour in Australia.<sup>47</sup>

The program provides an environment where young people feel free to share their experiences, confident that other participants will be able to empathise and relate to the challenges they face. Often, belonging to HighWater becomes a strong, stable point in the lives of participants – a secure thing they can rely on.

A 2007 evaluation of the program found that all participants in the program at that time reported either stopping or substantially reducing their use of drugs and alcohol during their time with the program. Fourteen of the young people had been in trouble with the police on a number of occasions before being referred to the program and only two had re-offended. In addition to positive outcomes related to improved engagement with formal education, participants also reported improved self-esteem and confidence, greater will to live, stronger commitment to school work, and a greater sense of connection to others and belief that people care about them.<sup>48</sup>

One 15 year old male participant explained, *“I haven't been drinking as much and getting into fights. I guess you could say I feel cared about. I actually want to get up in the morning and be on time for HighWater. I have something to look forward to.”<sup>49</sup>*



HighWater Theatre 'Who Owns Me Today' (2011)  
Source: Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company

<sup>44</sup> Wilkinson R & Marmot M. (2003). *Social Determinants of Health: The Solid Facts*. Geneva: World Health Organisation.

<sup>45</sup> Smith, R. (2002). 'Spend (slightly) Less on Health and More on the Arts.' *British Medical Journal*. (UK) 325 (7378):1432-1433.

<sup>46</sup> McQueen-Thomson D, James P & Ziaguras C (2004). *Promoting mental health and wellbeing through community and cultural development: a review of literature focusing on community festivals and celebrations*. Melbourne: Victorian Health Promotion Foundation.

<sup>47</sup> Osmotherly J. (2002). *The HighWater Youth Arts Program* Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company. Paper presented by Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company at the *Role of Schools in Crime Prevention Conference* convened by the Australian Institute of Criminology, Melbourne.

<sup>48</sup> Osfield Consultants. (2007). *Highwater Theatre the Partnership – Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company, Upper Hume Community Health Service*. Victorian Department of Education, p 14–15

<sup>49</sup> Ibid p 19.



## CASE STUDY: ARTFUL DODGERS STUDIOS

**Artful Dodgers Studios (Dodgers)** is an innovative program established in 1996 by Jesuit Social Services for young people aged 15–27. Participants work alongside professional artists and musicians in a safe and vibrant arts space that encourages the development of artistic skills and offers holistic support.



Flybz performing at the Napier St Block Party (2013)  
Photo: Jesse Sullivan Source: Artful Dodgers Studio

The **Dodgers** vision is to engage, transform, and strengthen young people through involvement in the arts. This is facilitated through increasing social connection, self-esteem, positive mental health as well as foundation and vocational skills. The creative program helps to validate them as important cultural contributors and the studios help them to explore artistic skills and identity beyond the risk factors in their lives. Many participants face barriers to education and employment.

The **Dodgers** is all about art and music. Participants can choose how they will engage and this is integral to their sense of empowerment as they maintain control over their own stories, artistic output and solutions. **Dodgers** artists work with young people to encourage them to strive for artistic excellence and participate in exhibitions and performances.

*“We’re here to unlock the arts for young people who would not ordinarily be given access. It’s about stimulating people through art, not placating them. The greatest thing we can offer is the opportunity to locate their unique voice, validate their creative choices and share it with others.”* (Forest Keegel, Community Cultural Development Artist)

In 2013 the **Dodgers** music studio helped foster a collaboration between young participants and ex-child soldiers turned hip hop artists ‘FLYBZ’ and legendary Australian song writer Paul Kelly. Producing, managing and releasing the track ‘Child Soldier,’ the **Dodgers** were able to help the newly arrived Fablice and Floreni fulfil their musical

ambitions. This resulted in national media exposure, airplay and paid performance opportunities for FLYBZ. They now use music to tell their stories to school and community groups and have won an African Australian Award, a National Youth award and a Victorian Refugee award. Fablice also received Multicultural Arts Victoria’s first Arts and Cultural Development Scholarship for Refugee Youth in 2014.

Rudder Exchange Visual Arts Mentoring Partnerships (REVAMP) is another program provided by the Artful Dodgers Studios’ and is for young artists with experience at the studios and who wish to further their art practice. REVAMP matches established visual artists with young people to exhibit together. Alumni of REVAMP have transitioned into tertiary study and exhibiting their work professionally. For example, a recent graduate won a scholarship of \$8000 for one year’s tuition at the Tom Bass Sculpture Studio School in NSW.

*“Participating in REVAMP and working alongside my mentor and the other artists has made me realise that I am just as able and just as entitled to express myself creatively as anybody else. I’ve expanded my appreciation of the art world and feel freer to express myself without harsh self-criticism. My confidence has grown phenomenally. You can see it in the way I carry myself and interact with people. I feel so well. This is a wellness that the hospitals can’t give you. This is a wellness that you can only get by being included back into society.”* (REVAMP Participant)



## **LIVEABLE CITIES, LIVEABLE TOWNS**

**"Since time  
immemorial people  
have turned to  
the arts to celebrate,  
to commemorate,  
to protest, to heal,  
and to unify"**

**THE ARTS RIPPLE EFFECT**  
VALUING THE ARTS IN COMMUNITIES





# LIVEABLE CITIES, LIVEABLE TOWNS

Community is defined by both people and place, the two are inextricably linked. Places are imbued with cultural significance and social meanings that are constantly being made and re-made which makes 'place' much more than simply a physical environment.<sup>50</sup>

Arts initiatives can transform public spaces that may once have been problematic or under-utilised into places that become meaningful and aesthetically pleasing to the communities that use them.

*"There is an increasing body of evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, on the positive contribution of arts and culture to a city's or region's liveability."<sup>51</sup>*

The Victorian Neighbourhood and Community Renewal programs that have adopted arts-based engagement approaches have shown that it is possible to both re-engage communities that have been excluded from the political and social mainstream,<sup>52</sup> and create inspirational public space outcomes.

Adopting art-based participation models can also be powerful tool for engaging community debate on the use of public space. When a community becomes involved from the design to realisation phase of a project it can enhance their sense of belonging, encouraging them to become custodians of their local environment.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Mulligan M, Humphery K, James P, Scanlon C, Smith P & Welch N. (2006). *Creating Community: Celebrations, Arts and Wellbeing Within and Across Local Communities*. Melbourne: RMIT Globalism Centre & Vic Health.

<sup>51</sup> Arts Victoria. (2008). *The Role of Arts and Culture in Liveability and Competitiveness: A Submission to the Victorian Competition and Efficiency Commission's Inquiry into Enhancing Victoria's Liveability*.

<sup>52</sup> MacDowall L, Gilmour J, Adams R J & Blomkamp E. (2013). *Government and the Arts: An Evaluation of a Cross-Government Partnership Brokerage Model for Supporting Creative Communities at Renewal Sites*. Centre for Cultural Partnerships, Victorian College for the Arts, Faculty of VCA and MCM, University of Melbourne. (unpublished)

<sup>53</sup> Dannenberg A, Jackson R, Frumkin H & Schieber A. (2003). 'The Impact of Community Design and Land-use Choices on Public Health: A Scientific Research Agenda.' *American Journal of Public Health*. 93 (9):1500-8.

## CREATING PLACE: NOCTURNAL

**Nocturnal** is an annual winter, after-dark art event that invigorates Dandenong's streets with temporary public art installations. An eight storey building in central Dandenong is illuminated by projections and public art is encountered in the city's laneways, car parks and streets.

**Nocturnal** started in 2006 and features artworks by established, emerging and students artists. It is delivered by the City of Greater Dandenong in partnership with Chisholm Institute, RMIT, Federation Square and Greater Dandenong's Walker Street Gallery.

Free guided night-time tours through the streets of Dandenong are part of the **Nocturnal** program exploring arts projects, light projects and meeting the artists.

The City of Greater Dandenong recognises that public perceptions of safety in its area are relatively low compared to many other parts of Melbourne.<sup>54</sup> One of the aims of **Nocturnal**, including the guided tours, is to activate spaces after dark and improve local residents' sense of security through a shared experience. Following the 2013 **Nocturnal** tours, 42% of participants reported that their perception of Dandenong at night had improved.

*"Nocturnal showed me that the streets are quite safe, well lit and have interesting elements within."*  
(Nocturnal tour participant)

The **Nocturnal** tours have grown in popularity with a 45% more attendees in 2013 than the previous year, when 322 people took part.



Member of public inspecting artwork titled "No Fence For Dreams" by Julian Clavijo (2013) Photo: Jason Edwards Photography.

A high proportion of **Nocturnal** tour participants are locals, with nearly 70% coming from Dandenong or neighbouring suburbs.<sup>55</sup>

*"I was pleased to see how art is being used as a tool for rejuvenating the city. We must never underestimate the power of creativity to generate excitement and tighten a community."*  
(Nocturnal tour participant)

Since 2006 the City of Greater Dandenong has partnered with Places Victoria to implement Revitalising Central Dandenong, which is a \$290 million dollar program aiming to rejuvenate the city centre. A place making program is delivering an array of public realm improvements, including a wide-ranging program of public art.

<sup>54</sup> Prezel N. 31 January 2011, "Boost to Safety," *Dandenong Leader newspaper*, and Community Indicators Victoria, *Greater Dandenong Wellbeing Report 2007*, [http://www.communityindicators.net.au/wellbeing\\_reports/greater\\_dandenong](http://www.communityindicators.net.au/wellbeing_reports/greater_dandenong)

<sup>55</sup> Unpublished **Nocturnal** survey data 2013, City of Greater Dandenong.



## CASE STUDY: CLUNES BOOKTOWN FESTIVAL

**Clunes Booktown Festival** is an annual book-selling and literary festival held in the historic goldmining town of Clunes in Victoria. It is modelled on the the successful European concept of “Booktowns” with book-selling as their core theme. The festival was developed by a local community group, *Creative Clunes Inc* with the objective of renewal for their town.



Browsing at Clunes Booktown Festival Photo: Neil Newitt on commission from Creative Clunes Inc.

*“A small group of us got together because we were concerned about our town’s survival. We had to work out how to become a sustainable community. It was a ghost town here.”*  
(Tim Hayes, Creative Clunes Inc)

Agricultural and manufacturing decline, drought and population loss had all taken their toll on the Clunes with mostly vacant shops on its main street. Creative Clunes envisioned a book fair on a weekend to test the idea that books could generate tourism and a better future for the town.

The first festival was held on a single day in 2007 and attracted about 6,000 people, way beyond the town’s expectations. The town ran out of money, food and even electricity. Seven years later **Booktown** has expanded to a weekend event attracting close to 20,000 visitors.

Only one bookstore existed prior to 2007 and Clunes now draws 50 book traders for the festival, with eight book traders permanently based in town and two on-line book traders. This is a remarkable concentration of bookshops for a town of under 2,000 residents. Creative Clunes has also developed two community-run bookstores originally managed by volunteers, who have now taken over these shops as businesses.

*“We are delighted that locals trained by Creative Clunes will now be operating successful private enterprises that in turn will employ other locals.”*  
(Tim Hayes, Creative Clunes Inc)

Other signs of growth are installation of an ATM, re-opening of the Clunes railway station and redevelopment of the Clunes Museum into a community and information centre, The Clunes Warehouse. In 2012 Clunes was recognised as the southern hemisphere’s first international book town. The designation has been given to only 15 towns worldwide.

A survey of residents in 2010 found strong support for the festival, with 99% of respondents agreeing that the promotion of Clunes is the event’s greatest economic benefit.<sup>56</sup> 84% of residents surveyed believed that Booktown was beneficial in securing the long-term future of Clunes through promotion of the town, attraction of tourists, economic benefits, sense of a positive future and community spirit. Local support for the event is also demonstrated the high proportion of local volunteers – 42% of residents indicated they had volunteered at the event in 2010.<sup>57</sup>

**Booktown** has expanded to include a suite of year-round Sunday Selection talks by prominent authors and the inaugural Clunes Booktown for Kids Festival will be held in late 2014. The Clunes Ceramic Award, now the second richest ceramic prize in Australia, is another arts initiative instigated by Clunes Creative in partnership with the Art Gallery of Ballarat and the Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum.

<sup>56</sup> Kennedy, M. (2010). *Research Audit – Clunes Back to Booktown 2010*. Bendigo: La Trobe University, p 27.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p 34.

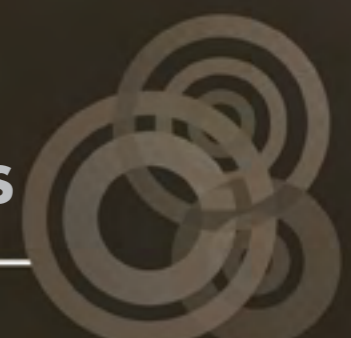


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Nocturnal tour participant, City of Greater Dandenong arts initiative.

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