



MEDIA RELEASE

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It's a wrap for the flashmobbers!

They came and, in a flash, they were gone. But their brief appearance has had long-lasting results, with Nillumbik Shire Council declaring its 52 Flashmobs project a huge success.

The project – to devise and enact 52 flashmobs over 52 weeks – succeeded in its aim to involve the widest possible cross-section of the municipality. School children, seniors, shoppers and train travellers were among the many groups that came together in the year-long project which began in November 2011.

52 Flashmobs project officer Cath Rutten said the project was about people, place and participation, with groups of people suddenly assembling in public places a perfect way to capture attention and imagination.

“We wanted to target people who might not normally participate in arts activities as well as those who do,” Cath said. “We wanted it to be accessible, local, free and not demand too much time or commitment but introduce the idea that participating in the arts is good for you and really, really, really fun!”

The 52 Flashmobs project was funded by VicHealth as part of its MOTION program, created to promote the health benefits of arts participation.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said the reaction to the 52 Flashmobs project has been fantastic.

“It's great to see that the local community embraced this unique program. It has provided a chance for people to feel part of the community, be active, have fun and feel great all at the same time,” Ms Rechter said.

Cath said about 900 people participated in the 52 Flashmobs, however audiences would have been in the thousands. The local library was mobbed three times, the supermarket seven times and 21 schools participated. Flashmobs rode two trains, danced 19 dances and sang 16 songs. There was poetry, an orchestra, seven choirs, a circus and a Great Big Muddy Symphony where mobbers covered themselves in mud.

“The creativity and opportunity for people to express and the level of engagement was tremendous,” Cath said. “Anyone in Nillumbik could be a part – as a participant, a spectator, a filmmaker, an organiser or a passer-by.”

Funding from the Regional Arts Fund enabled Nillumbik to work with young people to develop the multimedia side of the program, which was an effective way of involving young people. The final results can be viewed at www.52flashmobs.com



For more information on VicHealth's MOTION Program to get people physically active through arts visit www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/motion

In November, 52 Flashmobs in 52 Weeks won the Arts and Health in Public Programs Award at the 4th annual The Art of Good Health and Wellbeing, International Arts and Health Conference.

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