



# **MAKING ART WITH COMMUNITIES**

## **A WORK GUIDE**



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## A WORK GUIDE

Melbourne Fringe Festival Crowd Play 1 (2011) Photo: Kate Hammsworth

**ARTS  
VICTORIA**



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## MINISTER'S MESSAGE

The arts have a powerful capacity to transform our lives as individuals and communities, wherever we live, whatever our age, life experience or background.

Collaborations between artists and communities can result in extraordinary creative works and extraordinary social, educational and community-strengthening outcomes.

Research has shown that community arts projects promote wellbeing and effectively engage hard to reach groups – such as youth and disadvantaged communities. They foster a strong sense of

confidence, pride and belonging; provide an avenue for learning new skills; and for some – participants and artists alike – can open up new career pathways.

This work guide outlines the processes and protocols of working with diverse Victorian communities.

I hope it inspires both artists and communities to join together, get involved in the creative process and create some beautiful, inspirational and meaningful art that we can all enjoy.

**Hon Heidi Victoria MP**

*Minister for the Arts*

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# MAKING ART WITH COMMUNITIES – A WORK GUIDE

The idea for *Making Art with Communities – A Work Guide* has been brewing for some time. As people have become more aware of the value of community-based arts projects, there has been an increasing demand for advice and resources in this field. Arts Victoria, hoping to encourage and support the growth in community-based arts projects, brought together VicHealth and Arts Access to produce a guide – a series of practical help sheets to bring artists and community members together and get new projects off the ground. After considerable research, writing, discussion, debate and with the support of the Castanet network of Victorian arts organisations, artists and government agencies in its latter stage, this publication has emerged.

This work guide is not what was initially imagined, because the breadth and depth of community-based arts practice extended far beyond what could be outlined in a set of help sheets. There are many different ways of approaching this kind of arts project, and it is important to find the best model for your specific community. *Making Art with Communities – A Work Guide*, delivers not just the nitty gritty practicalities, but also snapshots the histories, philosophies and contexts of contemporary community-based arts practice, to help you find a model that fits your project and your community.

This guide is for artists, managers and community leaders, new or established. The volume of information, ideas, links and resources indicates the vast possibilities in the field. For those who are currently working on a project, you may use the guide to further develop an idea or research a particular aspect. Others may decide to read the guide before starting a project, to gain greater insight into each step of the process.

As well as profiling successful community-based projects, each chapter contains checklists and templates you can use to guide your own project as well as a list of relevant website links and resource documents for you to find out more.

Many of the projects featured in this guide were funded through Arts Victoria's Community Partnerships and Arts Development programs as well as by organisations supported by Arts Victoria and VicHealth.

However you choose to use *Making Art with Communities – A Work Guide*, we hope that it will be informative, helpful and stimulating.

**Berni M Janssen**

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## A MESSAGE FROM VICHEALTH

The importance of the arts and creative activities to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities shouldn't be underestimated.

As someone with an experience and understanding of the arts, I've seen first-hand the powerful results that bringing people together through arts activity can have.

Over our 25 year history, VicHealth has acknowledged the great potential of arts participation for health and directed our energies into learning more about how the arts fits into the health promotion jigsaw.

Over time, our investments and programs have become more sophisticated and our understanding about the links between art and health has deepened. This knowledge is now being shared between artists, arts organisations, funding and research agencies, international bodies and a broad range of communities and organisations, which are eager to explore the potential of the arts.

Participation in arts activity provides people from all walks of life with the opportunity for skills development, increased physical activity, new friends and expanded social circles. Art also brings communities closer together. It helps us to explore and interpret our stories and, in turn, share discoveries and learn more about how other people see the world.

The work of artists with communities across Victoria is built on a solid foundation of learnt expertise and shared investigation. The dedication and passion of artists and many of their project participants is an important reminder of the power of collaboration.

VicHealth is proud to have been involved in the development of *Making Art with Communities: A Work Guide*. We are sure it will prove an asset for those already working in the field, a valuable resource for anyone exploring the potential for art in their communities, and we hope it inspires more creative community activities now and into the future.

**Jerril Rechter**  
CEO, VicHealth

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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network. They have all contributed invaluable ideas and feedback and we are grateful for their expertise.

As is common with many community-based arts projects, this publication itself changed considerably from inception to execution. We are grateful to Anne Kershaw, Erica Sanders, Robin Laurie and Cath Colvin who worked on the numerous reviews and edits of this publication; to Michelle Armstrong and Tanya Farley who stayed with the project through moments of tumult; and to Andy Miller who managed the latter stages, bringing this project to completion.

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# **1. ARTS IN THE COMMUNITY**

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*Visible Sessions* Live at the Black Box as part of *Mix It Up* by the Arts Centre in Association with Multicultural Arts Victoria (2009) Photo: Damien Vincenzi

# 1. ARTS IN THE COMMUNITY

A community is defined by the people within it. By where they are, what they do, what they are interested in, or how they identify themselves. It may be a small town, school, prison, university, hospital or a community with special interests such as the environment.

## THE COMMUNITY-BASED ARTS APPROACH

A community-based arts project is where an artist works with a community to facilitate a creative process that enables participants to express their needs, aspirations, inspirations, identity or sense of place.

Such activities are sometimes referred to as community arts, artists in the community or community cultural development (CCD). These terms originated at different times and are often associated with different forms of engagement and practice. Like most terminology, their meaning has changed over time and is dependent on the people who use them. A search on the internet using these terms will display the enormous range of projects included in the field. The Links and Resources section at the end of this chapter has many examples of interesting sites.

Community-based arts projects are increasingly being used by organisations and groups in areas such as youth, health and community development because they are able to reach people and have a meaningful impact on their lives. Artists and arts organisations have been working with communities for many years. This publication brings together some of their knowledge and experience to assist people who want to undertake community-based arts projects, but may have limited experience. It has been developed to inspire, inform and support both artists and community members.

Although the range of projects undertaken in community contexts is diverse, the most successful projects place emphasis on the participants' development, the creative processes and the artistic outcomes. Making art with people requires an honest exchange and a safe space where people can challenge ideas, fearlessly experiment, learn new skills, speak their minds and be respected.

No two projects will be the same. Each community is different, artists work in different ways, and the aims and outcomes will vary. The common ground, however, is a shared belief in the creativity of all people and their inherent right to express what is important to them in a manner that is relevant, challenging and fun.

The following chapters look at how to work with communities and artists to develop, implement and manage community-based arts projects that will benefit all those involved. Each chapter ends with Links and Resources you can access to find out more about the topics covered.

*Comment recorded at the 3D Symposium for artists who work with communities, Melbourne, 2005*

Every community-based arts project is different, but there are many shared values and qualities... art-making, participation, inclusion, mutual respect, self-determination, dialogue, democracy, collaborations, empowerment.

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## A SNIPPET OF ARTS AND COMMUNITY HISTORY

Making art in and with communities is not a recent phenomenon. Culture is intrinsic to communities and art is an important aspect of culture. At different times and in different countries there have been community-based arts movements associated with those who did not have the rights, skills or access to determine how they were represented. Examples include the working class, women, Indigenous people, those from minority ethnic groups, prisoners, migrants and refugees.

In the 1930s, the United States experienced a grassroots amateur movement of workers creating theatre for workers. A sense of 'working class culture' was developed, inspired by the Russian Revolution and fuelled by the conditions of the Great Depression (Cohen-Cruz 2002).

In the 1950s and 60s, theatre director Augusto Boal developed the Theatre of the Oppressed in Brazil. This style of theatre was based on dialogue rather than monologue, which Boal believed led to oppression. He evolved various forms of theatre workshops and performances that encouraged and enabled dialogue, critical thinking, action and fun.

In the West during the 1960s, community art as an expression of participatory democracy flourished. Workshops in prisons, unions, schools, churches, day care centres and facilities for people with, for example, physical/emotional challenges, eating disorders and terminal illnesses occurred (Cohen-Cruz 2002).

Australia began to develop its own community art culture around this time. WEST Theatre Company, established in 1978, was one of the first professional community theatre companies established in this country (see opposite page), along with Murray River Performing Group and the Mill Theatre.

Arts and community projects occur in many contexts and can raise community awareness about many issues, including health promotion, environment and sustainability, urban renewal, rural revitalisation, cultural planning, community strengthening, social inclusion and cultural diversity.



*Chronicles: Searching for Songlines* Western Edge Youth Arts (2010)  
Photo: Carla Gottens

## The Australian Context: WEST Theatre Company

*Meme McDonald Artistic Director of WEST Theatre Company during its first eight years*

WEST Theatre Company was established in 1978 by four Victorian College of the Arts Drama School graduates. We were specifically trained to establish companies that initiated original work in collaboration with communities with the aim of creating new impetus for professional theatre and for communities alike. We were conscious of creating new horizons and, in the late 70s, were riding the wave of a cultural renaissance in Australia. Across the country in film, literature, dance, circus, the visual arts and music (particularly rock music), a bold and shameless accent was being placed on expressing who we were as a people. The rest of the world was showing interest. A lot of this 'newness' came out of engagement across cultures at the centre of the country (Alice Springs) but there was an equally strong sense of a cultural 'revolution' taking place in those parts of the city where stories had remained untold or ignored. Community arts burst onto the arts scene, demanding attention against a backdrop of political activism that was drawing the attention of international media. In the words of Shane Howard and his band, Goanna, 'The winds of change were blowing down the line'.

Community arts played a leading role in turning the lights on issues of inequity and injustice that had been sleeping at the heart of the country – race and gender issues were top of the list. Passion and commitment turned heads and changed thinking as to who art was for and who it could be about. The new storytellers challenged craft with content. This created raging debates at all levels – between artists, between administrators, between funding bodies and between many others in the mix. The nature and purpose of art was up for debate. A lot of debates about semantics followed in the wake of this wave of action. Thirty years later we're left still struggling over words.

One of the last large-scale outdoor events I directed in this community arts style was in 1993. *Waderbirds – Odyssey of the Wetlands* was an international arts/environmental science tour: community arts gone global. I directed a team of theatre, dance, visual and technical artists to create four large-scale events telling the story of a migratory bird – the Eastern Curlew – and the importance for its survival as it traversed a chain of wetlands across the globe. We followed the migration path of the bird, staging epic one-off events with communities in Mangere, Aotearoa/New Zealand, then in Melbourne under the West Gate Bridge, in Broome on Town Beach and finally in Kushiro, with our production base in a sushi factory and the event staged in a park on the north island of Hokkaido in Japan.

Participants were in the hundreds in each location, audiences in the thousands.

In the work I have done since – including my work as a writer and my position at the Greater City of Geelong as Artistic Director of Connecting Identities, part of the Cultural Development Network's *Generations* project – my creativity has continued to be fuelled by my relationship to the land and the indigenous cultures around me. I admire the cultural confidence in these communities, where art is an essential to life, respected for its ability to create awareness and connection, to nurture identity. I think we are in a unique position in Australia to build our 'cultural confidence' given the diversity of cultures we draw on from distant homelands, together with the sophistication of this land's tradition of art from the oldest, continuous living culture in the world.

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## THE VALUE OF ART

Art enables people to share their experiences, thoughts, feelings and imaginations. It is a means by which people can express their sense of identity. It enriches our lives by providing us with a way to see and experience the world through the eyes of others.

Art is intrinsically valuable because it:

- tells powerful personal and community stories;
- helps us to understand other people's experiences, developing our sense of compassion and humanity;
- challenges mainstream ideas and presents alternatives;
- presents complex and conflicting ideas in an accessible way;
- helps us see differently;
- encourages the imagination;
- opens a space for critical thinking;
- brings hope – it can help us to imagine what does not exist, and give it shape;
- transforms us, our communities, ideas and situations; and
- provides a public platform for expression.



*Balehenge. Art Is...Energy Festival (1998) Source: Arts Victoria*

## Unpacking 'Community'

*Jude Anderson Artistic Director, Punctum*

Take the word 'community', pull it apart, then look at the segments.

'Comme un' – French for 'as one'. Community is a coming together 'as one', as a people, to explore and question 'as one'.

'Common' – Community is what we have in common; what we share.

'Unity' – That which unites us.

When you pull the word apart, study its ingredients and consider what binds, you'll often find 'humanity'.

That's our starting point.

Every work Punctum builds is an exploration of humanity – the glue that means that for all our differences we can live together as a people – trust, empathy, ingenuity, humility and courage.

Community is the chunky bit. The visible architecture and humanity is what holds it together.

Punctum often starts with architecture that's changing – sheds, shacks, gasworks, basements, dams. We look at what that architecture says about how our humanity is changing. We peek and poke at what seeps out the cracks.

We do this hand-in-hand with people from the community in which we're working. We explore and question with them. The stories and advice they share with us provide clues that inform our work.

It's my hope that the built work reflects our common investigation into the architecture of humanity, whether it's staged in a sheep paddock, parking lot, dry dam or factory. We seek to do this in a way that is as lively and poetic, as it is surprising and memorable.



*Dinner in a Dry Dam* by Jude Anderson in collaboration with Carl Pannuzzo and Penny Larkins (2009) Photo: Julie Millowick

## THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY-BASED ARTS

Art is the expression of an individual or, if the process has been a collective one, an expression of a community. Democracy, social justice and civil society all depend on the individuals who make up the community and their ability to speak their hearts and minds. Often community-based arts projects involve members of communities who are acquiring the skills and/or confidence to tell their own stories, with their own voices.

Communities that embrace diversity, creative expression and cultural activity are richer, stronger and more able to deal with social challenges.

Engagement with the arts can address social inequality and disadvantage, and create community vitality and shared identity. The arts can contribute to other areas of society including education, health, the justice system, community building and reconciliation. A community where people participate in cultural activity has greater potential for connection, caring and social development.

Making art in community contexts is a social activity: it involves sharing, collaborating and building relationships with others. There is mounting evidence that participating in the arts develops creative thinking that is transferable across all knowledge areas. It teaches us to link diverse ideas and experiences. Creative thinking and the flexibility of mind and action are increasingly recognised as desirable attributes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Over the years there has been much anecdotal reporting about the benefits community-based arts can provide to communities and participating individuals. People involved have spoken about their increased sense of wellbeing. They feel less isolated, can communicate more easily and feel more confident.

Research undertaken both locally and internationally supports this anecdotal evidence.



*Baluk Arts Stencil Exhibition Hosier Lane, Melbourne (2012) Photo: Tracey-Lea Smith*



## Evidence of the Benefits of Community-Based Arts

*Strengthening Local Communities: Arts in Community Settings*, produced by Arts Victoria and the Department of Victorian Communities in 2006, evaluated two community-focused arts funding programs. This research found that the arts strengthens communities by:

- engaging hard to reach demographics, such as youth, ethnic and socio-economically disadvantaged communities;
- providing a creative focus for communities to explore issues and aspirations;
- creating new and diverse artistic work and cultural experiences;
- developing confidence, pride and a sense of belonging in participants; and
- providing artists and participants with new career pathways and work opportunities.

Using a sample of 313 small arts organisations in Victoria, Arts Victoria's *Small Arts Organisations Research and Evaluation Report* found that as well as producing art, the estimated 7,800 organisations achieved a number of community development outcomes. These include:

- enhancing community creativity and community wellbeing (76%);
- enhancing education, training and lifelong learning (67%);
- strengthening communities (66%);
- enhancing the learning experiences of young people (57%);
- providing opportunities for cultural tourism (53%);
- promoting community cultural participation through volunteering (52%); and
- improving health and wellbeing of people in their community (48%) (Deloitte 2007).

## Precious Little

*Precious Little* was a project undertaken by artist Malcolm McKinnon with and for the community of Nowa Nowa in East Gippsland, Victoria. The project involved the creation of a short film telling first-hand stories of gleaning, scavenging and making do in the lives and work of a range of local identities. The film was created as a celebration of the culture of inventiveness and frugality that has long been evident in this particular community.

*Precious Little* had its premiere screening in Nowa Nowa as part of a community festival event called *The Long Now* in October 2007. The film was also presented as part of a long-term exhibition called *Open for Inspection*, which ran in Nowa Nowa until April 2008. Sections of the film were post-produced for viewing online at: [www.nowanowamade.com](http://www.nowanowamade.com)

The project also provided a mentoring opportunity for three local artists who worked with Malcolm to record material for the film.

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## LINKS AND RESOURCES

The following links and resources provide valuable information on the topics covered in this chapter. Many of the links and resources provided in other chapters will also be relevant. These links and resources are a few examples of the information that is available online. Complete your own internet search to discover more.

### Victorian organisations and resources

- **Arts Access Victoria**  
[www.artsaccess.com.au](http://www.artsaccess.com.au)  
The Victorian peak body for disability arts.
- **Arts Victoria**  
[www.arts.vic.gov.au](http://www.arts.vic.gov.au)  
The government body charged with advising on and implementing arts policy, developing the arts and cultural industries across the State and ensuring access for all Victorians. Arts Victoria supports the arts and cultural industries to encourage excellence, develop good ideas, build audiences, encourage participation and improve facilities. The Arts Victoria website has information about grants, publications, useful websites and arts and cultural organisations.
- **Culture Victoria Website**  
<http://cv.vic.gov.au>  
Culture Victoria aims to deliver access to Victorian cultural collections.
- **Castanet**  
[www.castanet.net.au](http://www.castanet.net.au)  
A network of organisations which supports community arts in Victoria. Castanet offers professional development programs as well as planning, brokering and information services to individuals and organisations who are interested in developing community-based arts projects and activities.
- **Centre for Cultural Partnerships**  
<http://vca.unimelb.edu.au/ccp>  
The Centre for Cultural Partnerships is a dynamic, interdisciplinary hub, committed to inter-cultural methods of enquiry and collaboration. The Centre brings together the resources and expertise of creative arts practitioners, researchers, partnership brokers, arts educators, planners and public policy analysts to provide new models in teaching, professional development and knowledge exchange.
- **Cultural Development Network**  
[www.culturaldevelopment.net.au](http://www.culturaldevelopment.net.au)  
An independent non-profit agency that links communities, artists and local government councils across Victoria. The website includes publications, projects and links.
- **Multicultural Arts Victoria**  
[www.multiculturalarts.com.au](http://www.multiculturalarts.com.au)  
Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV) is a leading arts organisation promoting cultural diversity in the arts.
- **Museums Australia (Victoria)**  
<http://www.mavic.asn.au/>  
The Victorian branch of a membership organisation providing national and state services, and national networks for people with specific museum interests.
- **Public Galleries Association of Victoria**  
<http://pgav.org.au/>  
The Association represents and supports over 50 public art galleries across Victoria. The network includes university galleries, art museums and contemporary art spaces in metropolitan and regional Victoria.
- **Regional Arts Victoria (RAV)**  
[www.rav.net.au](http://www.rav.net.au)  
RAV is the peak body for regional artists and arts organisations, and the leading organisation for regional creative practice in Victoria. RAV inspires art across the state. Through advocacy, creative consultancy, touring, education and specialised resources, RAV develops and sustains creative communities and artistic practice all over Victoria.

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- **Royal Historical Society of Victoria**

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

The peak body of local and specialist historical societies throughout Victoria, and the historical society for the City of Melbourne.

- **Strengthening Local Communities; Arts in Community Settings**

[www.arts.vic.gov.au/Research\\_and\\_Resources/Evaluation\\_Projects/Strengthening\\_Local\\_Communities](http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/Research_and_Resources/Evaluation_Projects/Strengthening_Local_Communities)

The findings of an evaluation of two community-focused grants programs – Arts Development for Communities and Arts Residencies – which were undertaken in 2006.

- **VicHealth**

[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)

The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation invests in arts activities to achieve health and wellbeing outcomes for individuals and communities. The website hosts useful resources and tools, evaluation and research, as well as information on a range of funded projects.

### National organisations

- **Art and Wellbeing**

[www.australiacouncil.gov.au/art%20and%20wellbeing](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/art%20and%20wellbeing)

An Australia Council web page that assembles ideas and case study material that demonstrates connections between community cultural development and government 'wellbeing' initiatives. Written by Deborah Mills.

- **Australia Council for the Arts**

[www.australiacouncil.gov.au](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au)

The Federal Government's arts funding and advisory body. The website has information, publications and grant information.

- **Community Cultural Development in Australia**

[www.ccd.net](http://www.ccd.net)

A community development website detailing projects, people, links and publications.

- **Regional Arts Australia**

[www.regionalarts.com.au](http://www.regionalarts.com.au)

A national regional arts website including a regional artist directory, case studies of recent arts projects and information on creative volunteering workshop programs.

- **PlaceStories**

<http://placestories.com>

Placestories is an easy to use digital platform for artists and community members to share stories, ideas and knowledge.

### State organisations and resources

- **Arts Nexus**

[www.artsnexus.com.au](http://www.artsnexus.com.au)

The peak development agency for the creative sectors and communities of Tropical North Queensland. Arts Nexus connects artists, creative producers, organisations, enterprises and communities.

- **Artslink Queensland**

[www.artsyakka.com](http://www.artsyakka.com) or [www.qac.org.au](http://www.qac.org.au)

Artslink Queensland's online resource of practical tools and templates, information and ideas to take the hard work out of developing community arts.

- **Community Arts Network SA**

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

A South Australian community development website which includes a good list of publications about cultural community development and information on where they can be obtained. The website also includes published artwork and a national CCD journal and offers distance education in the Graduate Diploma in Community Cultural Development.

- **Community Arts Network WA**

[www.canwa.com.au](http://www.canwa.com.au)

The Community Arts Network WA mobilises and incubates community-based creative ventures. The website provides information on funding, resources, information and contacts.

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## LINKS AND RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

- **Country Arts SA**

[www.countryarts.org.au](http://www.countryarts.org.au)

Supports the arts in regional South Australia. The website includes information on funding and regional arts programs.

- **Red Hot Arts Central Australia**

[www.redhotarts.com.au](http://www.redhotarts.com.au)

A not-for-profit organisation which promotes the cross-cultural arts sector of Central Australia. The website provides information about arts activities and resources for artists.

- **Tasmanian Regional Arts**

[www.tasregionalarts.org.au](http://www.tasregionalarts.org.au)

Works with artists and a wide range of organisations and communities to support the development, presentation and promotion of the arts throughout Tasmania. The website includes information on arts projects and resources.

### International organisations

- **Agenda 21**

[www.agenda21culture.net](http://www.agenda21culture.net)

Agenda 21 for Culture is a publication of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the international peak body for local government. This website addresses the importance of cities and local governments adopting cultural development.

- **Arts Council England**

[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

The national development agency for the arts in England. The website includes comprehensive publications and information sheets.

- **Asialink**

<http://www.asialink.unimelb.edu.au/>

Asialink is Australia's leading centre for the promotion of public understanding of the countries of Asia and of Australia's role in the region. The organisation is a key provider of information, training and professional networks.

- **Center for the Study of Art and Community**

[www.artandcommunity.com](http://www.artandcommunity.com)

A North American association of creative leaders from business, government and the arts who have succeeded in building bridges between the arts and a wide range of community, public and private sector interests.

- **City of Seattle. Office of Arts and Cultural Affairs**

[www.cityofseattle.net/arts](http://www.cityofseattle.net/arts)

An organisation that promotes the value of arts and culture in Seattle. The office heightens awareness of the civic value of culture in such arenas as arts education, economic vitality and cultural tourism. The website includes information about artists, art projects, public art and education.

- **Creative New Zealand**

<http://www.creativenz.govt.nz/>

New Zealand's national arts development agency developing, investing in and advocating for the arts.

- **Partners for Livable Communities**

[www.livable.org](http://www.livable.org)

An organisation that recognises neighbourhood-based arts and cultural organisations as unique stakeholders in enhancing poor neighbourhoods through programs that make use of local identity and public space, promote social integration, offer opportunities and empower all to have a strong voice for change.

- **The International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA)**

[www.ifacca.org/](http://www.ifacca.org/)

The International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA) is the global network of arts councils and ministries of culture.

Other relevant references are listed through this Guide. Also see items listed in the References section on page 105 for further reading.

*Website addresses and references are correct as of May 2013.*

## **2. WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES**

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*Tangle* Polyglot Theatre (2011) Photo: Aaron Walker

## 2. WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

This chapter provides information and advice on how to develop effective arts projects in communities. Considering these issues before you start a project will help it run smoothly and provide the best opportunities for people to contribute and value their experience.

Working with communities has ethical, cultural and legal implications. It is important to do background research about any community you are planning to work with to avoid any misunderstandings or misgivings. If you are not sure about something related to the project or the community, ask questions. Always act with respect, honesty and clarity.

Arts projects involving community participants must be actively supported by community organisations and members. Do the community really want to do it? Is it mutually beneficial? These are important questions to ask. To be successful, projects should engage people and provide a range of meaningful ways for them to be involved, as well as providing appropriate respect and acknowledgement. From the outset, there needs to be clear dialogue between all involved.

The concept of 'Community' is not an unproblematic one but people appear unable to speak of it in terms other than positive and consequently people can have a difficult time critiquing community art.

*p.28 pARTicipation Forum Report 2012*

### CLARIFYING KEY VALUES AND BELIEFS

Although no two community-based arts projects are the same, those that are successful tend to share a number of core values and attributes, including a commitment to communities defining their own issues, aspirations and sense of culture.

All projects should promote and incorporate:

- social inclusion and equality – respecting diversity and inclusive of differences and needs;
- active participation;
- creative collaboration;
- community and/or collective ownership;
- transparency, clear processes and honesty;
- A clear understanding of expectations, process and context;
- reciprocity – sharing, caring and generosity;
- respect and trust;
- empowerment of participants;
- development of skills, knowledge, capacity and capability; and
- a shared understanding that everyone has rights and responsibilities.

## Cooking Stories

### Julie Shiels Artist

*Cooking Stories* was a writing and photographic project with food, recipes and story-telling at its core. I worked with nine refugee communities that had arrived in Australia at different times and in different ways – from Chilean refugees who fled after the fall of Allende in 1973 to Iraqis and Afghanis who arrived on boats from Indonesia between 1999 and 2001.

The vital ingredient in *Cooking Stories* was the telling of a story about a particular meal eaten by each of the participants on their journey to Australia - either before departure, in transit, or on arrival here. The project focused on food so that the people who participated were able to describe their experiences without visiting the sites of pain and trauma and to uncover stories that were beyond the suffering. I also didn't want to become another interrogator and hoped the new stories could run in parallel to ones they were forced to tell immigration officials to qualify for our country's compassion.

By using this method we presented stories and images that were a powerful description of life, culture and resilience. The aim was to create art with these communities that uncovered new memories that avoided using suffering as the dominant marker of refugee experience. *Cooking Stories* also brought forth experiences that connected many refugee communities across time and provided a platform for different cultures to share their stories.

The work was exhibited in the Immigration Museum in Melbourne from December 2003 to October 2004 and at the Footscray Community Art Centre. An estimated 100,000 people saw the exhibitions.

#### **Credits:**

Developed, produced and curated by *Julie Shiels*

#### **Photos:**

Taken in collaboration with participants by *Fatima Arauja, Nga Diep and Julie Shiels*

**Additional photos:** *David Lorime*

**Photomontages:** *Julie Shiels*

**Background shots:** *Shafiga: R. Le Moyne\**; *Sarah: Jogo trading\**; *Etedal: Tom Mann*; *Karim: P Moutzsis\**; *Anna: Fivo Freitas*; *Graziela: Gil Santos*; *Joseph: Samudra Peiris* \*photographs supplied by UNHCR

#### **Community organisations**

Timorese community - *Belgium Ave Neighbourhood House*

Russian Jewish community – *Shalom Association*

Afar community – *Afar Community Association in Victoria*

Vietnamese community – *Collingwood and Finbar Neighbourhood Houses*

Chilean Community – *Entre Todos, Channel 31, Community Television*

Afghan, Iranian and Sri Lankan refugee community – *Asylum Seekers Welcome Centre*





# RESPECTING AND ACKNOWLEDGING PARTICIPANTS

## Ethical Considerations

People need to know that the project will operate with integrity and in the best interests of the community. A set of ethical guidelines – values and principles – will encourage appropriate behaviour. These need to be discussed with the community participants and project partners at the start of the project and applied throughout its duration.

While a formal set of ethical guidelines is not always required, an awareness of the basic principles of respect, honesty, good manners and confidentiality will contribute to the project's success. Some projects will require a formal code of ethics: a clear outline of what is or is not considered ethical/acceptable behaviour by the group. Whether this is needed will depend on the nature and experience of the people involved.

Confidentiality, privacy, copyright, intellectual property and accountability incorporate moral principles as well as legal responsibilities that will continue to exist after a project has been completed. How these matters will be handled must be clear from the outset. A brief outline of each of these is provided on the following pages. More information is available in Links and Resources provided at the end of this chapter.

## Accountability

Running a community-based arts project requires a high level of responsibility and accountability in all aspects of the project – moral, legal, financial and artistic. The project team must ensure that it has done all in its power to ensure high standards are maintained in all areas.

## Negotiating a Shared Understanding of Protocols

### *Shahin Shafaei Artist*

It is always very useful at the beginning of the project to ask yourself and the participants:

Why are we doing this?

In exploring the answers to this question, everyone gets the opportunity to share their views, values, principles, reasons, expectations, priorities and needs.

Once these answers are addressed, a set of rules and protocols that are inclusive and that relate to this specific group can be negotiated.

Protocols and ethical considerations are made to empower the project and the community involved. They are the basis for proper interpersonal relationships that can provide the common ground upon which the project can be built.



*Skid* Arena Theatre Company (2006) Photo: Joel Chester-Fildes

# RESPECTING AND ACKNOWLEDGING PARTICIPANTS (CONTINUED)

## Confidentiality

In many projects information of a private and sensitive nature can be revealed in workshops or interviews. Unless it is understood that this information will be treated in a confidential way, people can be left feeling vulnerable. Participants need to feel safe and assured that what they say is not spoken about outside that forum. If material is to be used in a wider context, for example in a public performance, it is imperative that all participants understand from the outset how this information may be used and agree for this to happen. To ensure confidentiality, develop a contract/agreement with a confidentiality clause that all participants sign.

### Confidentiality and the Law

'The law of confidential information prevents the unauthorised use and disclosure by a person of another's confidential information, including ideas that are communicated in trust and confidence.'

*Arts Law Centre of Australia, 2013*

For further information on confidentiality, visit the Arts Law Centre of Australia website [www.artslaw.com.au](http://www.artslaw.com.au)

## Privacy

Individuals and organisations need to adhere to the Privacy Act 1988 that relates to the collection, handling and use of personal information. Organisations, artists and project managers should only collect the necessary personal information from participants (such as home addresses, phone numbers, medical information) to manage the project. This information should not be disclosed to another party without the person's consent.

## Code of Conduct

A Code of Conduct outlines expectations of acceptable behaviour, contributions and outcomes for project participants. It establishes boundaries and clarifies what commitment is required. A Code of Conduct that is negotiated with participants is more likely to gain acceptance and a willingness to adhere to the rules. A formal Code of Conduct might be established for a project where the guidelines need to be clearly emphasised. Even if a formal Code of Conduct is not developed, it is always useful to discuss expectations at the beginning of each project.

Other terms that might be used for a Code of Conduct are 'Code of Manners' or 'Job Description'. As the job description from the Women's Circus indicates, these documents can be very clearly and simply expressed.



*The Song Room (2011) Photo: Marcus Thomson*

## Women's Circus Member Job Description

Your job is to:

- Have fun
- Allow yourself time to develop
- Challenge yourself
- Work with other women in a feminist way, i.e. recognise all women are different
- Support and encourage other women
- Arrive at workshops/rehearsals on time
- Be prepared to take direction as the show moves from rehearsal to performance
- Recognise that all theatre work is of equal importance, i.e. administration, cleaning up, technical areas, performance, training, rehearsal
- Talk to the trainer, director, other women if you have a problem
- Work safely as an individual and with other women

*Women's Circus*

## Copyright and Intellectual Property

Copyright law protects the ownership of creative products such as visual art, film, writing, music and multimedia. A work is protected as soon as it is written, painted or recorded in some way. There is no registration or formal procedure involved. The general rule is that the author (creator) owns copyright.

Copyright is a set of exclusive rights. These rights give the copyright owner exclusive control over certain uses of the work. This gives the copyright owner the opportunity to negotiate and receive payment when other people want to use the work.

There are laws that protect the products that people have created as a result of intellectual effort. These are generally called intellectual property laws.

When working with communities you need to be very clear about who owns the work produced throughout the project. If an individual creates the work they can retain copyright and grant the project use of it for a specific time or purpose. There are exceptions to this, however. For example, if it is commissioned work or a work created during the course of employment, copyright may be retained by the commissioner or employer.



*Black Harmony Gathering (2010) Photo: James Henry*

Copyright and intellectual property issues can be complex, especially if you are working in a group context. If a creative work is devised through collaboration, some form of collective copyright agreement will need to be negotiated. If a creative work is jointly owned by many people, it may be more practical to authorise one or two people to give permission for use, particularly after the project is completed.

## RESPECTING AND ACKNOWLEDGING PARTICIPANTS (CONTINUED)

### Moral Rights

The Australian Copyright Act recognises the following three moral rights of individual creators/authors:

- the right to be named as the author or creator of the work;
- the right not to have authorship of the work falsely attributed; and
- the right of integrity of authorship – i.e. the right not to have the work subjected to derogatory treatment.

Moral rights apply to a wide range of copyright works including literary, artistic, musical and dramatic works and films. In 2007, the Copyright Act was amended to introduce moral rights for performers who contribute to the sounds of the categories of live performances and performers whose live performances are recorded in a sound recording.

Moral rights are granted only to individuals. It is not possible to assign or transfer moral rights.

Even when a creator has assigned all of his or her intellectual property rights (e.g. copyright) in a work by contract, the author still retains moral rights in the work. Similarly, even if the creator is an employee and his/her employer owns copyright in the work the creator still retains moral rights.

Moral rights continue in force for as long as copyright subsists in the work (subject to some exceptions).

There are various defences to infringement of moral rights. One of these is that moral rights are not infringed where the author has given his or her written consent in terms which comply with the Copyright Act. Generally, the consent should refer to the specific work and acts or omissions in relation to that work.

*Michelle Momdjian, Freehills, Sydney*  
*Source: Arts Law Centre of Australia*

### The Artful Dodgers Studio — Jesuit Social Services

*Forest Keegel Community Cultural Development Artist*

Engaging in art projects can provide participants with choices and control about the aesthetic qualities of a piece of art or music. For people who are unable to exert control over other areas of their lives such as trauma this can be particularly empowering.

We think it is important for participants not to be labelled and further stigmatized as ‘at risk youth’. Often the media is keen to focus on a bad kid gone good story. Through ongoing conversation with young people and the media we try to shift this focus and instead refer to our participants as artists.

We endeavour to provide a variety of ways for young people to develop concepts and contribute their ideas to a project. Not everyone feels comfortable speaking in front of others, and due to the flexible nature of the open studios, we don’t have all artists in attendance simultaneously. So, we collaboratively develop projects through group meetings; one on one conversations; a book on the table that anyone can add suggestions ideas and source material to at anytime; and a wall of images, a timeline and ways to engage.

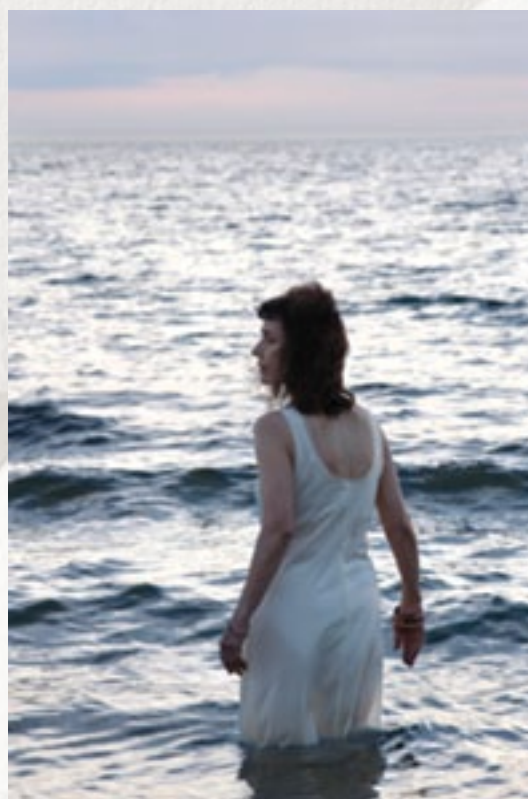
Public presentations of work can be challenging and nerve wracking for all artists, let alone those that are new to the process. In the build up to a public outcome lead artists and facilitators can be very busy, but it is important not to take over the process and leave participating artists behind. We support our artists by gathering as a group prior to an opening in the exhibition space to celebrate the work and share some food. After exhibiting we have a debrief and engage the artists in selecting images that document their work.

## Sundowner — Kage and Alzheimer's Australia Victoria

*Christine Bolt* General Manager, Communications - Alzheimer's Australia Victoria

The theatre production *Sundowner* was developed through a series of community forums over eighteen months, which brought together a team from Alzheimer's Australia Victoria, people with younger onset dementia, carers of those with dementia, and the KAGE creative team, a company renowned for its collaborative approach to dance theatre. Sundowning is the name of a behaviour associated with dementia when some people with dementia become particularly restless in the afternoon and early evening. The production since 2011 has starred Helen Morse (*A Town like Alice*, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*) and is the result of years of research and community engagement. It expertly combines theatre and physicality to tell the story of so many Australian families. The discussions within the forums were instrumental in creating *Sundowner*. Participants provided vital ideas, feedback and genuine stories that have subsequently shaped the philosophy and direction of the show.

Further information about *Sundowner* can be found at: [www.kage.com.au](http://www.kage.com.au) or [www.fightdementia.org.au/vic](http://www.fightdementia.org.au/vic)



*Sundowner* (2011) Photo: Jeff Busby

## A Few Thoughts on Community Cultural Development ...and Good Art

*Catherine Larkins Artist, Educator and Community Cultural Development Worker*

Lennie Hayes is a Bidawal/Gunai man. When he became Koori Liaison Officer for the Common Ground Celebrations in Lakes Entrance in 2007, he said, 'it is all about trust, honesty and respect'. I have to agree with Lennie. When people ask me, *how did you get all those people who are not artists to do such unexpected things with passion and spirit?*, Lennie's words and a few other key things come to mind.

Good art comes from good ideas – it is as simple as that!

*BUT ...*

How communities can be inspired to apply their collective and unique skills in the name of 'good art' is a little more complex. The artist who has the idea, however wild and ambitious it may be, must earn enough respect from the community to gain their full support. The smaller the community, the more important it is to show honesty, build trust and gain that support.

Over my 20 years in CCD projects I have always 'done my homework' before rocking into town and expecting loyalty from the locals. The first step is to understand the local history – black and white!

Introduce yourself to the original families – especially the elders, Indigenous and non-Indigenous – and listen to their stories. Ask their permission to work in their community and on their land. Once this initial respect has been established try to work with as many of those families as you can so that two or three generations of local people can make a meaningful, community building contribution.

Look at various sites to base the project. The place where people come to work and gather should have a 'comfortable vibe' and be suitable for the type of work to be achieved.

Be prepared to travel to visit remote people and encourage their contribution.

Separate the tasks that are intrinsic to realising the big picture. Define the responsibilities of each task from the most highly skilled to very simple and then delegate with respect and careful consideration. Never set someone up to fail. Collaborative arts projects are touched by many hands and this is a unique opportunity to mix and maximise the skills and goodwill of many.

Sometimes extraordinary people present themselves, like Greg, the snow groomer who helped me realise the vision for Snow Circus at Possum Flat. Greg is not an artist but his knowledge of the mountain and his hands-on contribution was vital in making a site-specific and challenging installation in the snow a reality.

Take risks and break away from tradition. Look at the unique cultures, artforms, materials, skills and sites that exist in the community and consider their potential in the creative mix. This is often the most fundamental starting point.

Make sure there is always money for food, transport and communication in the budget. The sharing of food is a key part of building friendships in any community.

Most importantly, always maintain the integrity of the work without ego. Allow this integrity to flow through everything at every stage of its evolution.

# ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

## Participatory Processes

Participatory processes enable the community to be actively involved in different aspects and stages of the project, from the planning meetings through to making and presenting the art. Whatever the activity being undertaken, it should be structured in a way that allows people to participate comfortably.

Through participation people contribute to a shared set of values, goals and visions. They develop a commitment to the project and a sense of ownership. Through working with other people, relationships are built.

How people choose to engage with the project – being part of the planning team, making art, firing up the sausage sizzle or driving the community bus – all participation needs to be valued.

Successful participatory processes:

- ensure that people feel safe and respected;
- create a space where ideas can be proposed, explored, listened to, shared, debated, developed and supported;
- allow for all opinions, even those that one opposes;
- encourage people to contribute and participate in the project in their own way; and
- ensure that people know their contribution is valued and acknowledged as part of the success of the work.



*Home is where... 'The Dragon'* by Glenn Romanis and dragon dance performance. Quang Minh Temple, Big West Festival (2009)  
Photo: John Sones

## Collaborative Practice

'Collaborative practice' and 'collaboration' are terms often used in both community and contemporary arts contexts. Collaboration is like a good conversation where the people involved build on what each other has said. Elements of collaborative practice/collaboration include:

- The artist/s and participants develop the art together.
- Ideas are built over a period of time and by a number of processes. The originator may not be evident or important. The process of building toward the final idea is as important as the idea itself.
- Participants' thoughts, beliefs and knowledge are often challenged.
- Healthy debate and the space for disagreement and dispute is allowed.
- The different skills and knowledge that people contribute are respected and acknowledged. People have different roles and responsibilities.
- The artwork cannot be made by any one of the participating individuals on their own. Through working together, individuals not only contribute skills, knowledge and ideas, but propel each other to a higher level of achievement. The artwork produced is 'greater than the sum of its parts'.

Collaboration does not mean the outcome is 'art made by committee'. Artistic decisions do not have to be unanimous. The artist's role is to provide artistic leadership. (For more ideas about how artists can collaborate with communities, see Chapter 3. Working with Artists.)

## ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)

### Inclusive Practice

Race, ethnicity, gender, class, religion, disability and age are some of the elements that make up a person, but no single one of them defines the person. People are a complex mix of intersecting characteristics and each individual is unique. Knowledge of a religion or race, for example, does not necessarily translate into knowledge of how that is interpreted in the individual. It is always better to challenge your own assumptions and talk to the person about their beliefs and practices.

Within the context of this Guide, it is important to note that although greater social inclusion can be an outcome of inclusive arts practice, the art itself should be the primary focus of the practice.

Inclusive practice:

- enables people to make their own decisions;

- applies to arts practice that aims to include any marginalised group;
- is characterised by mutual exchange of skills and ideas and respect for the contribution of all participants;
- challenges fear and prejudice;
- is different from ‘access’ because the lived experience of marginalised artists is central to the creative development process;
- practises inclusion at all levels and stages of the creative process, including presentation of, and deliberation on, art produced through this process;
- challenges existing aesthetic criteria and notions of ‘excellence’;
- gives equal priority to process and outcome and incorporates ongoing feedback as part of the creative process; and
- assumes nothing.

### The Yooralla Independent Living Centre Collaborative Art Project

Between 26 November and 3 December 2006 seven young people with disabilities and five artists embarked on an Arts Victoria funded art project at ArtPlay on the banks of the Yarra River in Melbourne. The idea behind the project was to develop a creative relationship between professional artists and young people with a disability through producing a permanent artwork. The processes involved in the creation of the work focused on different ways people can make art utilising wheelchairs and adapted aids/tools.

During the production period large painted works were created on Tyvec material on the floor, enabling the participants to use their wheelchairs as painting tools to create large abstract works. Brooms, brushes, suspended funnels of paint, paint-filled balloons, spray guns, rollers and wheelchair tyres were just some of the tools used to make painted marks on the material. The painted material was then wrapped around large three-dimensional frames. These were then suspended like abstract box kite forms from the ceiling above the children’s

equipment library at Yooralla’s Independent Living Centre. The work exemplifies the creative and positive potentials of using ability-enhancing equipment as a means of art making.

The project was coordinated by artist Geoff Robinson of Yooralla’s Recreation Department and produced in collaboration with artists Laresa Kosloff, Helen Johnson, Tim Burke, Adrian Harris and students from Yooralla’s Glenroy and Belmore Specialist Schools.



Yooralla Independent Living Centre Collaborative Art Project (2006/07) Source: Geoff Robinson



# RESPECTING DIVERSITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

## Culturally Aware; Culturally Appropriate

Working in the community is working with diversity. People can identify themselves according to race, language, religion, gender, disability, class or common interest. These will be interpreted and expressed differently in each individual. Some of these factors may dictate, for example, what people wear, what they eat or how they address particular people. They may impact on matters of physical contact, communication and authority to act in certain situations. Trauma, mental health issues, disability, deafness and social marginalisation all have personal, cultural and social manifestations.

Communities, whatever their defining characteristics and however they may identify themselves, each have different cultural values, protocols and behaviours that need to be understood and respected. In the early stages of a project, not knowing or understanding the way things work in a community can be challenging. Conduct some research and ask questions to develop an understanding and practice of what is culturally appropriate.

To assist, you may wish to contact relevant organisation, such as Arts Access Victoria, Koorie Heritage Trust, or Multicultural Arts Victoria (see Resources List on page 31).

### Protocols

Protocols are a set of rules, regulations, processes, procedures, strategies or guidelines which help you work with people and communicate and collaborate with them appropriately. They are also standards of behaviour, respect and knowledge that need to be upheld. You might even think of them as a code of manners to observe.



*Gunai/Kurnai Tribal Shields* Arthur Pepper-Dawes. Acrylic on paper (2008) Photo: Ponch Hawkes

# RESPECTING DIVERSITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (CONTINUED)

## Working with Indigenous Communities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are as diverse as any other communities. They have different languages and cultural practices and they face different issues.

Some basic guidelines for working with Indigenous communities include:

- Respect, acknowledge and listen.
- Find contacts in your local Indigenous community who can assist, guide and advise you.
- Consult prior to the commencement of projects, not as an afterthought. Consultations should begin at the development and concept stage and continue at every stage through to the final evaluation. Consultation and negotiation are best done face-to-face. Always allow time for feedback.
- Gain permission from (depending on the community) Elders, local communities and traditional owners.
- Clarify copyright. Stories, songs and artworks may have been appropriated in the past. Therefore, as with all communities, discuss copyright early in the process.
- Be flexible. Indigenous communities often do not work at the same pace or in the same time frame as some non-Indigenous communities.
- Keep in contact with the community.
- Respect confidentiality.



*Passage Through Ceremony* Gayle Maddigan in association with members of the Dja Dja Wurrung and City of Greater Bendigo (2007)  
Source: Gayle Maddigan and Dean Scott

## Working with Newly Arrived Communities

Art making with community, is one of the most powerful mechanisms to facilitate a more socially cohesive and harmonious society. People who have recently arrived in Australia often maintain a strong connection to their own culture and the home they have left. They may not be familiar with the language, customs or bureaucratic procedures in Australia. Some of them have also experienced wars; fighting; imprisonment; torture; harassment; threats of personal and family harm; escape; lack of food, water, medical and educational support; and the rigorous demands of establishing refugee status. Many can be traumatised. As previously mentioned, when working with any community, conduct research and ask questions to develop an understanding of what is appropriate for the culture and situation.

Cultural diversity creates a rich and varied world, which increases the range of choices and nurtures human capacities and values, and therefore is a mainspring for sustainable development for communities, peoples and nations.

Cultural heritage as the wellspring of creativity- Creation draws on the roots of cultural tradition, but flourishes in contact with other cultures. For this reason, heritage in all its forms must be preserved, enhanced and handed on to future generations as a record of human experience and aspirations, so as to foster creativity in all its diversity and to inspire genuine dialogue among cultures.

UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)

## Emerge Cultural Network (EMERGE) & Visible Mentoring Program

EMERGE is an ongoing response to community consultations with emerging and refugee communities that have identified the need for increased participation and opportunities in the arts. EMERGE responds directly to the needs of communities and artists and plays a pivotal role in reflecting and articulating community ideals and identity for our currently under represented emerging and refugee artists and communities in the cultural life of Victoria. The EMERGE program has been developed through extensive consultation and feedback from the communities and is a direct response to community needs.

The main objective of EMERGE is to increase opportunities for emerging and refugee communities to participate in and control their own cultural development. EMERGE achieves this through linking emerging artists and communities with established professional artists, skilled facilitators and each other.

VISIBLE MENTORING, produced by Multicultural Arts Victoria, has given a kick start to over 350 musicians from Melbourne's refugee & emerging communities over the last seven years. Many of the Visible artists have come to Australia to escape troubles in their homeland and have faced challenges establishing themselves in Australia despite successful music careers 'back home'. The project has provided opportunities for these artists from emerging communities to develop and showcase their

musical talents, whilst offering the wider audience a glimpse of the vibrant and diverse music and culture these artists have brought with them to Australia.

Through the program, artists are partnered with industry experts who provide mentoring in areas such as song & performance development, chasing gig opportunities, band finances, web presence & other important aspects of the music industry. They work together with their mentor to produce a high quality track, professionally recorded, mixed & mastered, an Electronic Press Kit, website development workshops & promotional hi-res photographs. Performance skills are refined throughout the paid performance outcomes throughout the year, such as our annual Emerge Festivals in Fitzroy, Footscary, Brimbank, Shepparton & Dandenong.

At the end of each year the Visible compilation CD is produced and sent to industry partners and press, expanding exposure and opportunities for the artists. Key mentors working on the project include Nicky Bomba (Bustamento), Jason Heerah (Electric Empire), Jake Savona (Mista Savona), Ivan "Choi" Khatchoyan (Cookin' on 3 Burners), Carlo Santone (Blue King Brown), Jen Cloher & Tristan Ludowyk (Public Opinion Afro Orchestra).

Text: **Jill Morgan** Executive Officer, Multicultural Arts Victoria



*Emerge at The Drum* (2010) Photo: Damian Vincenzi



*Angel's Voices* Shepparton (2009) Photo: Damian Vincenzi

## RESPECTING DIVERSITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (CONTINUED)

### Working with Disability and Mental Health Agencies

Disability and mental health issues have particular personal, social and cultural manifestations. When working with people who are deaf, have disabilities or mental health issues:

- Find out as much as you can about the community beforehand.
- Treat participants as individuals. Each disability or mental health issue will require a different approach. Get to know the participants individually as soon as possible.
- Be upfront; ask questions of the person, their carer and the group.
- Clarify expectations and set boundaries for participants and for yourself.
- Allow people the time and space to make their own decisions.
- Where possible, partner with a disability or mental health organisation to ensure community participants and project workers are adequately supported.
- Determine access requirements and ensure these are met. People with disabilities or mental health issues often need carers and/or support staff to assist.
- Ensure staff members have clear roles. Clarify that the artist is responsible for the participant's artistic needs, and that the support staff are responsible for the participant's disability or mental health needs.
- Form groups according to 'like-mindedness'. Groups do not have to be formed from people who all have the same disability or mental health issue.
- Be aware that artists working with people with disabilities need police checks.
- Organise consent forms and release forms for participants.
- Be aware of changing terminology (see bubble).

Arts Victoria and the Office for Disability have been working as successful cross government partners to address barriers and identify strategies for increasing access to the arts for artists and audiences across Victoria. Arts and Disability Action Plan Training (ADAPT) is an innovative approach to increasing the participation of people with disability in arts and cultural life in Victoria. ADAPT is a result of a cross government partnership between Arts Victoria (Department of Premier and Cabinet) and the Office for Disability (Department of Human Services) and the *Picture This* research, which aims to increase access to the arts in Victoria for artists and audiences with disability. Arts Victoria and the Office for Disability commissioned Arts Access Victoria, the State's key arts and disability peak body, to develop ADAPT.



*Exploration of gestural and neutral poses* Way out West performance workshop (2012) Photo: Courtesy of Arts Access Victoria

In the field of disability, over the years we have moved from talking of 'people with special needs' to 'people with disabilities' and currently within disability activism there is a trend for disabled people to call themselves 'disabled people'.

Terms change and not everyone wants to use a particular set of terms, so the best way forward is to ask the person how they identify themselves.

**Jo Cohen** Arts Access Victoria

## Dare To Be Faceless

SheppARTon Festival hosted the Australian premiere of 'Dare to be Faceless' in 2012. Commissioned by La Mama Theatre and staged at the Riverlinks Arts Centre by Shepparton Theatre Arts Group, the play was written by Simon Tengende, a writer, director, performer and community cultural development practitioner originally from Zimbabwe. The production was supported through VicHealth's Arts About Us Roadshow, produced by Artistic Merit, with the aim of celebrating diversity and reducing race-based discrimination. It examined the lives of refugees in Australia through the exploration of characters Mkipo and Andy who shared vastly different life experiences. As a story of grief, tragedy, loss, justice and hope, the production explored the humanity we all share, bringing together a cast, crew and audience from the Goulburn Valley's ethnically diverse community and arts professionals from the local area and across the State.



*Dare to be Faceless* (2012) Photo: Speed Shop photography

## RESPECTING DIVERSITY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (CONTINUED)

### Symphony of Signing – Arts Access Victoria

Symphony of Signing was an arts project to engage and celebrate the deaf community developed by Deaf Arts Network and delivered in Melbourne and Geelong in 2012. Deaf Arts Network (DAN) is Australia's only deaf arts organisation and operates under the auspices of Arts Access Victoria. It delivers arts programs, events and professional development for deaf and hard of hearing people, a community historically marginalised from participation in the arts.

The creative focus of the project was Butterfly Hands, an original poem written collaboratively, in Australian sign language (Auslan), by poets from Melbourne's Deaf community and translated into English by Auslan interpreter, Jodee Mundy. Butterfly Hands powerfully conveys the social isolation and exclusion commonly experienced by many Deaf people.

Auslan is a beautiful and very physical language, ideally suited to performance. Working with the Deaf community and the Anti Racism Action Band (A.R.A.B), a culturally diverse, community-based, youth performing arts program in Melbourne's northern suburbs, DAN developed a public performance, Symphony of Signing, with the poem at its centre. The first performance was in Melbourne's Federation Square as part of the 2012 Light in Winter Festival. On a Saturday afternoon in June, on the public stage, Deaf poet, Walter Kadiki, signed the poem (with captioning in English on the big screen above); dancers from A.R.A.B. and DAN's Deaf Can Dance group interpreted the poem in dance and the Massive Choir, Australia's first hip hop choir whose young singers are primarily drawn from the Polynesian community, interpreted the poem in song. Deaf director, Medina Sumovic, then led the audience of more than 2,000 deaf and hearing people in an extremely moving conclusion to the event, teaching them to sign and perform the poem in Auslan en masse. High levels of attendance by members of the Deaf community was achieved

due to DAN's collaboration with Victoria's peak body for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, VicDeaf, which organised and promoted a pre-event barbecue for the Deaf community at Federation Square immediately prior to the performance.

Deaf Arts Network, Walter Kadiki and Medina Sumovic then took Symphony of Signing to Geelong in November 2012 as part of Geelong's annual Streets Are Alive Festival. Prior to the actual festival performance, DAN held a series of workshops in Geelong and the surrounding region for members of both the deaf and the hearing community to learn and rehearse Butterfly Hands, in Auslan, resulting in the creation of a region-wide Auslan signing choir for the festival. This choir performed Butterfly Hands twice in public on the opening day of the Festival.

Symphony of Signing is an excellent example of a community arts project designed to celebrate a particular community (in this case, the Deaf community), developed with and promoted to that community, but which also successfully engaged the wider community to achieve a much greater public awareness of deaf arts and a greater appreciation of the uniqueness and beauty of the language of the Australian Deaf community - Auslan.



*Symphony of Signing* at Federation Square (L-R) Jacqui Mellington, Walter Kadiki and Nina Mishriky (2012) Photo: Courtesy of VicDeaf

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## LINKS AND RESOURCES

The following links and resources provide valuable information on the topics covered in this chapter. Many of the links and resources provided in other chapters will also be relevant.

### Copyright and other legal issues

- **APRA**  
[www.apra-amcos.com.au](http://www.apra-amcos.com.au)  
The Australian Performing Rights Association provides information for composers, authors and publishers of music.
- **Arts Law Centre of Australia**  
[www.artslaw.com.au](http://www.artslaw.com.au)  
The Arts Law Centre of Australia website provides a range of legal information including sample contracts, glossary of terms used in contracts, information sheets regarding festivals, events, public liability insurance, intellectual property, privacy, Indigenous protocols and copyright.
- **Australian Copyright Council**  
[www.copyright.org.au](http://www.copyright.org.au)  
Australian Copyright Council provides information, legal advice, education and forums on Australian copyright law for content creators and consumers.
- **Copyright Agency Limited**  
[www.copyright.com.au](http://www.copyright.com.au)  
CAL is an Australian copyright management company whose role is to provide a bridge between creators and users of copyright material.
- **Copyright, Moral Rights and Community Cultural Development**  
[www.australiacouncil.gov.au/resources/reports\\_and\\_publications/subjects/community\\_arts/copyright\\_moral\\_rights\\_and\\_community\\_cultural\\_development](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/resources/reports_and_publications/subjects/community_arts/copyright_moral_rights_and_community_cultural_development)  
An Australia Council guide for organisations, communities and artists involved in collaborative arts projects.

- **Screenrights**  
[www.screen.org](http://www.screen.org)

Screenrights facilitates access to film, TV and radio and provides payment to copyright owners for the use of their work.

- **Viscopy**  
[www.viscopy.com](http://www.viscopy.com)

Viscopy is a visual arts copyright collecting agency. It is Australia and New Zealand's not-for-profit rights management organisation for the visual arts.

### Working with Indigenous communities

- **Aboriginal Affairs Victoria**  
[www.aboriginalaffairs.vic.gov.au](http://www.aboriginalaffairs.vic.gov.au)  
Aboriginal Affairs Victoria (AAV) works in partnership with Indigenous communities, government departments and agencies to promote knowledge, leadership and understanding about Victoria's Indigenous people.
- **Aboriginal Community Co-operatives in Victoria**  
<http://www.coopdevelopment.org.au/viclinks.html>  
<http://www.atsihealth.org/aboriginal-cooperatives/w2/i1001730/>  
Aboriginal Co-operatives are a collective of people working together for the mutual benefit of the members.
- **Artists in the Black**  
[www.artslaw.com.au/legal/artists-in-the-black-](http://www.artslaw.com.au/legal/artists-in-the-black-)  
The Arts Law Centre of Australia's legal service for Indigenous artists, communities and arts organisations.
- **Black Arm Band**  
<http://www.blackarmband.com.au/>  
The Black Arm Band Company showcases, celebrates and shares the contribution of Aboriginal music to contemporary Australia.
- **Burrinja Gallery & Cultural Centre, Upwey**  
[www.burrinja.org.au](http://www.burrinja.org.au)  
Burrinja is a community cultural centre.

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## LINKS AND RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

### Working with Indigenous communities (continued)

- **Ilbjerri Theatre Company**  
<http://ilbjerri.com.au/>  
Ilbjerri is Australia's leading and longest running Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theatre Company.
- **IDJA Dance Theatre**  
<http://www.idja.com.au/>  
IDJA Dance Theatre is Victoria's first Indigenous contemporary dance and visual theatre company.
- **Indigenous Australia**  
[www.indigenoustralia.info](http://www.indigenoustralia.info)  
A valuable website which provides information about traditional Indigenous culture and heritage, written entirely by Aboriginal Australians.
- **Indigenous Protocol Guides**  
[www.australiacouncil.gov.au/resources/artforms/Indigenous\\_arts](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/resources/artforms/Indigenous_arts)  
A series of Australia Council guides for working with Indigenous communities.
- **Koorie Heritage Trust**  
[http://www.koorieheritagetrust.com/cultural\\_education/indigenous\\_cross\\_cultural\\_awareness](http://www.koorieheritagetrust.com/cultural_education/indigenous_cross_cultural_awareness)  
The Trust cares for the only public collection in Victoria dedicated solely to Koorie art and culture and offers a range of programs including cross cultural awareness training and tours, exhibitions, Koorie family history service and a retail shop.
- **Melbourne Museum – Bunjilaka – Birrarung Gallery**  
<http://museumvictoria.com.au/bunjilaka>  
Bunjilaka is the Aboriginal Centre at Melbourne Museum, a venue of Museum Victoria.

- **Songlines Music Aboriginal Corporation**  
<http://www.songlines.net.au/>

Songlines Music Aboriginal Corporation gives voice to Aboriginal peoples, celebrates and preserves the diversity of Victoria's Indigenous Cultures and promote reconciliation and healing by bringing together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

### Working with people with disabilities

- **Arts Access Australia**  
[www.artsaccessaustralia.org](http://www.artsaccessaustralia.org)  
The national peak body for arts and disability organisations working to increase access and participation.
- **Arts Access Victoria**  
[www.artsaccess.com.au](http://www.artsaccess.com.au)  
The Victorian peak body for disability arts.
- **Arts and Disability Action Plan Training (ADAPT)**  
[http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/Research\\_and\\_Resources/Resources/ADAPT\\_-\\_The\\_Arts\\_Disability\\_Action\\_Plan\\_Training\\_Project](http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/Research_and_Resources/Resources/ADAPT_-_The_Arts_Disability_Action_Plan_Training_Project)  
For further guidance and links.
- **Arts Project Australia**  
[www.artsproject.org.au](http://www.artsproject.org.au)  
A visual arts organisation promoting artwork by people with disabilities.
- **Back to Back Theatre**  
[www.backtobacktheatre.com](http://www.backtobacktheatre.com)  
A Victorian theatre company of people with disabilities.
- **Department of Human Services**  
[www.dhs.vic.gov.au](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au)  
A Victorian Government body that funds the disability, mental health and disadvantaged sectors.
- **Disability Online**  
[www.disability.vic.gov.au](http://www.disability.vic.gov.au)  
A Victorian Government website providing information for people with a disability, their families and carers.



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- **Divine**

[www.divine.vic.gov.au/main-site/divine-community](http://www.divine.vic.gov.au/main-site/divine-community)

An online community for and by people with a disability.

- **Making the Journey**

[www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/disability\\_and\\_the\\_arts/reports\\_and\\_publications/making\\_the\\_journey\\_arts\\_and\\_disability\\_in\\_australia](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/disability_and_the_arts/reports_and_publications/making_the_journey_arts_and_disability_in_australia)

An Australia Council web page with arts and disability case study examples.

- **Office for Disability**

[http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/Research\\_and\\_Resources/Research\\_Projects/Arts\\_and\\_Disability\\_Research\\_Project](http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/Research_and_Resources/Research_Projects/Arts_and_Disability_Research_Project)

*Picture This* research report.

- **Raw Law, your art, your rights: a guide to legal issues for artists**

<http://www.artsaccess.com.au/rawlaw>

Provides accessible legal information for artists who experience barriers to participating in the arts due to disability, their cultural or religious background or disadvantage.

- **Rawcus Theatre**

[www.rawcus.org.au](http://www.rawcus.org.au)

A theatre company of people with and without disabilities.

- **SCOPE**

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

Scope is a not-for-profit organisation providing disability services in Victoria. Scope's mission is to enable each person it supports to live as an empowered and equal citizen.

- **Weave Movement Theatre**

<http://weavemovementtheatre.com.au/>

A Melbourne-based dance/movement performance company comprising people with and without disabilities.

## Working with culturally diverse communities

- **Asylum Seeker Resource Centre**

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

The Centre is an independent human rights organisation assisting some of the most disadvantaged people in our community.

- **Australian Multicultural Foundation**

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

- **Community Engagement Toolkit Policy and Procedure**

<http://liverpool.clients.squiz.net/council/community-consultation/community-engagement-tool-kit>

A toolkit developed to enable the Liverpool community to be actively involved in Council decision-making and activities, and to provide a comprehensive and transparent approach to consultation.

- **Ethnic Communities Council of Victoria**

<http://eccv.org.au/>

The Ethnic Communities' Council of Victoria Inc. (ECCV) is the peak body for ethnic and multicultural organisations in Victoria.

- **Immigration Museum**

<http://museumvictoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum/>

Located in the Old Customs House in the heart of Melbourne, the Immigration Museum explores the stories of real people from all over the world who have migrated to Victoria.

- **Multicultural Arts Victoria**

[www.multiculturalarts.com.au](http://www.multiculturalarts.com.au)

Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV) is a leading arts organisation promoting cultural diversity in the arts.

- **National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters**

[www.naati.com.au](http://www.naati.com.au)

A useful website that includes an online directory of translators and interpreters for most languages, including Auslan.

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## LINKS AND RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

### Working with culturally diverse communities (continued)

- **Office of Multicultural Affairs & Citizenship (OMAC)**  
<http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au>  
OMAC drives Victorian Government multicultural policy and program implementation, with a focus on settlement of newly arrived immigrants.
- **RISE**  
<http://riserefugee.org/>  
RISE is a refugee and asylum seeker organisation run and governed by refugees, asylum seekers and ex-detainees.

- **Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC)**  
<http://www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/about-us/victorian-multicultural-comission>

The VMC is the voice of Victoria's culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities and is the main link between them and the government.

### Other

- **Artful Dodgers Studios**  
<http://www.artfuldodgers.tv/>  
The Artful Dodgers Studios is a program of Jesuit Social Services. The studios are for young people who are considered 'at risk' due to a range of personal and/or structural barriers.
- **Footscray Community Arts Centre**  
[www.footscrayarts.com](http://www.footscrayarts.com)  
Widely acknowledged as a leading centre for contemporary arts and community engagement.
- **pARTicipation Forum Report**  
<http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Publications/Social-connection/pARTicipation-Forum-2012-Evaluation-Report.aspx>  
Compiled by the Centre for Multicultural Youth (in association with Footscray Community Arts Centre).
- **The Torch**  
[www.thetorch.org.au](http://www.thetorch.org.au)  
An organisation that encourages community growth through arts projects, training and social activism.

See items listed in the References section on page 105 for further reading.

*Website addresses and references are correct as of May 2013.*

# **3. WORKING WITH ARTISTS**

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*We Built This City* Melbourne Workers Theatre. Written and directed by Donna Jackson, performed by Mark Seymour and the Trades Union Choir (2006)  
Photo: Georgia Metaxas

# 3. WORKING WITH ARTISTS

A professional artist who works with communities brings knowledge and experience of their artform as well as the ability to teach skills, inspire creativity and facilitate the making of new artwork by people not necessarily familiar with making art.

## THE VALUE OF WORKING WITH A PROFESSIONAL ARTIST

An artist will encourage and challenge people to explore new ways of thinking, feeling, doing and being and can often open up social structures and perceptions.

Artists have compassion for the human experience and sensitivity to place and story. They want people to experience the many facets of art and creativity – the revelatory, the celebratory and the transformative.

Working in a community environment, the artist wants art to be in and of the world; to be socially, intellectually, emotionally, culturally, politically and personally engaging. Like many community-based workers, artists want to make a difference.

The professional artist also brings an understanding of contemporary arts practice and will take responsibility for ensuring the artistic outcomes are of a high quality.

Using a professional artist will bring creativity, experience and artistic merit to the project.

If we are to re-ignite our creative energies, to produce vibrant, responsive, sustainable communities, then Rogelj (2003) believes we must all become artists – willing to take creative risks and make previously unimagined connections across disciplines and cultures. We need to create dynamic social processes which allow us to reflect on our values, ideas, and modes of expression, and also to postulate and play with the possibilities of how things could be.

*Rogers & Spokes 2003 p.1.*

## Creativity

Creativity is an important human quality. Being creative allows us to develop new ways of doing things, respond to change and be more open and flexible. Creative people understand that there is more than one way to do something, and almost every way has its own value.

An experienced artist understands their own creative processes, the ebbs and flows, the blank page, the 'aha!' moment and the 'sizzle' of abundant expression. They know that although the pathways of creativity are different for each individual, many of the elements are similar. Knowing the elements that make up the process of art-making allows the artist to guide the less experienced.

## Working with the Women's Circus

### *Sarah Cathcart Women's Circus (1997 – 2001)*

I worked at the Women's Circus, a community arts organisation, as Artistic Director from 1997 to 2001 and created five large-scale shows during that time. Each show involved over 100 women with various levels of experience in theatre, both on and off the stage.

For me, it was important that the women owned the work. The power of their ownership translated into the show and this sense of collective spirit underpinned the work. This was a major drawcard for the audience – they loved to feel that spirit while also seeing a large group of people working together.

This 'collective spirit' took a lot of careful work and planning. The main task for me as the leader was to hear the women – truly hear them. I constantly asked questions, such as: What would you like the show to be about? What skills would you ideally like to do in the show? Why is this topic important to explore and perform right now for an Australian audience? What is your experience of this topic?

I listened carefully to what the majority of women wanted to do – a range of ideas were always presented – and picked the topic for the show that I felt would resonate with most of the women. I always had final say on the idea for two reasons:

- the idea had to be able to be translated into a circus/theatre form; and
- I had to feel passionate about the idea myself because I needed the energy and enthusiasm to sustain a large group of people.

From the beginning of my time at the Circus I presented myself as a 'theatre director', pulling the show together into a dynamic and cohesive whole. So that all 50 plus performers/musicians worked in sublime unity, the women through the circus and theatre training developed skills in unity awareness, that is, a keen sense of each other spatially and physically. There was also a Circus policy that we 'have fun' so that the work, while disciplined and at times challenging, was joyous. This sense of unity and joy translated into the performances and were key ingredients in the success of the shows. It was important for me as the director that the women were also proud of their work. Early on in the rehearsal process I tried to create circus challenges for the more experienced women and in turn create theatre structures that would support the beginners in their first forays onto the stage.

As a theatre director I wanted to create work that was of a very high standard in terms of the level of the performance skills, the content of the show and its form. For this reason, we had a long lead time before each season – we started researching in April for a November show.

The content of the show was another element that I focused on as writer/director.

The Women's Circus aimed to tell stories that were not usually told. In 1997 our show was called 'Pope Joan' and told the story of a female pope who lived in the 9th century. The audience was engaged on a number of levels – the unity of the performers, the varying skill level of the circus 'tricks' and the content of the storyline, which was hopefully intriguing for the audience.

## Artistic Merit

People in communities working with experienced artists in a well-planned process can make powerful, high quality art. The artistic merit of the art created will be evaluated – informally and formally – by participants, partners, peers and audiences. Whether an artwork is of high quality and successful is often a question of vigorous debate.

In determining the quality of an artistic process and outcome, the word ‘excellence’ often appears in policy and funding documents, carrying many connotations or assumptions. Though how quality is determined in a project and by who, is important to consider to ensure that their goals are reached harmoniously.

Having a good idea, sound processes and the guidance of a professional and experienced artist or team of artists will bring an increased chance of success. The Australia Council provides an Artistic Reflection Kit on its website, a guide to assist organisations to reflect on ‘artistic vibrancy’ and measure artistic achievements.

<http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/artisticreflectionkit>

## Ratartat Public Art

Ratartat is a collaboration between Geoff Bonney and Peter Widmer. They choose to live in the country. They trained in an old fashioned way to make art but found, by accident, a thousand different places to use that know-how. The fundamental methods and philosophies that underpin their work have been consistent. These include:



- Tackling any brief, wherever and no matter how unusual, as long as it can be addressed using art as the basic tool.
  - Being open to any form or technique to produce the artwork and achieve the desired outcome.
  - Ensuring all involved understand that collaboration means no one can be too precious about the input that they offer. Robust debate is essential, as is a capacity to listen.
  - Remembering the moment of making is to be enjoyed to the utmost, but it's equally crucial to stay focused on the final outcome.
  - Essentially retaining evidence of the hand of the maker.
  - Engaging the local community in their place with the use of recognisable materials that are used in a way to intrigue the viewers and challenge their perception of what is normal.
  - Involving anyone from the community in a way that suits their skill set but equally expands their capacity to engage.
  - Needing to be challenged by the ideas and technical aspects of the project so that we, as artists are fully engaged as well.
  - Ensuring that the project has the capacity to develop post its completion. This may be in the form of an increased skill base for those involved, a permanent artwork in the community and/or the residual images of the project are retained as a community memory.
  - Finding a safe and harmonious place for the production of each project.
  - Remembering that the presentation of the work is of the utmost importance, as is the need to have a completed body of work to celebrate at the end of the project. It may not be what was initially expected, but it needs to be complete, accomplished and engaging.
  - Making sure that humour is an integral element of the project.
- Remember –  
**‘Without art we are all buggered.’ Ratartat**

## THE ROLE OF THE ARTIST

An artist or group of artists can work with communities in many different ways. Artists have different skill sets and preferences. It is important that a clear job description detailing their role is developed based on information about the community, group or individuals involved and the desired outcomes.



ArtPlay (2011) Source: ArtPlay

### Roles Artists Can Undertake:

#### Facilitator

A person who enables, assists, directs or helps others to create art. The artist can facilitate processes to develop ideas, skills and knowledge, and collaborative processes to make the artistic work.

#### Interpreter

The artist conducts a process to gather ideas and stories from the community and interprets these to create artworks.

#### Trainer

A teacher of skills and knowledge.

#### Animateur

A person who puts things in motion, engaging people in an idea and helping a community take action.

#### Mentor

An established practicing artist or arts industry practitioner with a wealth of knowledge and experience, who is willing to share ideas and provide advice and guidance. The mentor works with a member of the community or less experienced artist to aid the development of skills and knowledge of arts practice.

#### Consultant

An artist who advises on the concept, development and/or implementation of the arts project.

#### Project Manager

The person who administers all aspects of the project, including planning, liaison, budget management, evaluation and reporting. Many artists prefer not to take on this role, as it can distract them from their key function – making art.



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# CHOOSING AN ARTIST

## What to Look For

It is very important to select the right person for the project. Not all artists have the skills and personal attributes necessary to work in community settings. Even those who do, will not necessarily suit every community.

The artist's curriculum vitae or resume will help in assessing their suitability. Equally, meeting face-to-face and engaging in direct conversations about the project is vital. Consider the following when employing an artist.

Skills:\*

- Sound knowledge of arts practice
- Good communication skills
- Good organisational skills
- Experience working with communities
- Research skills
- Negotiation and conflict resolution skills
- Ability to collaborate

Personal attributes:

- Flexibility, adaptability
- Resourcefulness
- A sense of humour
- A genuine interest in or knowledge of the community the project aims to engage
- Ability to question – themselves and others
- Ability to share and be generous
- Ability to recognise and put aside their assumptions
- Ability to be honest about their own agenda
- An understanding of what it is to be a participant
- References from past employers

## Where to Look

Many of the arts or funding organisations listed in the Links and Resources section of each chapter may be able to assist you in finding a suitable artist. Arts organisations, especially those working within community contexts, are generally quite small and have limited resources. While most will do their utmost to offer help, it can stretch beyond their capacity. Before approaching anyone, be as clear as possible about what it is you require.

You could also contact your local government arts and culture officer or industry service organisations such as Regional Arts Victoria, Arts Access Victoria, Ausdance or Writers Victoria. Visit grant websites to see what projects and artists have been funded. An internet search of arts and community might also uncover some interesting possibilities.

Advertising in local and/or national papers or arts websites such as ArtsHub could also be useful.

## Payments

There is no national award for artists and little up-to-date information or recommendations about an appropriate rate to pay artists who work with communities. They are skilled professional workers and need to be paid accordingly. Negotiate with the artists fairly – this is their job, not a hobby.

Salaries and fees are not the same. A salary requires the artist or worker to be on your payroll and you are responsible for all their on-costs – superannuation, workers' compensation, etc. This is not the case if they are paid a fee. If fees are paid it is important to determine that the artist carries appropriate insurances (e.g. public liability, professional indemnity, personal accident).

It is important to factor in 'access costs' to a project. These may include: Auslan interpreters, extra staff, captioning, transport costs, appropriate signage.

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\* These skills and attributes were identified during the 3D Symposium for artists working in communities held in Melbourne in 2005; and emphasised in the research into professional development issues by the Castanet network in 2010 – 2012: [www.castanet.net.au/](http://www.castanet.net.au/)

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# CHOOSING AN ORGANISATION

## What to Look For

It is also very important for an artist to collaborate with the right organisation for the project.

Some organisations bring a long history and experience of working in community settings and artists to a project whilst others may be new to it. Some organisations may have flexible operations and be able to respond quickly to opportunities as they arise, others may have specific and lengthy decision making processes that require negotiation. Not all organisations will have staff or resources dedicated to specific projects. Others who do, may not have staff with the skills that a particular project needs.

Organisations that clearly articulate their purpose and method of working in community settings with artists are good places to start. Meeting face to face and engaging in frank conversations about the shared values (and mutual objectives) of the organisation and the artist in advance of a project is strongly recommended.

Consider the following when deciding which organisation to work with:

- that the organisation has resource capacity (people, budget, facilities, time equipment etc.);
- that there are agreed resources and staff available to support the project (who is offering the managerial support?);
- that there is a genuine interest in setting up the project to succeed;
- that there is a strong desire to collaborate;
- that there is experience in working with the community with whom the artist will be engaging;
- that there is a thorough understanding of the 'setting' in which the project will be located;
- that the organisation has strong community networks and support;
- that the organisation can demonstrate effective:
  - communication skills
  - organisational skills
  - evaluation skills
  - negotiation and conflict resolution skills;
- that there is some flexibility between the planned strategic objectives of the organisation and the artist's way of working; and
- that, as with artists, the organisation has the following attributes:
  - Resourcefulness
  - A sense of humour
  - Ability to question – themselves and others
  - Ability to share and be generous
  - Ability to recognise and put aside their assumptions
  - Ability to be honest about their own agenda
  - An understanding of what it is to be an artist working in a community setting.

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## LINKS AND RESOURCES

The following links and resources provide valuable information on the topics covered in this chapter. Many of the links and resources provided in other chapters will also be relevant.

### Creativity and artistic merit

- **Arts Council England**

[www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/advice-and-guidance)

The website contains useful infosheets and guidelines from the Arts Council of England, including one on artistic assessment.

[http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/achieving\\_great\\_art\\_for\\_everyone.pdf](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/achieving_great_art_for_everyone.pdf)

There is useful information to be found in the Arts Council England publication: 'Achieving Great Art for Everyone'.

- **Australia Council for the Arts**

<http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/artisticreflectionkit>

The term 'Artistic vibrancy' has been coined by the Council with reference to artistic success, innovation and achievement.

### Finding artists and arts workers

- **Arts Access Australia**

[www.artsaccessaustralia.org](http://www.artsaccessaustralia.org)

The national peak body for arts and disability organisations working to increase access and participation.

- **Arts Victoria**

[www.arts.vic.gov.au](http://www.arts.vic.gov.au)

The government body charged with advising on and implementing arts policy, developing the arts and cultural industries across the State and ensuring access for all Victorians.

- **ArtsHub**

[www.artshub.com.au](http://www.artshub.com.au)

Australia's premiere website for arts news and employment opportunities.

- **Ausdance**

[www.ausdance.org.au](http://www.ausdance.org.au)

An organisation that promotes dance through training and education, marketing, events, establishing professional standards and government advocacy.

- **Australian Society of Authors**

[www.asauthors.org](http://www.asauthors.org)

The peak professional association for Australia's literary creators.

- **Castanet**

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

Castanet is a network of Victorian arts organisations, artists and government agencies. Castanet supports community arts and cultural development in Victoria by offering professional development programs as well as planning, brokering and information services to anyone who is interested in developing community arts projects and activities.

- **Community Music Victoria**

[cmv.customer.netspace.net.au/](http://cmv.customer.netspace.net.au/)

A not-for-profit, membership-based association which supports, promotes and facilitates music-making among Victorian communities.

- **Festival for Healthy Living**

[www.rch.org.au/fhl/](http://www.rch.org.au/fhl/)

A collaborative strategy developed to promote mental health and emotional wellbeing in primary and secondary schools and their communities through a range of performing and visual arts workshop techniques.

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## LINKS AND RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

### Finding artists and arts workers (continued)

- **Multicultural Arts Victoria**  
[www.multiculturalarts.com.au](http://www.multiculturalarts.com.au)  
The MAV website details opportunities and support for artists and communities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and offers culturally diverse art to the public.
- **Museums Australia (Victoria)**  
<http://www.mavic.asn.au/>  
The Victorian branch of a membership organisation providing national and state services, and national networks for people with specific museum interests.
- **Music Victoria**  
[www.musicvictoria.com.au](http://www.musicvictoria.com.au)  
The contemporary music industry peak body for Victoria.
- **National Association of Visual Artists (NAVA)**  
<http://www.visualarts.net.au/>  
The National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) is the national peak body for the visual and media arts, craft and design sector. NAVA has useful resources including professional development guidance for artists.
- **Regional Arts Australia**  
[www.regionalarts.com.au](http://www.regionalarts.com.au)  
The RAA website includes a regional artist directory and case studies of recent arts projects, as well as information on creative volunteering workshop programs.

- **Regional Arts Victoria**

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

Regional Arts Victoria is the peak Victorian agency resourcing and supporting contemporary and innovative regional cultural practice.

- **Writers Victoria**

[www.writersvictoria.org.au](http://www.writersvictoria.org.au)

The peak body supporting Victoria's professional writers.

See items listed in the References section on page 105 for further reading.

*Website addresses and references are correct as of May 2013.*

# **4. DEVELOPING THE PROJECT CONCEPT**

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*Moving One Hundred rehearsal* Australian Dance Awards Public Program (2009) Photo: Belinda Strodger

# 4. DEVELOPING THE PROJECT CONCEPT

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The idea for a project can be initiated by anyone: an artist, community member, group, organisation or local government worker. Building the original idea into a well-developed concept requires time. The early stages may feel a bit chaotic, but with research the ideas will form into a solid concept. A concept that is clear and achievable will help when seeking support from the community, other organisations, potential sponsors and funding bodies.

Throughout the project the concept, processes and plans will be continually revisited in order to develop, change, implement and evaluate what has been done, what is happening and what needs to happen. Flexibility and the capacity to change and respond to new ideas and challenges are vital for the success of the project.

To turn an idea into a fully developed concept, you need to answer some simple questions:

- Who is going to be involved?
- Why do you want to engage with this particular community?
- What do you hope to achieve by undertaking this project?
- What do you want to do?
- How do you want to do it?
- Where and when do you plan to do it?

Concept development should always include:

- participatory processes (e.g. brainstorming, one-on-one conversations, meetings, consultations) with community members, artists and other stakeholders;
- research (e.g. talking to people who have undertaken community-based arts projects);
- reflection;
- evaluation; and
- synthesis – bringing the ideas and information together into a cohesive concept.

If you're not sure where to start, recruit an experienced artist as a consultant to help guide and shape the initial planning. This may not necessarily be the artist who will ultimately conduct the project, but their professional knowledge and experience should ensure that the concept you develop is artistically interesting and achievable. You will be able to discuss issues such as:

- the artform that will be most appropriate to your aims and situation;
- the sort of artist or artistic team you will need;
- the kind of creative processes that might be applicable;
- the possible outcomes;
- the timeframe for the project; and
- the resources that will be required.

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## WHO WILL BE INVOLVED?

Identify the community participants, partners, artists, arts workers and others who will be involved. Each of these is discussed in detail below. Develop a project structure that allows for the inclusion of other people and organisations as the project proceeds.

### Community Participants

Clearly define the community you intend to work with and how you are going to encourage them to work together.

Identify any barriers there may be to participation, such as the need for childcare, language difficulties or lack of transport, and consider how these obstacles can be addressed.

### Partners

It can be very effective to work with organisations that share common goals or that work with the same community you intend to engage. Each organisation, particularly those from other sectors, will bring different skills, knowledge and resources to the project. Approach these organisations or groups to see if they are interested in establishing a partnership. The partnership should have a clear purpose and add value to the project.

Partnerships can take many different forms. Some are about networking and exchanging information; other more intricate partnerships can share resources and workers. Whatever the nature of the partnership, clear communication is essential. From your very first contact be clear about goals, roles, responsibilities, contributions and expectations.

### Artists

Identify and book the artists (subject to funding). Bring them on board as early as possible. They should be involved in shaping your project concept and plan.

### Arts Workers

'Arts worker' is a broad term for people working in the arts but not necessarily as artists. They could be working as coordinators, project managers, facilitators or in a range of other roles.

### Project Working Group

Establish a project working group that includes members of the community, artists, representatives of partner organisations and other people who have relevant expertise. This group can provide support, advice or resources to project staff and participants. Keep the group small, otherwise it may be difficult to get everyone together or to make decisions. Be clear about the function of this group – is it purely advisory or does it have decision-making powers?

### Project Managers

Project management can be undertaken by any one of a number of people: a worker in one of the partner organisations, a specifically employed project manager or the artist. Regardless of who undertakes the role, a clear job description is necessary. It is very important to delineate the roles and responsibilities of the artist, the project manager and other project workers. In deciding whether you need a designated project manager, consider the scale of your project, the workload and the skills required – is it realistic for one person to do it all or does it require two or more people?

### Support Staff

In some projects support staff are vital. When you are working with people who have particular needs, it is essential that they are appropriately supported so they gain the maximum benefit from their involvement. It also enables the artist to remain focused on the art-making process. Examples of support staff include carers for people with disabilities, Auslan interpreters, interpreters for CALD communities and youth workers for 'at risk' young people.

Staff filling support roles are often sourced from a partner organisation working on the project.



*Initiation* Ralph Rogers (2012)  
Courtesy: Torch Project

## Statewide Indigenous Arts Officer in Prisons & Community

*Carolyn Dew,  
The Torch Project*



In 2011, The Torch Project had just completed an 18-month pilot program that set out to address the over representation of Aboriginal people within our prison system. To do this a dedicated 'Indigenous Arts Officer in Victorian Prisons & Communities' was appointed to work with Aboriginal people within the corrections system and in the immediate post-release phase on arts activities that strengthen cultural ties to country, family and community. One of the program's annual highlights is the *Confined* exhibition, featuring the artworks made by the emerging artists.

The exhibition has grown to become a significant event on Victoria's Koorie arts calendar, and a key feature of the City of Port Phillip's Yalukit Willam Ngargee. In 2013, 65 artists will show new work which includes a growing number of post release artists keen to exhibit and make a career in the arts. An evaluation of the pilot demonstrates that the program can effect real social change for Victoria's most disadvantaged, reducing recidivism rates by over 50% on current statistics and improving the sense of wellbeing for all involved.

## Volunteers

Determine if volunteers will be engaged in the project and what is required to locate and involve them. Volunteering has significant benefits for both the individual and the community as a whole. Volunteering is a great way for people, regardless of their age, cultural background, location or circumstances, to get involved in the community. It can bring immense personal satisfaction for the volunteer as well as making communities more active, confident and resilient.

Victorian communities can grow in depth and strength through the efforts of volunteers and volunteering organisations. Communities build stronger and more lasting ties, and activities can have continued and long-term effects at a practical level or at a more emotional level through a sense of community spirit.

Research shows that people who volunteer report better physical and mental health as well as improved employment opportunities. Volunteering allows people to learn new skills, meet people and create networks, as well as providing a sense of belonging through team work and getting involved in the local community.

## Other People and Groups

Projects can involve many organisations and individuals in the community. Local businesses, other community groups and artists can provide valuable support and expertise. Broad participation can contribute to building a more cohesive and capable community.

## WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE?

Being clear about why you want to work with a community will assist in determining your aims, objectives and desired outcomes. There can be many reasons for working with a group of people. Some examples include overcoming social isolation, tackling a community issue, promoting social harmony, developing skills, building self-esteem and confidence, fostering a sense of local pride and identity, sharing stories and encouraging social connectedness.

### Benefits of Being Involved: Participant Voices

- I enjoy working with other people – someone always has an idea or a suggestion about how we could do something. We learn from each other.
- Not everyone is good at sport or likes to play sport.
- Working together to make stuff is fun.
- The kids in the mall are driving the older people mad and we want to give them something to do.
- There's a lot of racism in our community and we want to find a non-confrontational, positive way to talk about it with some of the groups/people. It's a difficult issue.
- I have met people that I would not usually talk to and have heard their stories ... they don't seem so bad anymore.
- Making art is sometimes challenging, exciting. I like that.
- People feel connected when they sing together.
- You learn a lot about other people when you are in a workshop together, things you don't usually find out about people. That's interesting.
- I made new friends through the project. We go out together now.
- When I was at school they told me I couldn't write ... now I have my poems published.
- I have learnt to do things I never thought I was able to do.
- I liked dancing when I was young. Thought I was too old for it, but I feel fitter and happier than I have for years.



Melbourne Fringe Festival Crowd Play 1 (2011) Photo: Kate Harnsworth

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## WHAT SORT OF PROJECT IS IT?

There are a myriad of options available for community-based arts projects.

Don't just settle for what you already know or for the most obvious or easiest choice.

Research other community-based arts projects. Who was involved? What artforms did they use? Why did they choose to undertake that particular project? What were the outcomes and benefits to the community and artists? Search the internet and talk to people who have been involved in community-based arts projects in the past.

After some initial research, invite an artist or arts worker to talk about projects they have worked on or to provide an overview of contemporary arts practice. Present some of the research and explain the initial ideas. Invite the community along to join in the conversation. Having the community actively participate in the project from the very beginning will foster a strong sense of ownership and commitment to the work.

Conducting this discussion before any decisions are made builds relationships between all involved and establishes a shared vision, which are characteristics of successful projects. It will also ensure that the project you develop will be appropriate and interesting for the community.

### Jammin It Up

The *Jammin it up* project was a joint initiative of the Darebin City Council, City of Whittlesea, Reservoir Police, Melbourne Aboriginal Youth Sport and Recreation, and MAYA Healing Centre. The project was aimed at young people, 12 to 25 years of age living in the northern suburbs of Melbourne.

*Jammin it up* was developed in 2005 to address issues of young Indigenous people interested in music making, performance and cultural issues. At the time there was a lack of knowledge or awareness of council-run youth services, facilities and programs. *Jammin it up* was a way to engage young people through the various artforms of music and introduce them to a range of other services and programs. The program was very successful and attracted a wide age range of children and young people.

The project was funded by VicHealth from 2006 to 2007 and this enabled the young people to access local artists such as Casey Atkinson and Kutcha Edwards. Some of the key outcomes were the songwriting workshops, excursions, hip hop writers' summer camp and music performances.

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## WHAT ARTFORM WILL BE USED?

Each artform has its own requirements in terms of processes, equipment, venue/space and materials. Some artforms require people to work together; others require people to work more independently. Some are more physical than others.

Some artforms may be more appropriate to your community than others. Consider:

- What is culturally appropriate?
- What will attract and hold the interest of your participants?
- What will best deliver the outcomes you want to achieve? For example, if you want participants to learn to work more effectively together, you might choose theatre or a choir as the artform. If you want to develop literacy skills, you might choose a zine or poetry project.
- What resources are required?

Don't make assumptions about what you think people will be interested in doing. Keep all possibilities open. Research, discuss and debate!

## WHAT PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS WILL THERE BE?

Plan for some form of public presentation at the end of the process. This can be a simple show-and-tell for family and friends, an exhibition, a publication, a website or a full performance. This gives participants a shared goal and provides an important opportunity to celebrate achievements. It is also an opportunity for the wider community to engage with the project and to enjoy the work that has been generated in their community.

### Resourcing Artforms

**Poetry workshops** require a poet, a room where the group can sit comfortably around a table, some paper and pens. The work created could be desktop published and photocopied; published on a website or presented in a reading.

**Digital storytelling** can be a simple or complex process, but always requires access to computers, scanners and equipment such as video or still cameras and audio-recorders.

**Multimedia workshops** require access to a multimedia lab, a computer with appropriate software for each person, and lots of time to learn the skills, or an understanding that there is a limit to what can be achieved within the timeframe.

## WHERE WILL THE PROJECT TAKE PLACE?

The project may require a number of different spaces:

- a project office for the coordinator;
- a workspace for the artist;
- meeting places;
- a workshop or rehearsal space;
- access to specialist facilities such as a multimedia lab, sound recording studio or video editing suite; and
- a venue for the public presentation.

Venue hire can be expensive. Local councils, educational institutions and other organisations often have spaces that are available for communities. Creative Spaces is a useful source of venues (see Links & Resources on page 98) Try to negotiate the use of the space as part of a partnership or sponsorship.

## Extraordinary Women

### *Paola Bilbrough Practising artist working with communities*

Extraordinary Women (published November 2007) is a book of stories, poems and images initiated as a result of conversations with young people in Braybrook. While working on a range of art projects, I encountered a recurring theme: young women often felt silenced and oppressed by their male peers and had a limited vision of what was possible for themselves. A group of young women suggested we collaborate on a project that focused solely on women's voices.

The resulting text celebrates the lives of 50 women from diverse cultural backgrounds and age groups in the western region. The 'community' was an ESL class at Victoria University, a class of Year 10 girls at Braybrook College, a young mother's group in Sunshine and other individuals.

The project offered many doorways to storytelling. Some women chose to sit and talk about significant

experiences and influences. I presented their written stories back to them for reshaping. Others wrote poems and stories with myself, Katherine Heneghan and Madeline Ford (teachers at Braybrook College and Victoria University respectively). Participants contributed photographs from their pasts and posed for new ones. The book took on the feel of a family album. Some of the Year 10 class elected to type and arrange copy during lunchtimes.

The resulting book, designed by Louise McDonald, was launched at the Big West Festival in 2007. Many of the participants spoke at the launch and one young woman commented that being part of Extraordinary Women 'made me feel inspired week after week by the people – there's a bigger world'. Another said, 'it has made me more comfortable with myself and I am confident to talk now without hesitation'.

## HOW LONG WILL THE PROJECT LAST?

Depending on the scope of your project, the planning stage of a project can take months. Remember to factor sufficient time for your initial planning. In particular:

- Allow as much time as possible so that people can participate in the development.
- If you require funding, allow time for the preparation of funding submissions. Check how long the assessment and approval process takes. For example, Arts Victoria generally takes 15 weeks to process a grant round.
- Be realistic in planning the duration of the artistic process to ensure good outcomes.
- Remember to factor in school holidays, religious festivals and other events that may impact on your project.
- Allow adequate time to promote the project to potential participants, including time for them to consider their interest and availability.

## The Tree Project

*Amanda Gibson, Project Manager Australian Blacksmiths Association (Victoria)*

The Tree Project is a response by blacksmiths to the devastating fires of Black Saturday, 7 February 2009. It's a 9-metre high steel and copper gumtree in the making, to remember the people lost, the tireless work of firefighters, relief workers and the people recovering and rebuilding their communities. The leaves of this tree have been forged by hundreds of blacksmiths around the world. The project is managed by the Australian Blacksmiths Association (Victoria); a group of Australian blacksmiths based in Melbourne, Victoria. This non-profit Association has been around for over twenty years, but this is the biggest project it has managed so far.

On Valentine's Day 2009, just seven days after the Black Saturday Fires, a blacksmiths' online forum proposed forging metal gumleaves to send to Victoria as a gift to the fire affected communities. The Australian Blacksmiths Association (Victoria) agreed to manage the project, forge the branches and trunk and put it all together to create a small tree. The Association contacted blacksmith

organisations overseas to send leaves. In Victoria, local blacksmiths travelled into the fire affected communities with portable forges and anvils, forging leaves at festivals and markets. Someone proposed the idea that people could sponsor a leaf with their name stamped on it to help with the cost of materials. Since then, leaves have been sponsored in the names of loved ones lost to the fires, survivors, friends, dogs, cats, horses and kangaroos that perished in the fires, firefighters, CFA divisions, recovery organisations, Australians overseas, names of properties destroyed in the fires, garden clubs, tennis clubs and local businesses; all those who wish to express their sorrow, compassion and hope for the future.

Soon leaves started to arrive from across Australia and around the world. This tree which was thought to be about a metre high and fit in a flowerpot grew bigger than anyone imagined. The Australian Blacksmiths Association (Victoria) joined forces with the British Artist Blacksmiths Association



*Gumnuts and Leaves* by Hank Wilton, Blacksmith  
Photo: Courtesy of the Tree Project



*Blacksmiths from Overall Forge and the Australian Blacksmiths Association (Victoria)* Photo: Courtesy of the Tree Project

and the California Blacksmith Association to arrange collection points for the UK & European leaves and American & Canadian leaves. The Irish Artist Blacksmiths Association sent many leaves. The Ukrainian Union of Artist Blacksmiths was instrumental in collecting leaves throughout Europe including from places such as Belarus, Lithuania and Russia. In the south of France, a group called Lou Foc held a special event to forge leaves. Qantas Freight flew the leaves out from these collection points to Australia free of charge.

Blacksmiths from over twenty countries have contributed to the Tree Project. The leaves are made by master blacksmiths, some by blacksmithing students and some by children. Amazingly, there are over three thousand of them. With so many leaves, the Blacksmiths needed a much larger support structure than originally assumed. Sinclair Knight Merz Engineering offered their services to engineer a tree that could carry all the leaves. Valley Community Bank Group and Bendigo Bank donated funds



*Trunk under the press at Overall Forge*  
Photo: Courtesy of the Tree Project

towards stainless steel for the trunk and in 2012, Overall Forge forged the 2 tonne trunk under their industrial press in Albury. Many other community groups, businesses and individuals have supported the Tree Project so far including the RCL Group, the Strathewen Community Renewal Association, Nillumbik Shire Council, FRRR, Regional Arts Victoria, Arts Victoria, DPC, the Fire Recovery Unit, DPCD and the Pozible crowd funding website.

In 2013 the tree will be assembled by volunteer welders and engineers and installed in the town of Strathewen late in the year.

The aim is that the tree will provide a place of reflection and contemplation for those who have suffered terrible loss. The tree has become an expression of empathy and solidarity among those in the fire-affected communities, across Australia and from around the world. It is a symbol of admiration and hope for the spirited people who are recovering and rebuilding to stand for generations to come.



*Cliff's hand* (Steel leaf by Cliff Overton CFA)  
Photo: Courtesy of the Tree Project

## DEVELOPING THE PROJECT BRIEF

In order to turn the developed conceptual framework into an achievable project, all the details that will make it a success need to be confirmed. Answering the questions in the project brief template below will help you to construct the plans necessary to deliver the project successfully.

This information will also be useful for any funding or sponsorship proposals. Everyone involved in the

project, including the community participants, artists and partners, should be encouraged to participate in this stage. You will already have some of the information needed to complete the template, some you will need to extend and some you will need to research. The main thing is that you end up with a document that clearly articulates all key aspects of your project.

### Project Brief Template

Clearly answer the following questions:

#### 1. Community

- Who is the target community?
- What is the relevance of the project to that community?
- Are there any barriers to their participation (e.g. transport, childcare, cultural, religious, etc.)?
- How will you overcome these barriers?
- How will you ensure the community has access to the project (e.g. promotion, support, etc.)?

#### 2. Project values

- How does the project address the needs of the community?
- What processes and structures will be used to ensure that the project is inclusive and owned by the community?
- Does the project provide different opportunities for involvement depending on the interests and capacity of participants?

#### 3. Artistic merit

- What artform or combination of forms will be employed and why is it/are they relevant to the target community?
- What is the background and experience of the artist(s) involved?
- What is the artistic concept for the project?
- What creative processes will be used in order to realise the concept and fulfil the needs and expectations of the community?

#### 4. Project delivery

- What is the timeframe for the development, production, presentation and evaluation of the project?
- Who is included in the project team and what is their role?
- Who are the project partners and what are their roles and expectations?
- What are the objectives of the project and what will be the key indicators of success?
- What are some of the obstacles in reaching these objectives? What are the possible solutions to these obstacles?
- What resources does the project need and where are you sourcing them from?
- Has a public presentation been planned? How will you attract audience?

#### 5. Outcomes

What will be the impact of the arts project on:

- individual participants?
- the community?
- the artist(s)?
- project partners?
- the wider public?
- artform practice?

#### 6. Evaluation

- How do you know that you're achieving what you have set out to do?
- How are you gathering information to determine this?
- Who is the evaluation for? (see page 67 for more on evaluation planning)



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## LINKS AND RESOURCES

The following links and resources provide valuable information on the topics covered in this chapter. Many of the links and resources provided in other chapters will also be relevant.

### Publication

- ***The Art of Renewal. A Guide to Thinking Culturally About Strengthening Communities***  
[www.arts.qld.gov.au/docs/art-of-renewal05.pdf](http://www.arts.qld.gov.au/docs/art-of-renewal05.pdf)  
A useful guide produced by the State Government of Queensland.

### Project examples

- ***100 Story Building***  
[www.100storybuilding.org.au/](http://www.100storybuilding.org.au/)  
A new social enterprise and centre for young writers, 100 Story Building is designed to help build the literacy skills and confidence of youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as help the creative youth of Melbourne learn the finer points of writing to express themselves even more fluently.
- ***Murmur***  
[www.murmurtoronto.ca](http://www.murmurtoronto.ca)  
An oral history project that records stories and memories told about specific geographic locations.
- ***Small Towns Big Picture***  
<http://www.culturaldevelopment.net.au/projects/small-towns-big-picture/>  
A publication produced by the Law and Management division of La Trobe University.
- ***The Tree Project***  
[www.treeproject.abavic.org.au](http://www.treeproject.abavic.org.au)  
A response by blacksmiths to the devastating fires of Black Saturday, 7 February 2009

### Artforms

#### Australian

- ***Australian Centre for the Moving Image***  
[www.acmi.net.au](http://www.acmi.net.au)  
Located in Federation Square, Melbourne, the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, or ACMI, is dedicated to the moving image in all its forms.  
  
<http://www.acmi.net.au/cocreative-communities-forum.aspx>  
ACMI ran a forum called Co-Creative Communities which brought together storytellers, broadcasters, filmmakers, artists, activists, cultural workers and researchers to discuss the challenges and opportunities that digital convergence and participatory media present for communities.
- ***Community Cultural Development in Australia***  
[www.ccd.net](http://www.ccd.net)  
A community arts website with a good overview of contemporary projects.
- ***Community Music Victoria***  
[cmv.customer.netspace.net.au/](http://cmv.customer.netspace.net.au/)  
A not-for-profit, membership-based association which supports, promotes and facilitates music-making among Victorian communities.
- ***Cultural Development Network***  
<http://www.culturaldevelopment.net.au/>  
The Cultural Development Network is an independent non-profit organisation that links communities, artists, local government and organisations in order to promote cultural vitality.
- ***Music Council of Australia***  
[www.mca.org.au](http://www.mca.org.au)  
The Music Council of Australia provides information and organises research, advocacy and projects to advance music and musical life both in Australia and internationally.

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## LINKS AND RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

- **Visionary Images**

[www.visionaryimages.org](http://www.visionaryimages.org)

A collaboration between disadvantaged young people and established artists, in partnership with community welfare agencies and other government and non-government agencies. The projects feature a lot of visual and multi-media.

- **Western Edge Youth Arts**

[www.westernedge.org.au](http://www.westernedge.org.au)

Western Edge provides positive arts and performance experiences to young people from different cultural and social backgrounds living in the western suburbs of Melbourne.

- **Women's Circus**

[www.womenscircus.org.au](http://www.womenscircus.org.au)

The Women's Circus is a community arts company that presents innovative high quality circus performances and workshops to a diverse audience and participant base.

### Artforms

#### International

- **Apples and Snakes**

[www.applesandsnakes.org](http://www.applesandsnakes.org)

Apples and Snakes is an organisation dedicated to poetry education and community. It focuses on working with emerging artists and producing new work. Apples and Snakes works extensively with schools, prisons, libraries as well as more traditional arts venues to develop literacy, communication skills, motivation and self-esteem through performance poetry workshops and events.

- **Center for Digital Storytelling**

[www.storycenter.org](http://www.storycenter.org)

The Center for Digital Storytelling is an international non-profit training, project development and research organisation dedicated to assisting people in using digital media to tell meaningful stories from their lives.

- **Foundation for Community Dance**

[www.communitydance.org.uk](http://www.communitydance.org.uk)

Foundation for Community Dance is a professional organisation for anyone involved in creating opportunities for people to experience and participate in dance.

The website includes a very extensive resource and links section.

- **Sonic Postcards**

[www.sonicpostcards.org](http://www.sonicpostcards.org)

A creative education project devised and delivered by Sonic Arts Network that takes place in schools throughout the UK, encouraging pupils to engage with their sound environment and be creative with ICT.

This website contains the Sonic Postcards created by the pupils alongside their accompanying work, such as films, images of art work and creative writing. It also has other information such as project details, teacher resources, press and partner information.

### Support

- **Volunteers**

<http://www.dpccd.vic.gov.au/communitydevelopment/volunteering>

Free online support for volunteering in Victoria is available through a suite of information, resources and tools to help volunteer-involving organisations .

See items listed in the References section on page 105 for further reading.

*Website addresses and references are correct as of May 2013.*



# **5. MANAGING THE PROJECT**

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# SNOW CIRCUS



# 5. MANAGING THE PROJECT

Thorough and thoughtful planning is essential to a successful project and helps avert many of the pitfalls that can occur in community-based arts projects. A clear and detailed project brief will be a good start, but ongoing planning will be required once the project moves from the development to the production stage. This chapter looks at planning for the overall management of the project. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 look at the management of people, budgets and resources, and events in more detail.

While planning documents can be developed rapidly if necessary, planning over a longer period of time allows for greater participation and contribution from all participants. Involving people in the planning process is essential for a strong and successful

project. Although planning can seem daunting, it is important to remember that you are often simply building on existing information that is already in your project brief.

## Key Ingredients for a Successful Community-Based Arts Project

*Susan Strano Former Manager, Creative Communities Regional Arts Victoria*

- **Knowledge of your community:** 'Community' is not always some amorphous mass. It could be very specific for your project. Who are you working with and are they as interested in the project as you? What's in it for them? How do the participants become involved and how will they shape the project?
- **Good relationships:** Does the chemistry work? Relationships are chemical and community-based arts projects are as much about relationships as they are about art. If the artist is new to the community you may need extra time to build rapport.
- **Planning:** Careful planning is your best friend. It can help with the overall design, timeline, fund-raising and smooth implementation of the project. It can keep people safe and happy. Thinking every scenario through will not prevent things going wrong but will give you the tools to deal with them if and when they arise. If you apply for funding, the funding body selection panel can see if your project is well planned or not. Planning will help with the what, why, who, how, when, where, how much, where from and what to do when it all goes pear-shaped. Time spent planning in the beginning will make your project run smoothly and it increases the chance of achieving what you set out to accomplish.
- **People:** Think about all the people involved; participants, partners, audience etc. Think about what's in it for them and how to make the experience wonderful. Apart from the incredible art, also consider simple things like room temperature, food, water and toilets. Try to make their effort worthwhile and the experience of presenting or experiencing the final artwork memorable.

## OVERVIEW

People and organisations often have their own methods or systems for planning. Whatever system you use, ensure you commit your thoughts to paper so they can be shared and referred to throughout the project. A written plan is effectively a map to get you from beginning to end without too many detours.

Depending on the scale of your proposed project, you may need to develop a number of planning documents:

**a timeline:** this outlines the tasks and activities that need to occur at particular stages or dates to ensure the project runs smoothly;

**an implementation plan:** this expands on the timeline, providing the detail of who needs to do what by when;

**a financial plan:** this shows the resources needed, their estimated cost and where they can be sourced from;

**a communication plan:** this outlines how you will communicate with participants, the community, partners and workers. It also describes what, how and when you will communicate to the public;

**a health and safety plan:** this is developed to ensure the health and safety of everyone involved in the project, including members of the public who participate in workshops and events;

**a risk management plan:** this identifies and analyses any risks associated with the project and how they may affect its smooth running. It also identifies how that risk will be managed;

**an evaluation plan:** this helps you assess how well you have achieved the project aims, objectives and outcomes. It also details when, who and how you will evaluate; and

**a documentation plan:** this shows how you will keep a record of what happens throughout the project and what you will document.

Each of these is discussed in detail below.

### Planning Suggestions

*Tamsin Sharp, Caitlin Nunn, David Nguyen  
Good Start Arts Project*

Have a flexible framework with key goals. Do enough planning so the facilitating team (and support networks) know the main agendas of the project. The project plan should remain flexible enough so a dramatic shift can be made (which can often be the case) without jeopardising the project itself. The more you know a group, the more prepared you can be. Always bring the group along with you and don't dictate how the project is planned. Facilitate sessions so they have input into the direction of the project.



*Belonging Identity and Home* Mossgiel Park Primary School (2012)  
Source: Mossgiel Park Primary School

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## TIMELINE

A timeline should be constructed early in the development of the project. It lists all the activities required at a given time to realise the project. Always allow extra time at each stage to accommodate the fluctuations that can occur in art-making, communities and life.

It is important to note that some items on your timeline may need to be supported by a separate, more detailed document. For example, in some projects the item 'recruit participants' may involve a complex set of visits and events to publicise the project and gain support over a number of months. It may be easier to itemise each of these events and related tasks in a separate 'recruiting' timeline document. Similarly, the item 'public performance' on the general timeline will probably require its own much more detailed timeline, indicating the timing and order of tasks that will need to be completed to put on the event.

Typical items for a project timeline include:

- commencement date;
- research and development of ideas, people and organisations;
- establishment of a project working group (advisory committee);
- meetings of the project working group;

- promotion of the project to invite participation;
- introductory meetings – artists, organisations, participants;
- meetings to further develop ideas and activities with artists and participants;
- workshops, rehearsals and creative processes to make the artwork;
- regular checks on progress;
- evaluation of the art-making process;
- production of a public presentation;
- promotion of the public presentation;
- the public presentation (event); and
- final evaluation, report writing and documentation.

If the timeline changes or participants change – make sure everyone is clear of the change, discuss the change and notify funding bodies and investors of the change. (refer to page 86)

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The implementation plan builds on the broad timeline. It includes the tasks to be undertaken, who is responsible for completing them, and by when.

The implementation plan is a tool that helps to guide and organise the project. It should have enough flexibility to allow for inevitable changes. It will be referred to throughout the life of the project and should be easily accessible by all involved.

A clear plan is essential for effective communication and understanding roles and responsibilities. It will also indicate potential pressure points in the life of the project enabling you to consider alternative courses of action.

On a large-scale project, the implementation plan may be supported by more detailed, specialist plans. For example, a production manager on a theatre project will probably generate a detailed production schedule that is relevant to their role and responsibilities.

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## FINANCIAL PLAN

All projects require resources – people, equipment, materials, money, etc. A financial plan shows what resources are required, their estimated cost, where they will be sourced from and how and when they will be used.

This information will be condensed into a budget, which is the financial planning tool for the duration of the project.

Chapter 7 covers resourcing and budgets in more detail.



*The Megaphone Project* Anthony Nagle, FINA Festival (2007)  
Photo: Jeff Busby

## COMMUNICATION PLAN

Effective and positive communication is at the heart of every successful project. Time spent developing a communication strategy or plan is time well spent. To assist in this area, there are many valuable resources available on the internet. Your communication plan should cover both internal and external communication.

### Internal

People involved in the project need to be kept up-to-date and know what is expected of them. A culture of open, honest and positive communication is to be encouraged.

Timely and purposeful meetings will ensure that everyone is well informed. To make these meetings effective:

- set agendas and time limits; and
- take minutes, noting any decisions made, action points and who is responsible for completing them and by when.

It may be helpful to identify key people to be 'communication conduits'. For example, you may decide that all artistic matters are to be referred to the lead artist and financial matters are to be referred to the project administrator. Have a person identified as the 'I'm not sure who to ask' person. As the title suggests, all queries which do not fall under a specific umbrella can be addressed to this person.

Your internal communications strategy should include:

- who is responsible for making sure artists, workers, partners and participants know what is happening and what they need to do;
- how the information will be communicated;
- a decision-making process/plan;
- key contacts in partner organisations; and
- who is responsible for writing the thank you letters, reports and acquittals at the end of the project and ensuring they are forwarded to the appropriate bodies.



## External

External communication includes promotions, publicity and marketing. Most importantly, it is about reaching participants and audience members in your target community.

Contact with the media, designers and printers; liaison between media and community members; briefing of people to be interviewed and other similar activities should be clearly identified as part of someone's role.

Resources for promotions and publicity should be allocated. Depending on your project and location, this may include funds for advertising, printing, maintenance of a website, a publicist or a designer.

See 'Links and Resources' for some excellent online resources regarding external communication and marketing.

### External Communication Tips

- Consider who your audience will be.
- Consider how best to reach that audience. Where will the target audience find the information? Newspaper? Radio? TV? School newsletter? Internet? The participants themselves?
- Manage your communication. What are you hoping to achieve? What is your key message? Do you have any interesting stories, angles or people? Are there any issues to be managed? What kind of language is appropriate?
- TV and newspapers love good strong visual images. Plan what you can offer and make sure you can deliver.
- If the project has limited funds, devise your own campaign. There are many resources that can be used to reduce costs: newsletters, websites, free listings in newspapers and general/trade magazines, Facebook and other social networking sites, and community announcements on radio and television. Design and print your own fliers, posters, postcards; assemble databases; make use of partner organisation distribution networks; write a media release and distribute it to local radio, TV and newspapers.
- Prepare a media release: one page only with the name, time, date, venue, address, cost (if any), the hard facts and some quirky details (the 'hook' for the story).
- Brief people involved in interviews properly so that a consistent message and correct information is being promoted. Make sure they are aware of all aspects of the project's goals and proposed outcomes.
- Assign one person to liaise with funding bodies and any other external stakeholders.
- Ensure you set aside sufficient time to enable successful communication.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN

If you are organising a project that has workshops, activities and events, you have a duty of care under the Victorian *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (the OHS Act). You must take all reasonable care to ensure that safety risks have been identified, assessed and controlled.

Find out what health and safety procedures need to be in place for your project to adhere to the law as well as insurance and licensing conditions.

WorkSafe provides information to assist you to understand your obligations under the Act. Additionally there are tools, tips and guides to making a safe work place; with information on risks in respective industries, how to minimise the risk of injury, and legal obligations.

<http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/safety-and-prevention>

## RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

We all manage risk to some degree, but often not systematically. When managing a community-based arts project a systematic approach is required.

You need to:

- identify, assess and control any potential obstacles to the project's success. Consult and communicate with all relevant stakeholders; and
- put in place a system to monitor and review your plan so that changes, made when necessary, do not put the entire project at risk.

Remember risks include risks to the project's viability, such as inadequate funding due to unsuccessful funding applications, as well as physical risks to participants and audience members (see health and safety plan). An easy-to-use Risk Management Toolkit is available through the ACT Insurance Authority. (See Links & Resources on p.70)

*Extract from Interview of Glenn Romanis by Alison Richards. Melbourne 2005. The interview was the basis for the article 'Marking the Landscape for Artwork,' Spring 2005.*

### **Richards:**

In your experience, what's needed to make a particular project work, if community process is going to be an integral part of it?

### **Romanis:**

Basically, good planning. For the process to work successfully, it needs to be thought through, costed and supported. If you want the work to last, people have to be involved for a reason. You can't just say 'we want a community art piece'. It takes quite a bit of work to get it up and running to the point where people can be involved successfully and safely. They might need to learn new skills or they might have to

commit themselves for far longer than anticipated. There might be health and safety issues or insurance issues. It might take a team of artists or assistants to provide the necessary supervision to make sure no-one gets hurt or materials aren't wasted – let alone make sure participants get something out of it, are enthusiastic on the job and stay enthusiastic after the job is over.

Then there's the issue of whether the project works, not just for the people involved on the day but for the broader community down the track; people who mightn't have a clue about why it was put there or what it meant to the people who made it. An art object has to stand the test of time and distance. You don't have to know exactly what it was supposed to be but it's got to have some resonance, it's got to have the potential to spark, to be open to different responses in people later on, or it really hasn't happened at all.

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## EVALUATION PLAN

Evaluation is a process of gathering evidence before, during and after a project to find out how well the aims and outcomes have been achieved. Every project needs to be evaluated in some form. Evaluation benefits everyone involved in the project. It can also contribute to the knowledge of the community-based arts sector.

An evaluation provides the opportunity for all participants to measure and compare where they were before the project started, and where they reached by the project's end. Evaluation results also provide valuable information for project staff, including creative staff, volunteers, mentors, etc.

Evaluation information can feed into the organisation's own planning and evaluation processes. It can provide useful information for future funding applications. It can provide a useful record for measuring progress with community-

based arts projects, and help to develop and extend the work of the organisation. The information can help shape future promotion and recruitment strategies for new projects.

*From: Evaluating Community Arts and Community Well Being. An Evaluation Guide for Community Arts Practitioners*

*Prepared by: Effective Change Pty Ltd for Arts Victoria; Darebin City Council; City of Whittlesea and VicHealth (2002) p.17*

Evaluation will tell you what worked and what did not work. It is an opportunity to showcase your achievements and learn from what was less successful. Evaluation results can also provide useful information for planning and future funding applications. Effective evaluation involves input from everyone involved in the project: participants, artists, other workers, partner organisations and audience members.

Planning what, who, when and how you will evaluate is essential. Resources, including time and staff, need to be allocated to plan, collect, collate and analyse information. If the project has received funding, the granting body will require a report against particular criteria – this is a good starting point for working out what needs to be evaluated.

Evaluation includes quantitative and qualitative information gathering. Most detailed evaluations use a combination of both.

Quantitative evaluation deals with numbers. For example, you could count the number of:

- participants
- audience members
- artists
- workshops
- performances
- media mentions
- website visits

Qualitative evaluation is about what people feel and think. It can be formal or informal. You can gather this information using:

- feedback sheets
- surveys
- journals
- focus groups
- interviews
- strategic conversations
- debrief meetings
- anecdotal comments, emails and conversations

## EVALUATION PLAN (CONTINUED)

### Evaluation Tips

- Start evaluation from the beginning of the project.
- Undertake evaluation in a positive manner: constructive feedback is useful; destructive criticism is destabilising.
- Evaluate throughout the project to help:
  - keep the project on track and in line with stated aims and objectives;
  - ensure quality control.
- Allocate resources to the evaluation. For example, allocate someone to put survey sheets out at the performance.
- Involve participants, artists and partners.
- Evaluate processes as well as outcomes.
- Evaluate the art itself.
- Think about using funding body acquittal forms as a starting point to help work out what you need to monitor and evaluate.
- Think creatively about how to gather information.
- If resources allow, consider bringing in an objective outside eye to evaluate.
- Be honest – you can learn as much from the mistakes as from the successes.



Barwon Valley School Circus (2009) Source: Barwon Valley School



A-Lure Visionary Images (2008) Source: Visionary Images

**Good Starts Arts** – Run by the Refugee Health Research Centre at La Trobe University and funded through an Australian Research Council Linkage Grant in partnership with VicHealth and the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (Foundation House)

...some of the best feedback comes informally during and after sessions. So making notes throughout the project is invaluable. It's often hard to get participants to be critical in the afterglow of a successful project.

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## DOCUMENTATION PLAN

Allocating resources to documentation in the early stages of the project ensures the project is recorded for future reference. Documentation can be used for many purposes – as part of reports/acquittals to funding bodies, annual reports, newsletters and future funding applications.

Funding bodies and partner organisations may use images from projects they have supported in publications and other promotional material. Having good quality images and documentation on hand brings the project to a broader audience.

Items to be documented can include:

- promotional materials – posters, fliers etc;
- handouts;
- photographs, video and audio recordings of events and workshop activities;
- project journal(s);
- contact lists;

- interviews;
- quotes;
- articles in newspapers, magazines, websites, television and radio; and
- creative work, such as photographs of visual art, videos of performances and copies of written texts.

Documentation can be done by a number of people, including participants, workers and artists. The project manager's job description should include collecting and archiving relevant documents. A photographer or video artist may be employed to capture aspects of the process including the special event. Allocate resources early for documentation.



*The (Aussie Rules) Taming of the Shrew* The Old Van (2009)  
Source: Old Van

## BE PREPARED FOR CHANGE

Change is the most predictable aspect of any community-based arts project. Just when you think everything is falling into place, something happens: the person you have been working with in an organisation leaves; the program folds; the organisation is restructured; participants become ill, get jobs or leave. Sometimes the catalyst for change is positive, such as when a new idea or a new partner adds value to your project.

Adequate planning, clear communication, risk management and a flexible approach will ensure that you have a stable foundation to adapt to changing circumstances without it being a major stress on the project. Focus less on the problem and move onto finding a solution as soon as possible. Where relevant, make sure everyone involved is clear of the change.

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## LINKS AND RESOURCES

The following links and resources provide valuable information on the topics covered in this chapter. Many of the links and resources provided in other chapters (particularly Chapter 8) will also be relevant.

### Planning

- **ACT Insurance Authority**

<http://www.treasury.act.gov.au/actia/Risk.htm>

The ACT Insurance Authority has developed an easy-to-use Risk Management Toolkit. While the toolkit has been created for use by government agencies and employees, the model tools are flexible and may be of use to many non-government organisations and project managers.

- **Our Community**

[www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)

Our Community provides information for community groups – training, workshops, publications and infosheets (some are available at a cost, others are free). The website has a huge range of help sheets on topics including funding, risk management, media releases, event checklists and insurance.

- **Smart Chart 3.0**

<http://www.smartchart.org/>

Interactive Smart Chart 3.0 is an online tool that can help you make and assess strategic decisions.

### Evaluation

- **Arts Council England**

[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

The Arts Council England website provides infosheets on self-evaluation for organisations and artists.

- **Evaluating Community Arts and Community Well-Being. An Evaluation Guide for Community Arts Practitioners**

[www.arts.vic.gov.au/Research\\_and\\_Resources/Resources/Evaluating\\_Community\\_Arts\\_and\\_Wellbeing](http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/Research_and_Resources/Resources/Evaluating_Community_Arts_and_Wellbeing)

The publication was developed by Arts Victoria, VicHealth, Darebin City Council and the City of Whittlesea.

- **Evaluation Glossary**

[www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/index/evaluationandresearch-uk/eval\\_res\\_glossary](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/index/evaluationandresearch-uk/eval_res_glossary)

An extensive glossary of evaluation terms published by the UK's Big Lottery Fund.

- **Evaluation – Step by Step Guide**

[www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/evaluation](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/evaluation)

A publication produced by Victoria's Department of Planning and Community Development.

- **Most Significant Change Evaluation**

Entering 'most significant change evaluation' into a search engine will yield millions of results.

One example is: Dart J & Davies R 2003, A Dialogical, Story-Based Evaluation Tool: The Most Significant Change Technique, *American Journal of Evaluation*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 137–155, available at: <http://clearhorizon.com.au/category/resource-hub/most-significant-change/>

- **Liverpool Grass Roots**

<http://parliamentofdreams.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/evaluation-guidance-oct12.doc>

Programme Evaluation Guidance, a publication prepared for Liverpool Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Liverpool City Council community arts in health programme.

See items listed in the References section on page 105 for further reading.

*Website addresses and references are correct as of May 2013.*

# 6. MANAGING PEOPLE

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*Homeland* Kate Just (2007) Photo: Courtesy Heide Museum of Modern Art



# 6. MANAGING PEOPLE

No-one works in isolation in a community setting. Projects are implemented by people with different experiences, expectations and ideas. You need to think about the most effective way to manage these diverse individuals. Everyone should understand how they fit in and what is expected of them. This will involve clarifying relationships, roles and responsibilities.

## WORKING WITH PARTNERS

### Advantages

As discussed in Chapter 4, working with other groups and organisations can bring together a diversity of skills and resources to produce more effective outcomes. Partnerships may be formed between organisations that share similar goals or work with the same community. Other organisations may join the partnership throughout the course of the project.

Partnerships believe that more can be achieved together than alone. They are about promoting creativity and creative thinking, using collaboration to tackle complex issues and find new solutions.

*Kelly & Kelly 2002, p.11*

Partnerships may be formal or informal. All partners need to be clear about why they are involved, what they want to achieve, what they are contributing and their roles and responsibilities. Partners may invest time, personnel, expertise, funds, materials and/or facilities to the partnership.

Once you have clarified the purpose, function and communication processes of the partnership, it will help to detail this in an agreement. Establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or a formal Partnership Agreement if the partnership is complex.

If partnerships are to be successful... they must have a clear purpose, add value to the work of the partners and be carefully planned and monitored.

*VicHealth, The Partnerships Analysis Tool p.1*

### Strategies

One organisation usually takes a leadership role and coordinates the partnership. This may involve the employment of a project manager, an artist/manager or identifying a volunteer to undertake this role. The lead partner is responsible for the health of the partnership. This involves nurturing its development, fostering good communication, encouraging stakeholder participation and interest, and monitoring the progress of the project. Partnership meetings will help to:

- clarify the purpose, function and communication processes of the partnership;
- assist in planning;
- provide support and advice; and
- monitor and evaluate the project as it develops.

### Partnership Tips

- Develop a shared vision and clear objectives.
- Monitor progress and share reflections throughout – this is critical to strengthening and sustaining the partnership.
- Be clear about:
  - why the partnership is necessary;
  - what value the partnership adds to the project;
  - what each organisation is contributing to the partnership;
  - who is responsible for the partnership in each organisation;
  - each organisation's roles and responsibilities;
  - expectations and perspectives; and
  - processes for communication and decision-making.

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## INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPANTS

Without community involvement the community-based arts project is a hollow vehicle. From conception through to completion you need to ensure that there are many opportunities and ways that members of the community can be involved and participate. The participatory processes and inclusive and collaborative practices discussed in Chapter 2 are useful ways of ensuring these opportunities are created. Remember:

- If the participating group is already established, develop the idea for the project with them. Keep the group involved in the project's development through discussions, further planning and regular updates.
- If the project draws participants from across a community, develop a plan for community access to the project. Work with other groups and organisations in the community to identify potential participants, provide contacts and promote the project widely via word of mouth, newsletters, local newspapers, radio and websites.
- Develop clear strategies to ensure potential participants are able to access the project. Work with your partner organisations, community groups and other individuals to identify multiple ways to disseminate information and to encourage people to participate. Make phone calls, use email, Facebook, or an online collaborative tool such as Basecamp.com and organise meetings. Word of mouth is still one of the most valuable communication methods.
- Tailor the type of access offered to the particular community: meetings, one-on-one contact, hands-on participation, surveys. Not everyone wants, or has the time to attend meetings or go to workshops but they may still like to be involved. Be creative and inclusive.
- Projects may require a lot of time for good processes to evolve and for people to participate. Where possible, let participants know far in advance what their time commitment is likely to be.
- Community members' time is a valuable resource. Don't squander it. People are busy, they have families, work and other commitments.
- Ensure that meetings are necessary and purposeful, and scheduled at times and locations that are convenient. Sometimes it is more efficient and effective to have a series of one-on-one conversations than to hold a community meeting.



*Dust* Hubcap Productions with Regional Arts Victoria and Asbestos Diseases Society of Victoria (2008) Photo: Ferne Millen Photography

# MANAGING WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS

Community projects can involve large numbers of people from diverse backgrounds. Artists, project managers, partners, community participants, volunteers and a range of other workers, including carers and technical support people, all have roles to play. Everyone needs to be clear about what their role involves, what their responsibilities are and what is expected of them. They also need to be aware of what is *not* their responsibility. If this is not clear, there is potential for confusion and conflict. It is useful to clarify roles for workers and volunteers with appropriate job descriptions, contracts and/or letters of agreement.

## Job Descriptions

As discussed in Chapter 2, a job description is a simple document that clearly articulates roles, responsibilities and expectations. It also outlines who you need to report to and may outline the conflict resolution process. For workers, this will be part of their contract.



Melbourne Fringe Festival (2008)  
Photo: John Sones, Singing Bowl Media

## Contracts and Letters of Agreement

Contracts and letters of agreement are legal documents that help to clarify roles, relationships and situations. They can include terms of employment or participation, job descriptions and clauses about copyright, confidentiality and conflict resolution.

Depending on the complexity of the situation, a contract or letter of agreement may be required for:

- partners
- artists
- staff/workers
- participants
- volunteers

Simple letters of agreement can include who does what, for how long and for how much. For community participants, it may outline what they are expected to do, what the project will provide and what outcomes are sought.

Contracts do not need to be complex documents. They just need to articulate the roles and responsibilities of the different parties. The more complex the relationship, job, project or partnership, the more detailed the contract will be. Always seek advice if you are unclear about what is required. The Arts Law Centre of Australia is a good place to start (see Links and Resources on p.78).

## RESOLVING CONFLICTS

In recognising that conflict sometimes occurs, be prepared and have a conflict resolution process in place. This may include a set of ground rules negotiated with the group or a Code of Conduct (see Chapter 2) and a process by which the involved parties engage in a series of discussions to resolve their issues.

The process usually starts with the parties sitting down together to talk through the issues and come to an understanding. If they are not able to do this, a facilitator or mediator can be brought in. This may or may not be someone participating in the project.



*Embodied Dis/assemble Dance (2011) Photo: Karen Donnelly*

### *Cymbeline Buhler Artistic Director – Community Program, Western Edge*

It's so easy to assume that an artistic project will have intrinsic value for its participants, and overlook the need to really question how the participants will benefit. It's important to start by acknowledging that we as the artists and facilitators want something from the participants, and then take time to think seriously about how the project can serve them as well.

When I was recruiting for a project earlier this year, a lot of elders in the African community talked about how often their young people had taken part in projects, and that when the project came to an end, the artists disappeared and the young people were left with a hole in their lives where the project had been and no way of recreating the experiences they had or knowledge of how to pursue a career in the arts.

One of the ways we have addressed this at Western Edge is to create paid 'emerging artist' roles within our projects, offering young people the opportunity to work alongside our professional artists, so they can gain industry experience and develop their own vision of what kind of work they would like to do.

Another way which I'm currently developing, is a program that will run through the year with multiple entry points for participants to join. It's an unwieldy way to operate the project and certainly adds challenges to my job, but responds to the young people's need for continuity – both those who have been working with us previously and those who drift in from other projects.

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## GAINING NECESSARY PERMISSIONS

Permissions and permits are required in a wide range of situations. Below are some examples that apply when working with others:

- People working with children or people with disabilities need police checks. There may be a cost involved in obtaining these. Decide early on if this cost is going to be covered by the individual or by the project. Let people know what is required before they start working on the project.
- Written permission is required to publish a person's image. Gaining this permission from participants early on will assist the person responsible for documenting the project.
- Written permission is required from participants to publish extracts from, for example, an interview, their artwork or short story. Copyright and intellectual property are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2. Remember: Obtaining permissions should be outlined in the initial contract (not after the fact ) so everyone is clear from the beginning.



*Activities at ArtPlay (2011) Photo: Courtesy of City of Melbourne*

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## LINKS AND RESOURCES

The following links and resources provide valuable information on the topics covered in this chapter. Many of the links and resources provided in other chapters will also be relevant.

### **Working with partners**

- **Arts Law Centre of Australia**  
[www.artslaw.com.au](http://www.artslaw.com.au)

The Arts Law Centre of Australia website provides a range of legal information including sample contracts, glossary of terms used in contracts, information sheets regarding festivals, events, public liability insurance, intellectual property, privacy, Indigenous protocols and copyright.

- **The Community-Business Partnerships Resource Centre**  
[www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)

Our Community has a series of practical, no-nonsense help sheets for community groups, detailing the main steps of initiating, nurturing and expanding community-business partnerships.

- **The Partnership Resource for Community Arts**  
[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/en/Publications/Social-connection/Partnership-Resource-for-Community-Arts](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/en/Publications/Social-connection/Partnership-Resource-for-Community-Arts)

A VicHealth publication.

- **VicHealth's Partnership Analysis Tool**  
<http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/Publications/VicHealth-General-Publications/Partnerships-Analysis-Tool.aspx>

See items listed in the References section on page 105 for further reading.

*Website addresses and references are correct as of May 2013.*

# **7. MANAGING BUDGETS AND RESOURCES**

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Scienceworks Museum Victoria (2010) Photo: James Geer



# 7. MANAGING BUDGETS AND RESOURCES

This chapter provides information to help you manage the budget and resources you require for your project.

## UNDERSTANDING THE TERMS USED

There are a number of terms and concepts relating to financial matters that will be useful for you to understand. These are explained in the table below.

<b>Acquittal</b>	<p>Refers to the completion of paperwork, usually to a funding body, that outlines how the money was spent. This helps the funding body account for its own expenditure.</p> <p>The financial reporting requirements vary according to the funding body. Some only require financial statements certified by the chief finance officer of the organisation. Others may require externally audited accounts, especially for large sums. The financial reporting requirements are set out in the funding agreement. An accompanying project evaluation report is also often required.</p> <p>Some funding bodies will not provide funding to organisations that have not acquitted previous project grants, even if those projects are being run by a different department. It is worth checking whether your organisation has any outstanding acquittals before applying.</p>
<b>Auspice</b>	<p>Usually refers to the situation where an organisation applies for a grant on behalf of another organisation or group and manages the money on the project's behalf.</p> <p>Auspecting bodies usually charge a fee for this service to cover their costs. Your local council may also be willing to apply on your behalf. They will usually require an agreement or memorandum of understanding that outlines the responsibilities of each partner.</p>
<b>Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status</b>	<p>Some funding bodies (including philanthropic trusts) will only fund projects that are run by incorporated organisations or organisations that have Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status. DGR status is attractive to sponsors and donors as they are able to claim their sponsorship or donation as a tax deduction.</p> <p>Arts organisations can apply for DGR status. This usually requires setting up a separate (Trust) bank account. The organisation is then listed on the Register of Cultural Organisations (ROCO) that is administered by the Commonwealth Office for the Arts (<a href="http://www.arts.gov.au/roco">www.arts.gov.au/roco</a>).</p> <p>Non-incorporated organisations and those without DGR status sometimes choose to have their project 'auspiced' by an organisation that is registered (see above).</p>
<b>Earned income</b>	<p>Money generated by the community-based arts project including the participants paying for workshops, audience ticket sales, etc.</p>

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## UNDERSTANDING THE TERMS USED (CONTINUED)

<b>Financial accountability</b>	<p>Means having sound financial processes for managing the project funds, with a senior person taking responsibility for the financial management. This may be an experienced person from the organisation's finance department or a volunteer providing 'in-kind' support (see below).</p> <p>To maximise success:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Ensure all transactions, receipts, invoices and the like are carefully recorded and that there is clear documentation for your reports.</li><li>- Monitor expenditure against your original budget and report regularly to the project management group so that everyone knows how much has been spent, and how much is left.</li><li>- Identify who is authorised to spend project funds and have a system of 'sign off' before expenditure actually occurs.</li><li>- Review and revise the budget where necessary. Sometimes overspending in one area can be offset by underspending in another.</li><li>- If the project receives grant funding, ensure that you are spending the money in accordance with the funding agreement.</li></ul>
<b>Funding agreement</b>	<p>This is essentially a contract between the organisation managing the project (or in the case of an auspiced project, managing the money) and the organisation that is providing the funds.</p> <p>It sets out any terms and conditions that apply to the grant. For example, you may not be able to buy equipment with the money or you may need to include the funding body's logo on your promotional materials. It outlines what your obligations are, including when and how you need to report to the funding body.</p> <p>The funding agreement is a legally binding document, so read it carefully and ensure that the person who signs it is legally authorised to sign. If you are unsure about any of its content, ring the funding body and ask them to clarify.</p>
<b>In-kind support</b>	<p>Includes all non-cash services, goods, time and expertise provided by your organisation, partners, participants, the community and volunteers.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The local council provides a bus to transport participants to and from rehearsals.</li><li>- The local community arts centre provides a rehearsal or performance venue.</li><li>- The local press provides free advertising and local retailers let you use their shop windows to publicise the event.</li><li>- One volunteer offers to ring everyone to pass on information, which involves their time and the cost of the phone calls.</li><li>- A local business provides the use of office space and equipment, such as photocopiers, computers and telephones.</li><li>- Volunteers help out with an event – setting up an exhibition, preparing food and drinks, building the sets and making costumes.</li></ul> <p>When making applications for funding, estimate how much this support would cost if you had to pay. It is usually a significant contribution to the overall budget.</p>

## IDENTIFYING THE RESOURCES REQUIRED

Typical requirements for a project include:

- human resources – people, skills and time;
- materials;
- venues, equipment and transport;
- services – such as printing, design, childcare; and
- insurances and permits.

These may be paid for or provided in-kind. The example in the following box shows how one project could use a combination of financial and in-kind sources to obtain the resources they require.

### Scenario: GOOD Health Centre

GOOD Health Centre works with a group of young residents from the local housing estate. They want to make short films.

They need the following resources: an artist, two venues – one for workshops and one with access to multimedia/computers for video editing – and equipment, such as video cameras.

They already have the workshop space. To ensure ongoing access to equipment and video editing, they form a partnership with a local school. The council provides funds to pay for the artist.

The films are presented as part of a local festival.

As part of your planning, think about the following questions:

- What do you need to run the project in terms of skills, venues, materials, services, funds and other resources?
- Which of these resources do you already have?
- What can your partners, other organisations or community groups provide?
- What can the community provide?
- What are the gaps?
- Where can you find support for the gaps?
- Have you made provision for access?



(f)route Penny Carruthers Cassilis/Swifts Creek (2012)  
Photo: Dylan Lane

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## IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL INCOME SOURCES

Some projects will gain earned income through the activities undertaken, such as income from ticket sales or the sale of items produced by the participants. Many community-based arts projects will require other sources of external income to cover their expenses. Grants, sponsorships and crowd funding are ways to source these funds.

### Grants

Local, state and federal governments and philanthropic trusts provide grants for projects. Think widely about the funding areas your project may fit into – it could be of interest to areas including the arts, community, health, youth, multicultural or regional affairs. The internet is a good source of information on funding opportunities.

When researching possibilities:

- Match the project with the right funding body – read the information provided about what they fund, their areas of interest and key selection criteria. If your project isn't a good fit, don't apply – it will be a waste of everyone's time.
- Find out when the grant rounds are (i.e. when grants become available). Funding bodies may only have one or two grant rounds each year. If you miss the deadline you will have to wait until the next round.
- Check funding deadlines – generally they cannot be negotiated.
- Always check guidelines carefully, as some funds will only be open to groups that have a particular legal status. An auspicing body may be a solution.
- Ensure that your project occurs within the grant timeframe. If you want to conduct the project in the next few months, you may be too late to acquire any grants. Retrospective funding is very rarely provided.
- Check if the funding body requires an independent audit for grants over a certain amount. Ensure you budget for this if it is required.
- Talk to the funding bodies. When you have an outline of what it is you want to do, call them, discuss it with them, ask questions and seek advice. This will assist you in applying to the right funding body for the project and will help in writing a better application.

### Sponsorships

Sponsorship is a mutually beneficial relationship where support is provided in return for a service.

When investigating sponsorship:

- Look for a natural fit between the project and the sponsor.
- Use local expertise and support wherever possible.
- Consider in-kind as well as cash support.
- Think innovatively about what services can be provided for a sponsor. These could include advertising or logos on promotional materials, artist-run performance workshops for the sponsor's employees, or the choir singing at the sponsor's end-of-year breakup.
- Prepare sponsorship proposals and, if successful, sponsorship agreements (see the Links and Resources section on p.89 for some online and free resources).
- Make sure any conditions stipulated by the sponsors are able to be delivered within the project and the budget.
- Ensure all arrangements between organisations are comprehensively documented in a written agreement, including partnership, sponsorship and auspicing arrangements. This will help eliminate the potential for misunderstanding.
- Remember that sponsors need to be looked after, otherwise they might not support you (or future projects) again. Allocate resources to keep them updated with the progress of the project.
- Remember to invite everyone who has sponsored the project to the final event and to acknowledge and thank them.



*The Telepathy Project* Veronica Kent and Sean Peoples (2008)  
Photo: Michelle Tran

## Crowd Sourcing or P2P (Peer to Peer) Investment

Crowd funding (also known as crowd financing) is a way to build support for a project or idea through collective effort or social investment. Crowd funding is often through the internet, with assistance from sites such as Pozible, Indiegogo and Kickstarter. Each of these crowd funding sites have a different slant to them in the type of support offered and the type of activity offered across not-for profit and charity, arts, film and creative industries etc. Pozible, for example aims to assist artists, musicians, filmmakers, designers and social change advocates to further their projects. Pozible is regarded as a good alternative to traditional methods of funding in Australia. It is also important to consider how feasible your project or idea is and how much you can realistically raise in this way. As applies to grants and sponsorship, your reputation as a practitioner is also central to the way you conduct your affairs and manage relationships through crowd funding activity, as this is an investment on the part of others and not free money.

## PREPARING A BUDGET

Once the required resources and possible sources of income have been identified, develop a budget. The budget is your primary financial management tool and should detail all support needed, including in-kind goods and services. A realistic budget will help you contain the size of the project and ensure the project doesn't exceed the available resources.

Most funding bodies provide a template for you to use when presenting your budget. Although these vary, the basic principles remain the same. There are usually clear guidelines on how the information is to be presented. For example, the Arts Victoria budget template for the Community Partnerships program provides the following guidelines:

- Use the budget form provided to detail all expenditure items and estimated income for the project.
- If the budget form does not provide adequate space, use it as a summary and attach a detailed budget and any explanatory notes to your submission. Significant cost centres such as artists' fees should be broken down and detailed.
- Expenditure items, that Arts Victoria funding will be used to offset, must be identified with an asterisk.
- All expected income relevant to the project, including funding submissions to Local, State and Federal government agencies must be included in the budget. Please indicate whether these amounts are confirmed (C) or unconfirmed (NC).
- The amount of funding sought from Arts Victoria should be represented as projected income.
- The budget should represent a breakeven result once the amount sought from Arts Victoria is included.
- If your project budget is being managed by a not-for-profit organisation; these are often endorsed charities, income tax exempt or may be entitled to other concessions, depending on their status.

## PREPARING A BUDGET (CONTINUED)

### Sample Budget: Community Health Centre Theatre Project

A sample budget (not inclusive of GST) template is presented below. This budget is for a community theatre project being developed with local community members through a collaboration between a community health centre (CHC) and a professional theatre company (PTC).

Please note that this is one simple example of a

budget. It is always useful to check how your project partners and funding bodies prepare their budgets.

Remember, budgets are a useful communication tool. It is often the case that you do not reach your projected budget. Rebudget and forward this to your relevant funding bodies and investors. It will clarify the situation for all.

Income	\$	Expenditure	\$	*
Earned Income <sup>1</sup>		Project/Production Costs <sup>4</sup>		
Tickets 200 x av. \$15 per ticket	3,000	Venue (in-kind)	3,000	
Merchandising	200	Materials	1,000	
Artists and Others Contribution <sup>2</sup>		Equipment	1,500	
Cash		Costumes/Set	2,000	
XYZ Community Health Centre (C)	5,500	Community (see breakdown)	2,200	
		Freight	720	
In-kind		Marketing and Promotion <sup>5</sup>		
DEF Theatre Company (Equipment)	1,000	Poster Design and Printing	1,500	
XYZ Community Health	1,880	Advertising (includes \$1,000 in-kind)	2,000	
		Access provisions	1,000	
Government Grants				
Arts Victoria	10,000	Administration <sup>6</sup>		
Australia Council		Communications	200	
Regional Arts Victoria (NC)	10,000	Stationery	200	
Local Government Grant (C)	2,500	Insurance	1,400	
Local Government In-kind (Venue)	3,000			
Other VicHealth (C)	15,000			
Non Government Grants and Support <sup>3</sup>		Salaries, Fees, On-costs <sup>7</sup>		
Cash		Artists Salaries (see breakdown)	24,600	*
GHI Trust (NC)	10,000	Production Salaries	10,500	
		Project Manager	5,000	
In-kind		On Costs @ 12%	4,270	
Top Bakery	100	Administrative Support Staff	600	
Green's Grocery	100	Support Worker	1,280	
Daily Planet Newspaper	1,000	Auslan Interpreter (Fee)	310	
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>63,280</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>63,280</b>	

## Notes

1. Box office/Merchandise/Membership/Entry fees (provide details on how this figure was calculated)
  2. Self investment/Value of materials
  3. Business Sponsorship/Donations/Community Fund-raising/Local Arts Council
  4. Development costs/Production/Technical/ Materials/Freight
  5. Promotions/Publicity/Advertising/Printing and design/Programs
  6. Office costs/Administration overheads/Insurance
  7. List all principal personnel and breakdown of salary/On costs/Living allowances
- Make sure you are clear about what is included in each section.

## Budget Tips

Budgets are not to be feared. Follow the tips below and ask someone more experienced for help if required.

- Be detailed and realistic about expenses. It is better that you know from the beginning that you cannot afford something than to discover in the middle of the project that no funds are available. An under-resourced project causes immense stress.
- Give monetary value to all in-kind support. This ensures you are presenting a realistic picture of how much the project will cost.
- Make sure in-kind support is shown as both income and expenditure.
- Be realistic about how much external funding you will be able to source.
- Use a combination of sources to resource the project – don't put all your eggs in one basket!
- Carefully read any notes, guidelines or other information funding bodies provide. This information is there to help you submit an application that is assessable and successful.
- Provide all the information requested. This will increase your chance of success.
- Identify how the requested funding will be spent.
- Identify the status of all sources of income ('confirmed' or 'not confirmed').
- Budgets tell a story – a financial story. Make sure your budget and your proposal tell the same story. For example, if your application says you will run 10 weeks of workshops, make sure your budget includes sufficient funds to pay your workshop leader/artists for that length of time.
- Make sure your budget adds up correctly.
- If budgets are not your strength, ask for help from someone more experienced. It is always good to have a second pair of eyes.
- Have a Plan B in case you don't secure all your funding. For example, you might consider a scaled-down version of the project that doesn't compromise the artistic and community outcomes.
- Make sure you are familiar with tax requirements and recipient status (i.e. DGR, GST etc.). There are some useful links at the end of this chapter to assist.

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## WRITING FUNDING APPLICATIONS

An effective application clearly articulates a good idea. It outlines what you are going to do, why you are doing it, who will be doing it, and when and how it will happen. It provides an overview of the project that can be incorporated into planning documents as the project progresses.

### Funding Application Tips

- Read the guidelines carefully. Ensure you are eligible and that your project fits within the guidelines.
  - Contact the funding body and discuss your project with them, even if it is not a requirement. They will answer any questions you have and can give you sound advice about your application. Before you contact them, have a clear understanding of your project.
  - Be prepared. Make sure you have enough time to write the application and to collect all relevant support material, such as letters of support and confirmation, and resumes of those involved.
  - Be clear about the deadlines as these are generally fixed. You may be able to provide some of the support material after the deadline, but check with the funding body.
  - Follow the guidelines on how to format your application and support material. Use any checklists provided.
  - Read the key selection criteria and ensure that you address them specifically in your application. For example, if one of the key selection criteria is the calibre of the artists, make sure you submit resumes that are relevant to the project and examples of their previous work.
- Demonstrate that the project will have artistic merit by having a clear artistic vision, creative processes that will enable you to realise it and experienced, qualified artists.
- Use simple, clear language – avoid jargon. Do not assume that members of the assessment panel have any knowledge of your group or your industry’s jargon, rhetoric or acronyms.
  - Demonstrate that you are able to achieve the project by following a well thought out timeline and implementation plan.
  - Make sure the application is clear and easy to read and understand – assessors have to read huge numbers of applications. Your application also needs to stand out (for the right reasons) from the others.
  - Proofread for spelling and grammar.
  - Ask for a second opinion.
  - Check what signatures are required.



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## LINKS AND RESOURCES

The following links and resources provide valuable information on the topics covered in this chapter. Many of the links and resources provided in other chapters will also be relevant.

### Budgets and financial management

- **Arts Council England Sample Budgets**  
[www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/doc/example\\_budgets.doc](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/doc/example_budgets.doc)  
A useful information sheet from Arts Council England.
- **CPA Australia**  
<http://www.cpaustralia.com.au/cps/rde/xchg/cpa-site/hs.xsl/knowledge-not-for-profit.html>  
Useful information on managing grants and finances in not-for-profit organisations.

### Sourcing funding

- **Foresters Community Finance**  
<http://www.foresters.org.au/>  
Foresters Community Finance Limited is a Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI) providing finance and investment capital to the community sector in Australia.
- **Grants**  
[www.grants.dvc.vic.gov.au](http://www.grants.dvc.vic.gov.au)  
A website featuring information about all the grant programs administered by the Department of Planning and Community Development. On this site you can apply for grants online, download guidelines and application forms, read about what community organisations have done with successful grant applications and find hints and tips on how to apply for a grant.
- **GrantsLINK**  
[www.grantslink.gov.au](http://www.grantslink.gov.au)  
GrantsLINK provides information on funding available under a variety of grant programs for individuals, businesses and communities.

- **GrantGuru Community**  
<http://community.grantready.com.au/>  
Australia's largest searchable listing of grants and funding programs for community based and not-for-profit organisations.
  - **Local Government (Municipal Association of Victoria)**  
<http://www.mav.asn.au/about-local-government/council-details/Pages/council-details.aspx>  
Local Government can be a great source of support. For a list of Victorian State municipalities, visit the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) website.
  - **Local Government Victoria**  
[www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/localgovernment](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/localgovernment)  
This website provides information about Local Government grants. Some councils provide small grants for activities in their area.
  - **Our Community**  
<http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/>  
A social enterprise that provides advice and tools for Australia's not-for-profit community groups and state, private and independent schools, as well as practical linkages between the community sector and the general public, business and government.
  - **Philanthropy Australia**  
[www.philanthropy.org.au](http://www.philanthropy.org.au)  
The Philanthropy Australia website includes a links section for Australian philanthropic foundations. The organisation also publishes a Directory of Australian Philanthropy.
- ### Philanthropic trusts & private support
- **ANZ Trustees**  
<http://www.anz.com.au/personal/private-bank-trustees/trustees/granting/>
  - **Besen Family Foundation**  
[www.besenfoundation.org.au](http://www.besenfoundation.org.au)
  - **Creative Partnerships Australia**  
[www.creativepartnershipsaustralia.org.au](http://www.creativepartnershipsaustralia.org.au)
  - **Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal**  
[www.frrr.org.au](http://www.frrr.org.au)

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## LINKS AND RESOURCES (CONTINUED)

### Philanthropic trusts & private support (continued)

- **Harold Mitchell Foundation**  
[www.haroldmitchellfoundation.com.au](http://www.haroldmitchellfoundation.com.au)
- **Ian Potter Foundation**  
[www.ianpotter.org.au](http://www.ianpotter.org.au)
- **Myer Foundation**  
[www.myerfoundation.org.au](http://www.myerfoundation.org.au)
- **Reichstein Foundation**  
[www.reichstein.org.au](http://www.reichstein.org.au)
- **Telstra Foundation**  
[www.telstrafoundation.com](http://www.telstrafoundation.com)
- **The Awesome Foundation**  
<http://www.awesomefoundation.org/en/chapters/melbourne>
- **The JB Seed An Arts Grant Fund**  
[www.theseedfund.org](http://www.theseedfund.org)

### Crowd Sourcing or P2P (Peer to Peer) investment

- **Indiegogo**  
[www.indiegogo.com](http://www.indiegogo.com)
- **Kickstarter**  
[www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com)
- **Pozible**  
[www.pozible.com](http://www.pozible.com)

### Agencies

- **Arts Victoria**  
[www.arts.vic.gov.au](http://www.arts.vic.gov.au)

The Arts Victoria website features grant information, a links section and relevant publications.

- **Australia Council for the Arts**  
[www.australiacouncil.gov.au](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au)

The Australia Council for the Arts website features grant information, a links section and relevant publications.

[http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/philanthropy/resources\\_and\\_links](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/philanthropy/resources_and_links)

The Australia Council also has a useful 'Resources and Links' section.

- **Regional Arts Victoria**  
[www.rav.net.au](http://www.rav.net.au)

The Regional Arts Victoria website features information about grants for regional artists and projects.

- **VicHealth**  
[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)

The VicHealth website features information about funding, publications and information about previously funded projects.

### Preparing funding applications

- **The Community Funding Centre**  
[www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/funding)

The Community has a grant database as well as a range of information sheets covering many topics.

See items listed in the References section on page 105 for further reading.

*Website addresses and references are correct as of May 2013.*

# 8. MANAGING EVENTS

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*Snuff Puppets* Roaming performance, Kareem the Elephant (2010) Photo: Claudio Raschella

# 8. MANAGING EVENTS

An event is a satisfying culmination to a project. It is an opportunity for participants to show the work they have created and skills they have learnt, and for people to come together, share, appreciate and celebrate. It is a time to be proud of what has been achieved.

The event can be on any scale – from a show-and-tell for friends, family or the wider community to a full-scale theatre production, exhibition or festival. Whatever the event, planning and checklists are essential. This chapter provides guidance and information to help you successfully manage your event.

## PLANNING

You will already have developed a set of planning documents for the overall project (see Chapter 5). Some of these plans will be able to be adapted specifically for the event. Other event-specific plans will need to be developed. The types of plans that may be required specifically for the event include:

- **An implementation plan.**
- **A communications plan:** this will include plans for promotion and publicity.
- **A risk management plan:** this identifies and evaluates the risks and assesses ways to reduce and manage them.
- **An emergency management plan:** this includes, for example, locations of the fire-fighting equipment and first aid kits, contact numbers for emergency services, evacuation plans in the event of an emergency, etc.
- **A security plan:** this should identify the level and type of security needed. It should address questions such as: Do you need police or security personnel? How will you deal with lost property or lost children?
- **A public safety plan:** this identifies and analyses significant safety hazards and indicates how you will implement selected controls. It identifies, for example, how you will ensure temporary structures are secure, and records where the gas cylinders and electrical cables are situated. If the event is outdoors, it might include the provision of adequate water and sunscreen for participants and audience members.
- **A logistics plan:** this covers items such as first aid, toilets, waste management, signage, communications, traffic, transport, parking, food and alcohol permits, etc.
- **Checklists for use on the day of the event:** these may include contact lists with all participants' details, running schedules, event task checklists and a list of props and other resources required and where they need to be located.



*(f)route (2012) Photo: Andrea Lane*

**(f)route** [www.froute.com.au](http://www.froute.com.au)

(f)route is a collective of artists and ‘fruitists’ based in East Gippsland. (f)route plans for the convergence of art and agriculture, food and community, landscape and environment, enterprise and optimism, health and happiness, travellers and locals. At the moment its core is its trademark (f)route breakfasts in fruity places – be it backyards, orchards or fruit shops. These breakfasts are for locals and travellers. They have become an open platform for ideas that shift the way things are done in small communities.

Over the last 2 years, (f)route has generated its own (admittedly) unwieldy response to a lack of resources and infrastructure, with a sense of the poetic, juxtaposed with an abundance of space and place, and stories of succulence. Good sense is starting to be made of ideas that were once driven by mere instinct and chutzpah.

(f)route is now developing a social enterprise because it believes that although the traditional marketplace continues to fail East Gippsland’s creativity, there is value in the existence of rural communities, and that (f)route will find the mechanisms that can assist ethical economic development in remote communities.

## OBTAINING INSURANCES, LICENSES & PERMITS

Workshops, rehearsals and events all require some form of insurance. The type of activity will determine the type and level of insurance. Workers, artists, participants (including volunteers) and audience members all need to be covered.

Insurance can be expensive, so you need to identify and budget for it from the start. Always seek professional advice on this and make sure you deal with an insurance company that understands and deals with the arts. It may also be worth speaking to your local council to see if they can assist. The Our Community website (see Links and Resources on p.98) contains useful information on insurance and insurance agents.

You also need to check with the local council to determine whether you require any permits or forms of licensing in advance of the proposed activity or event. They can provide advice on application procedures and deadlines.

## COMMUNICATING WITH PARTICIPANTS

Effective communication will be the key to the success of the project and the event.

For the event itself:

- ensure that everybody involved knows where they are meant to be and when; and
- prepare a rehearsal/performance schedule and give it to all participants.

## ENSURING AN AUDIENCE

You want to make sure all the hard work you have done will have an appreciative audience. Think about your audience in all your planning activities. If you hope to attract audience members from the general public, ensure that you promote your event in a relevant and timely fashion.

Considering the questions listed below will help you clarify who the desired audience is and how you can ensure they attend.

### Place

- Is the venue an established and known site or do you need to provide travel details/directions?
- Is the venue easily accessed by public transport? If not, have you developed an alternate transport option (such as provision of buses)?

### Price

- How much are tickets going to cost?
- Can your target audience afford this price?
- Are you able to offer cheaper tickets to a preview night?
- Are you able to give discounts for family/group tickets?
- How do you know what price to display? (See previous chapter on Managing Budgets and Resources.)

### Event

- Is your event family-friendly?
- Is the content of your work suitable for children?
- Will there be food and drinks available?
- Will your event be alcohol free?
- Is your event outdoors? Do people need to bring rugs, chairs, etc.?

### Publicity

- How early do you need to send invitations to sponsors, funding bodies, partner organisations, family and supporters?
- Who can you approach to acquire free publicity?
- How effective is paid advertising likely to be? Where would you gain the most appropriate exposure – online, newspapers, school newsletters, billboards?

## Collingwood Housing Estate Arts Committee

In 2001, CHEAC (the Collingwood Housing Estate Arts Committee) was formed. It included estate and private residents, members of Collingwood Neighbourhood House and local arts community representatives. Their attention soon focused on a large disused underground parking lot on the Collingwood public housing estate. Spurred by its potential as a multipurpose community and arts venue, negotiations began with the Office of Housing to secure access and funding. CHEAC organised the renovation and reopening of the space and continue to oversee its use as an art gallery, theatre, meeting place, music venue, recording studio and community event space.

In addition to various local uses, many people visit for events associated with the Fringe Festival, Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT), Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT), enlivening and integrating this part of the estate with the broader community.



AURA (2011) Photo: Sue Kent



*Making a seed mandala at CERES Harvest Festival Photo: Cinnamon Evans*

## CERES Festivals

CERES (Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies), named after the Roman Goddess of agriculture, began when the Brunswick Council gave the community the lease in 1982. The 10 acre site was formerly land fill and the first job was to clean and clear the land. CERES has restored the landscape and created a pioneering working model of sustainable community development. There is a huge diversity of projects utilising education, community participation, arts and celebration to showcase environmental technologies, and action on environmental and social issues.

CERES produces two flagship festivals – Return of the Sacred Kingfisher Festival and the Autumn Harvest Festival – which have become annual community celebrations. They explore community stories that have shaped the area. They also examine ancient Dreamtime notions of landscape and how this has influenced modern Australia. The artistic process involves a range of artforms, such as live theatre, dance, film, story telling, music and visual art, with contributions and direct collaborations with community and professional artists.

CERES has established strong relationships with Indigenous Elders, teachers and artists over the years, creating opportunities for new collaborative exchanges through artistic practice. CERES has created a sacred space where Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous communities can come together and share with each other, through stories of ancient and modern experiences.

CERES is a place for people to come and connect to the natural environment and an appropriate place to explore our social and cultural relationship to community, arts and landscape.



*CWA ladies judging the cake competition at CERES Harvest Festival Photo: Cinnamon Evans*



## The Village Festival

[www.thevillagefestival.com.au](http://www.thevillagefestival.com.au)

The Village Festival exists to provide an intimate environment in which professional and non-professional artists, and audiences can meet each other in 'bliss'. The programming aesthetic is populist, accessible, quirky, and littered with the familiar and the exotic. Fanning out from the centre of a park are hand-made portable theatres – tents, inflatables, caravans, buses, puppet booths alongside a selection of art, bric-a-brac, food stalls, games and items to delight the senses. In the middle is a café and a bar, to sit with friends and take in the view. A large blackboard tells you what's on in the surrounding venues. Each show is between five and thirty minutes; and they are cheap... many things are free.

The Village is run by a professional team of highly experienced arts workers, often mentoring teams of volunteers, students and keen amateurs. The Village provides artistic support for artists – this may simply be some dramaturgical or design advice, but has often included devising and directing new works. Many Village Festivals are presented in conjunction with other festivals or events and in those instances, all venues are free to the public.



*Khalil Jureidini at the Village (2013) Photo: Craig Brown*

### Remember

- Everything always takes longer than expected.
- Expect change and don't be afraid to make changes to the plan where necessary.
- Plan, plan, plan: from long-term plans to the 'To Do List' for the day of the event. Addressing the smallest details in advance will spare you stress.
- Keep track of your project and event via the plan: evaluate as you proceed.
- 'Be prepared' is a form of risk management. Think of what can go wrong and how you will manage the event accordingly. Even the smallest projects and events have risks.

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## LINKS AND RESOURCES

The following links and resources provide valuable information on the topics covered in this chapter. Many of the links and resources provided in other chapters will also be relevant.

### Legal issues

- **Arts Law Centre of Australia**  
[www.artslaw.com.au](http://www.artslaw.com.au)

The Arts Law Centre of Australia website features sample contracts, a glossary of terms used in contracts, information sheets regarding festivals, events, public liability insurance, intellectual property and Indigenous protocols.

### Event management

- **Creative Spaces**  
<http://www.creativespaces.net.au/list-a-space>  
Creative Spaces is program of the City of Melbourne Arts and Culture Branch. It partners with government, philanthropic, private organisations, and educational institutions to provide a broad range of services around space for arts and cultural production, including a searchable database of available spaces across Victoria and, more recently in other States.
- **Crowd Control At Venues And Events**  
[www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/)  
A WorkSafe Victoria publication intended for venue and event host employers, crowd control agencies and crowd control staff. It provides tools and recommendations for controlling entry into events, monitoring and communicating on crowd and individual behaviour, dealing with potentially aggressive or violent behaviour and coordinating emergency evacuation of an event. Search the WorkSafe Victoria website to locate this publication.

- **Major Events, Advice for Managing Safely – Victorian WorkCover Authority**  
[www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/)

WorkSafe Victoria's practical guidance for major event organisers, venue owners and suppliers regarding the management of safety risks at major events and how to meet their duty of care through integrated event safety planning. The document includes examples of hazards and sample safety plans. Search the WorkSafe Victoria website to locate this publication.

- **Media Team Australia**  
[www.mediateam.websyte.com.au](http://www.mediateam.websyte.com.au)

Media Team Australia is a non-profit organisation that assists community organisations to make their media, marketing and public relations activities more professional. The website provides risk management plans and a checklist. It is an invaluable resource for any organisation that runs public events of any scale.

- **Our Community**  
[www.ourcommunity.com.au](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au)

The Our Community website has help sheets covering funding, risk management, media releases, event checklists and insurance.

[http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/insurance/view\\_help\\_sheet.do?articleid=263f](http://www.ourcommunity.com.au/insurance/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=263f)

A useful help sheet on types of insurance.

See items listed in the References section on page 105 for further reading.

*Website addresses and references are correct as of May 2013.*

# 9. COMPLETING THE PROJECT

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*Deaf Can Dance* Deaf Arts Network, Arts Access Victoria and Phunktional (2009) Photo: Tatjana Pitt

# 9. COMPLETING THE PROJECT

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All community projects come to an end. It is important that the project finishes as well as it began. There is a lot of energy and excitement at the beginning of a project, but often, by the end people are tired or have already moved on to whatever is next. The project can just drift away, leaving people unsure of exactly what happened or what was achieved. To avoid this, create an ending!

The project finale could be a party or a shared meal linked with the project's presentation. Or it may be a separate project-based party or community celebration. Whatever it is, it will be an opportunity to recognise achievements, celebrate what has been made together and thank people. It is an occasion for praise, pride, recognition and constructive criticism.

## CREATING A HAPPY ENDING

Issues to consider at this stage include:

### Celebration/Appreciation

Everyone likes to be recognised and appreciated. Acknowledging and appreciating people's contributions and talents all the way through the project is important for the community. Particularly as the project comes to an end, thank everyone who has been involved – workers, participants, community members, partners, sponsors and funding bodies. Ensure that people who have contributed to the project have been appropriately acknowledged in publications and presentations. If a publication, short report or other form of documentation has been produced send a copy to all the appropriate people and organisations.

### Evaluation

At the beginning of the project you developed an evaluation plan. Evaluation was then carried out at various stages throughout the project. Complete the final stage of the evaluation once the project has ended. Gather all the necessary information, analyse and share.

### Documentation

Collect all the project's documentation and archive it in an organised manner. Much of this material will be required for the final report and will be useful for projects in the future.

People in your organisation or a funding body may want information or images from the project for annual reports, or simply because it was a successful project and they want to know how it was developed. They need to know how to access this information even if you are no longer involved.

## CREATING A HAPPY ENDING (CONTINUED)



*The Village* (2013) Photo: Craig Brown

### Reporting

An internal report summarising the project is valuable for everyone involved. It is an opportunity to analyse and reflect upon what worked and what did not work, ensuring that lessons are learned and shared.

Funding bodies and partners require different levels and forms of reporting and documentation and the internal report can provide the basis for these. Always leave enough time and resources at the end of a project to be able to complete this process effectively. Often the time it takes to wrap up the project and prepare, write and disseminate the reports is underestimated.



*Melbourne Fringe Festival* Crowd Play 2 (2011) Photo: Kate Harnsworth

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## Funding Acquittals

If the project received funding, follow the acquittal and reporting procedures outlined in the funding agreement. Organise an independent audit if required. There will be a deadline after the project has been completed when the acquittal is required.

## Sharing with the Sector and Advocacy

Apart from the project's final report there may be additional reporting or promotions that need to be completed. Other organisations or people working in the field may be interested to see how the project worked. Prepare and send reports to other staff, websites, journals, newsletters or conferences.



*Fresh Dance New Beats* Ausdance Victoria (2008) Photo: Adrian Neugebauer

## Internal Report Tips

In preparing your internal report, include the following:

- Name of the project
- Partner organisation details
- Artists involved
- Names of main project managers, community coordinators, etc.
- Participant names and numbers
- A description of the project (e.g. workshops, an exhibition)
- A review of the goals and objectives, and whether and to what degree they were achieved
- Reflection and analysis of what happened throughout the project
- Overview of how things changed from the original plan and why
- Recommendations
- Evaluation material
- Financial report
- Publicity report
- Copies of publicity and promotional materials
- Copies of any media coverage
- Documentation of the process and result (e.g. still photos, video, audio)
- Copy of the entire report for archiving



*The Go Show* Dale Morris, Pedro Lay, Brian Harris at the Footscray Community Arts Centre (2006) Creator: Simon Obarzanek



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# REFERENCES

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