

# MOTION: Arts, Physicality and Connection

## Project summary

Building health through arts and new media



*Crowd Play brings together people from diverse backgrounds and promotes the health benefits of participatory arts.*



*Tangle is an interactive outdoor play space where kids and adults can create a massive artwork through body movement and imaginative play.*

The mental health and wellbeing impacts of the arts have received much praise and attention over a number of years. These include increasing people's confidence and sense of self-worth, extending involvement in social activities, and giving people influence over how they are seen by others.

Increased physical activity is not as regularly considered despite the fact that it is a core component of many models of arts practice. VicHealth's MOTION program fuses creative community engagement with increased physical activity to build social connection.

We live in a world that is becoming increasingly sedentary which, in turn, means we have to make a conscious effort to get up and get moving more often. There are many ways to do this that appeal to different people at different times. Being physically active doesn't always have to be focused around a ball or a racquet.

VicHealth is interested in exploring the communicative potential of the arts to encourage people toward greater levels of physical activity, and how social connection and physical activity can be mutually reinforcing. By engaging in the fun and interesting methods of physical activity promoted through the MOTION program, we are hoping to encourage people to think more creatively about their health.

Seven MOTION projects have been funded to explore the fullest possibilities of these intersections.

### City of Melbourne – The Giant Theremin

'The Giant Theremin', created by acclaimed artist Robin Fox, is a super-sized instrument that is controlled by movement rather than touch. A first of its type, the Theremin's distinctive warble is accompanied by an array of additional sounds that makes it impossible to resist running, dancing, jumping and forming unusual shapes in the activation zone to create a symphony of movement. 'The Giant Theremin' is located at Les Erdi Plaza in Melbourne's Northbank precinct and is open during the 2011–12 summer.

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*The Giant Theremin is activated by physical movement and unusual formation.*

## Polyglot Theatre – Tangle

Polyglot Theatre has created an interactive outdoor play space where children and families use the physical action of weaving elastic with their whole bodies to build a massive, touchable artwork. The building of the web is facilitated by artists and fuelled by live music to encourage physical movement, artistic decision-making, imaginative play and dramatic interaction. In partnership with Playgroup Victoria and Berry Street, 'Tangle' will engage with families in Melbourne's Central Business District, Shepparton and Latrobe throughout 2012.

## Latrobe City Council – Dance with Me

'Dance with Me' is about bringing the Latrobe Valley community together to get moving, have a laugh and show each other why the community loves its Valley. Videos of community members dancing a short dance routine with accompanying music will be projected onto public buildings across the Valley. By bringing live performance, film and physical activity together, the Latrobe Valley will reveal an active, united and positive community.

## Nillumbik Shire Council – 52 Flashmobs in 52 Weeks

'52 Flashmobs in 52 Weeks' promotes messages around healthy living and healthy communities to both participants and spectators around four themes: action, sound, word and space. A tech-savvy group of local young people promote the flash mobs through a social media project that reinforces health messages. Nillumbik Shire Council is building on partnerships across the municipality and surrounding areas, ensuring the project provides opportunities for local groups and organisations to get new people involved in their activities.

## Melbourne Fringe Festival – Crowd Play

'Crowd Play' aims to bring together a large group of people, from diverse backgrounds to actively participate in an inclusive, dance and song performance. Crowd Play promotes the benefits of participatory arts in a healthy lifestyle. During the 2011 Melbourne Fringe Festival, Crowd Play performed thrice in various public sites. The energizing, captivating and inspiring performances are sure to get toes tapping and hips wiggling.

## The Squeaky Wheel – Roll Up

'Roll Up' is a VIP bike valet service providing cyclists with free, secure and convenient parking when attending festivals and events. A fully outsourced mobile service, 'Roll Up' is available for hire by businesses, councils and community groups. The service is ideal for event coordinators who are looking to target a culturally and socially conscious market. It also offers excellent sustainability solutions to public events.

## Aphids – Atelier Edens

In partnership with Parks Victoria, Aphids are developing an Atelier Edens smart phone application that will use GPS technology, cinematic chapters and original sound scores to enliven interactions between visitors and the landscape of Point Nepean National Park. As users roam through digital hotspots within the park, they will trigger a series of wild, unexpected adventures, heightening their experience of the environment they are moving through.

Active and participatory arts practice is about capturing collective imagination. This creates new opportunities for collaboration, co-creation and partnership.



'Roll Up' is a free VIP bike valet service for cyclists attending festivals and events.

### Acknowledgement

These photos are reproduced with permission: Crowd Play – Melbourne Fringe (Photographer: Katie Harmsworth); Tangle – Polyglot Theatre (Photographer: Aaron Walker); The Giant Theremin – City of Melbourne (Photographer: Peter Casamento); Roll Up – The Squeaky Wheel (Photographer: Mik Efford).