

Western Edge Youth Arts Inc.

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**WESTERN
EDGE
YOUTH
ARTS**

Strategic Plan 2016-2020



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Our Artistic Vision

Young people who have been part of Western Edge Youth Arts are culturally diverse leaders, artistically articulate and astute. Through their connection with us, communities are stronger, healthy, connected and inclusive. The artistic landscape is enriched with diverse stories that are meaningful to young people and touch the hearts and minds of communities.

Western Edge Youth Arts (WEYA) achieves this by creating challenging, socially engaged and inspiring performances with culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged young people.

Our purpose

Is to enable diverse young people to make sense of the world they live in through art.

At WEYA, we create a place where young people can make complex, socially engaged art that generates deep reflection on values and enables young people to discover new perspectives.

Many of our performers are unlikely to set foot in a mainstream theatre. They are under 26, living in the inner and outer west of Melbourne or beyond and move between cultures. Sometimes they are cash poor, but rich in ways that make for complex, funny, challenging and beautiful art.

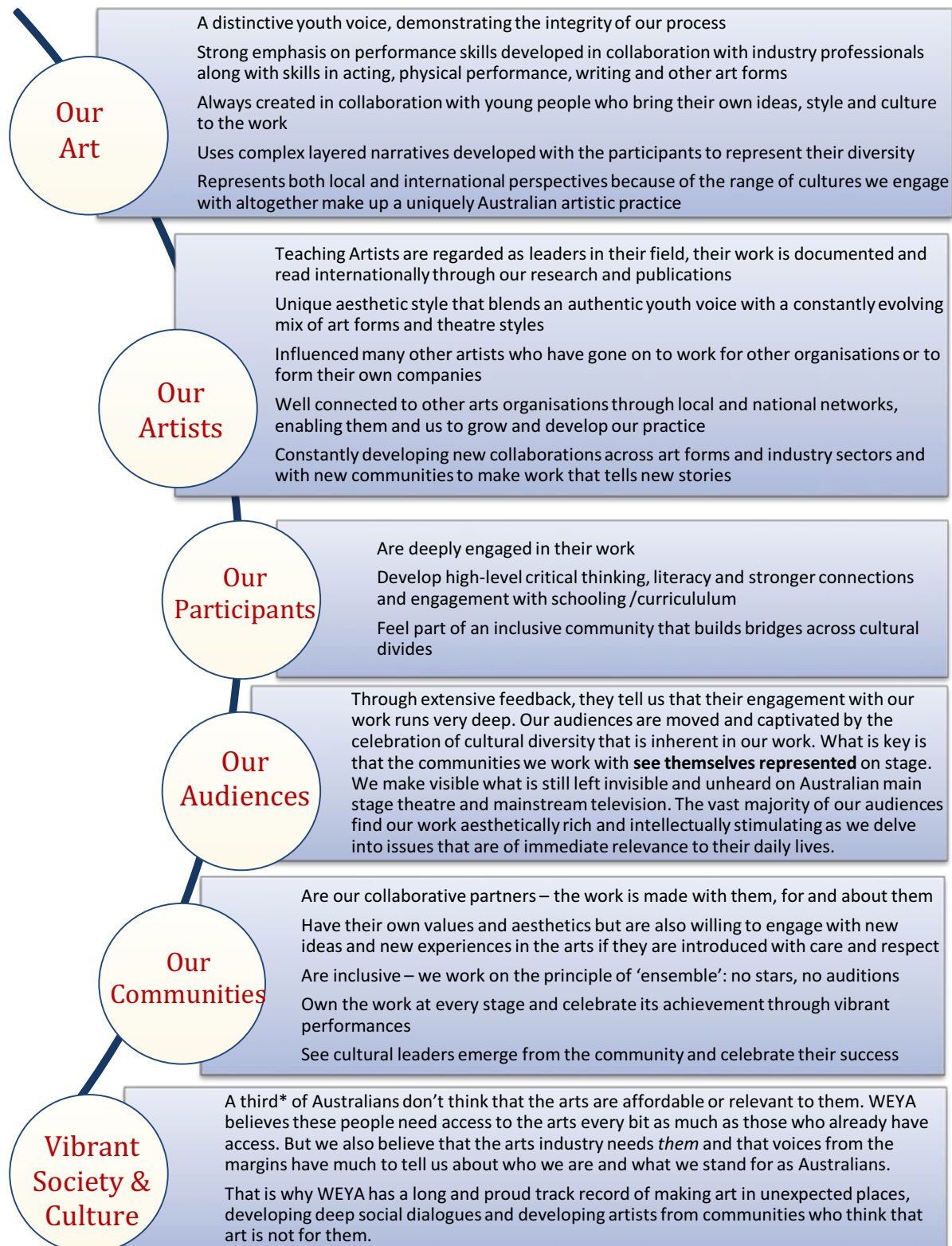
Our work is fun but grounded in research and theory. Our processes encourage the sort of rigorous thinking that young people can carry into daily life. Many go on to lead their communities through our mentorship.

WEYA's teaching artists are skilled in community arts, applied theatre and arts education. They run workshops in collaboration with culturally diverse emerging artists, industry professionals and culturally, as well as economically, diverse communities. Together we find the burning issues that are relevant locally, nationally and globally, and transform them into compelling contemporary performances that captivate, stimulate and move the communities we work with.

WEYA's contribution to the arts is like no other organisation. ***What WEYA offers to the arts sector and community has been inspired by the very people we are here to benefit – our youth of today and the future.***

Bernadette Fitzgerald
Chair

Our Artistic Vibrancy



*Arts in Daily Life: Australians Participating in the Arts. 2014 Australia Council for the Arts

Executive Summary

Over the next four years, WEYA will touch the lives of over 1000 marginalised, culturally diverse young people and the communities they belong to.

The goals underpinning our strategy will ensure opportunities are created for young people from culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged communities to connect, engage and grow through the creation of excellent, socially engaged art so that they make sense of the world they live in.

As an arts organisation that contributes to a vibrant society and culture, WEYA will make art a part of daily life by reaching new audiences and generating widespread, dynamic cultural conversations through performances that are highly responsive to the culture, values and aesthetics of communities in Melbourne's outer west.

By constantly developing our practice, exploring new forms and creating original content, we seek to educate and inform the communities we serve, as well as learning from them. We seek to create work with a genuine community aesthetic.

Through our emerging artists program for culturally diverse young people, we will make an important contribution to increasing the diversity of the Australian theatre industry and provide pathways for these artists to employment.

WEYA will continue to refine its practice through rigorous assessment and research and to make positive contributions to the arts sector by pursuing a national leadership role in arts education.

Our ability to deliver on our strategy requires a well-managed, governed and financially sustainable organisation. Over the next four years, WEYA will work towards addressing emerging risks associated with policy changes in arts sector funding: introduce greater rigour in our governance framework: and introduce contemporary work practices to improve the way we produce outcomes.

Our core purpose is built on breaking down barriers and embracing the richness and beauty of culturally diverse communities by building an organisation as diverse as the emerging artists we are here to serve.

In the current national funding context, WEYA's endgame is not necessarily to expand the number of people we engage with, but rather to deepen our existing relationships with young people and the culturally and economically diverse communities we already work with. Our four goals are about becoming even better, more sustainable, accessible and nationally as well as internationally recognised for what we do best: inspiring marginalised, culturally diverse young people and the communities that they belong to.

Strategic Goals

1. Young people make sense of the world they live in through art.

We make innovative work that draws on young people's hopes, dreams and real experiences. We raise awareness of social issues in their context and transform young people's lives through contemporary performances that are unconventional, funny, smart and beautiful. Performances explore the complexity of life in multicultural Australia. It's a living theatre that uses complex, layered narratives to grapple with the deeper themes running through young people's lives.

Weekly workshops encourage powerful and sometimes life-changing encounters between young people from diverse backgrounds. We explore their experiences, challenges and ideals, and together make sense of it through a sophisticated and powerful drama process.

We build and maintain real relationships over time. Young people in their teens work with emerging young artists in their early twenties, and established artists of all ages contribute to the community.

Projects span many years to deepen working relationships and develop artistic skills. This means we can provide mentorship, training and professional development as people grow artistically and establish their creative careers.

We offer paid employment for emerging young artists, giving them artistic control and practical advice on their independent

projects. We also set up student placements and tailor our responses as young artists tell us what they need.

WEYA achieves this by creating socially engaged, challenging and inspiring performances with culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged young people. Through this process we will:

- ❖ **Engage** disenfranchised young people with the arts
- ❖ **Develop** CaLD emerging artists by providing employment opportunities, training, mentoring and pathways to the industry
- ❖ **Inspire** artistic experimentation, innovation and creativity that fosters leaders in creative practice.

"Performances talk about relevant stuff. Things that are very big issues. Never thought theatre could incorporate this and that your cultural background matters." - Emerging artist Oti Willoughby, describes his experience working with WEYA.

"It's important because it's targeting people who don't get the opportunity to do drama or theatre. It's creating programs directly into communities. Without these programs, young people today would not be doing these things. It would only be a small percentage that are proactively getting out there."
- Emerging artist, Piper Huynh, describes her experience working with WEYA.

2. Artistic practice is vibrant, relevant and accessible, putting culturally diverse arts practice centre stage.

The arts have intrinsic value that enrich the lives of participants and audiences, giving access to important cultural knowledge and experiences that enable young people to become fully engaged citizens. It is through art that we appreciate and come to understand the complexities of our world and what it is to be human. This is widely understood in privileged communities where the arts are widely valued and supported both in schools and through mainstream cultural institutions.

We believe that access to arts is therefore a right and that access should be available to all Australians regardless of income, geographical location or cultural background. This is a matter of social justice.

It is also a way of changing society for the benefit of all Australians because it builds a more inclusive society in which all voices are heard and the complex beauty of our multicultural society is understood and celebrated.

That is why we are committed to providing high quality opportunities for young people in communities who have no or very limited access to the arts.

Audience engagement and feedback is central to the relevance and accessibility of our artistic practice. WEYA reaches out to 1000 plus audiences each year, most of whom would not normally attend an arts event or access arts experiences, so it is increasingly important to understand why and how we can continue to enrich their experience.

“A challenging and sophisticated practice that allowed young people to develop as emerging leaders in their own community.” – Dr Chris Sinclair, University of Melbourne

Through our work across culturally diverse communities, our performances are relevant and accessible because we engage with the complexity and diversity of Australian society, resulting in programs that are highly responsive to the culture, values and aesthetics of these communities.

We address community issues and allow people to imagine how things might be different. We offer insight to problems and explore taboos with cultural sensitivity.

To ensure our artistic practice is relevant and accessible we will:

- ❖ **Learn** through reflective practice and evaluation so that programs demonstrate excellence of practice and are **relevant and accessible** to diverse communities
- ❖ **Produce** distinctive and meaningful art in collaboration with diverse young people that is highly responsive to the culture, values and aesthetics of communities
- ❖ **Engage** audiences and communities in a dialogue about our practice, enrich their daily lives through the arts and deepen their understanding of the world through young peoples’ performances
- ❖ **Collaborate** with creative individuals and organisations across a range of platforms, both within Australia and internationally, to showcase, enrich and invigorate our practice.

*“A poetic pedagogy that is alert to the tension between success and failure, and recognises that it is precisely this tension that leads to innovative and challenging artistic practice.”
– University of London’s Professor Helen Nicholson describes WEYA’s practice.*

3. National leader in arts education

Research by independent experts into WEYA reveals major social and educational impacts are achieved through our programs.

This research provides strong evidence that programs create confidence in learning and confidence for life. Our programs create strong social connections, sophisticated language use and deep conceptual thinking. Our community projects create an increased sense of identity and pride.

Our education projects lead to high quality outcomes and attitudinal changes to learning and there is evidence that the young people are more aware of the social and moral complexities associated with the enacted stories that they create and perform to their peers and their communities.

Our collaborations with teachers demonstrate our dialogic pedagogy leading to lasting changes in their practice and learning with 'real-life' outcomes.

Through disseminating our practice in professional forums, we will break down barriers between industry sectors and pursue a national leadership role in arts education.

For these reasons, WEYA is well positioned to becoming a national leader in arts education. We will continue to:

- ❖ **Forge long-term partnerships** with disadvantaged schools to deliver arts education with real outcomes
- ❖ **Advocate and influence** through research and evaluation
- ❖ **Build awareness and accessibility** of our internationally peer reviewed research
- ❖ **Ensure programs reflect contemporary collaborative practice** of artists and arts educators
- ❖ **Lead innovative community-based arts education and partnerships.**

*"WEYA's education programs lead to high quality outcomes and attitudinal changes to learning."
– Professor Robyn Ewing, University of Sydney*

"Programs provided an experience of success and achievement for young people who rarely have such experiences." – Australia Council for Education Research

4. Well-governed and financially sustainable organisation

Without a well-governed and financially sustainable organisation, our ability to achieve our goals and deliver exceptional arts programs with young people is compromised.

Driving the organisation forward within a framework of effective accountability will be an applied principle across everything we set to achieve. Equally, the way we are organised and go about our work needs to be aligned with the strategic goals of the organisation.

The arts sector is continually changing and becoming increasingly competitive. Our need to demonstrate our value proposition to existing and potential investors is therefore greater than ever.

As a progressive organisation, WEYA will embark on income diversification strategies necessary to maintain our existing level of activity and forge inroads into realising our full potential.

For these reasons, we will ensure:

- ❖ **Fit for purpose governance and management structures** are in place
- ❖ **Strong financial management and business practices** are adhered to
- ❖ **Diversify income sources** to maintain existing levels of activity and realise our full potential
- ❖ **Sound human resource practices** for exceptional individual and team-based results
- ❖ **Strong partnerships with existing key stakeholders.**

Strategic Context Analysis

Environment analysis and managing associated risk underpins our artistic choices

Realising our vision and mission is greatly dependant on WEYA's ability to assess and manage emerging risks associated with its internal and external environment.

Over the years, and more extensively in the last year, WEYA has critically assessed its environment and has formulated a number of conclusions. Following board-led analysis specific to the following three key drivers, the conclusions will influence our strategic goals.

Funding pressures

WEYA works with communities with a low socio-economic profile. WEYA's capacity to earn income is very limited and as a result the organisation is highly reliant on government and philanthropic support.

In 2012, WEYA received four year funding from the Theatre Board of the Australia Council. This multi-year funding provided the stability needed for better long-term planning and has strengthened organisational capacity. However with recent changes in government arts policy this funding source is diminishing with ever-increasing competition. WEYA will need to introduce diversified income streams to meet the potential decline in government funding and continually demonstrate its artistic value to funding bodies.

WEYA has developed relationships with philanthropic trusts who mainly contribute to the company on a project basis. Seven philanthropic trusts and foundations regularly fund the company, of these, WEYA has multi-year agreements with two. The company now has a strong demonstrable basis of success and an opportunity to build bigger partnerships with more depth over longer periods and make the relationship

management both better and more cost effective than running many small grant applications.

Internal risks are attributed to having a heavy reliance on government funding within a dynamic funding environment.

Specifically, these relate to:

Australia Council – Youth Arts Program funding ends 2015. Without the support of the Australia Council in 2016 and beyond, programming will be significantly reduced particularly the emerging artists program. WEYA will apply for four year funding in December 2015 and Arts Projects funding in February 2016.

Department of Education and Training – The Strategic Partnerships Program funding agreement ends in 2017. There has been a decrease in the available funds in this program in later years. WEYA will combat the potential loss of DET funding with the introduction of minimum fees for service and a teacher trainer program.

Creative Victoria – Organisation Investment Program funding agreement ends in 2016. WEYA will reapply in 2016. WEYA has a good working relationship with Creative Victoria and is delivering to current KPIs.

Local Government – WEYA receives a substantive part of its local government funding from Maribyrnong Youth Services through annual agreements. There is no current threat to this funding. WEYA has recently increased local government funding through approaches to Geelong City Council and City of Melbourne. Changes in the location of some programs to outer western suburbs will enable the organisation to access funding from Brimbank Council and Wyndham Council from 2016.

Social demographic changes

WEYA is situated in Victoria's fastest growing and most culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) region, comprising of 130 cultural groups and 150 languages. The region has the youngest population in Victoria and a younger median age than the national average. WEYA needs to ensure its practice and programs are accessible and relevant to these communities, formulate strategies to increase participation from young people, and continue to engage with the complexity and diversity of Australian society resulting in programs that are highly responsive to the culture, values and aesthetics of communities in the outer west.

Partnerships and collaborations

A diversity of partnerships and collaborations enables the organisation to broaden its program, offering different art forms in different geographic areas and to more participants. It is also a critical source of raising funds from a wider range of government and philanthropic sources.

There are potential partnerships with organisations working in the areas of:

- Crime prevention
- Health and substance abuse intervention
- Family violence
- Migration and newly arrived families.

Organisation capacity and capability

WEYA has a solid, long-standing reputation across our markets. This reputation has been built over many years under limited resources. Only available resources limit our capacity and capability.

Despite these limitations, WEYA's ability to work collaboratively with young people, emerging artists and partners to produce relevant and accessible art performances to disadvantaged communities is attributed to a small team of dedicated staff.

WEYA acknowledges that ongoing sustainable outcomes will require innovation and contemporary approaches. For this reason, WEYA will introduce a new artistic and management structure that allows for succession, legacy and replenishment across key management functions and improve monitoring of organisational performance.



Financial Overview

WEYA has successfully maintained a financially sustainable organisation for twenty years. In the last three years, the organisation has increased its overall revenue by 18%. WEYA maintains a position of cash flow positive and has increased its reserves by an average of 10% each year since 2010.

Annual income for the past three years has been an average of \$434k and the current year's expected income is \$454k. Expenditure has averaged at \$427k per annum with this year's expected expenditure to be \$448k. Currently WEYA has confirmed income for 2016 of \$245k.

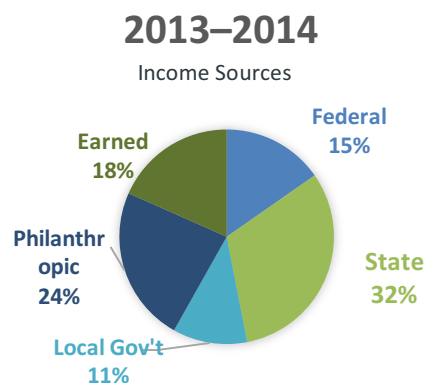
Liabilities are limited to payroll accruals and long service leave of approximately \$17k. The organisation has no loans. Fixed assets are limited to computer and sound equipment.

WEYA's sustainability is attributed to sound financial management and a broad reach of support across federal, state and local government funding along with trusts and foundations. In 2014 WEYA received additional state funding through Creative Victoria's Organisation Investment Program. In 2015 local government funding contributed to 17% of revenue after receiving support from both the City of Greater Geelong and the City of Melbourne.

Significantly, the organisation has maintained ongoing relationships with a number of philanthropic trusts and foundations. In 2015 this income made up approximately 23% of the organisation's revenue with another 2% from individual donations.

To date, the following trusts and foundations have provided either consecutive annual funding or two to three year funding:

- Sidney Myer Foundation
- Kimberley Foundation
- Newsboys Foundation
- Helen McPherson Smith Trust
- Besen Family Foundation
- Gandel Philanthropy



Importantly WEYA ran its first annual donations appeal in 2015 as part of the Creative Partnerships Plus1 program and now has a donor funding base that it will continue to grow in the next five years. This income has enabled the organisation to employ a part-time marketing assistant.

Despite a relatively stable financial situation for the past three years, WEYA is keen to move beyond a heavy reliance on government funding towards a more sustainable situation in which there are greater discretionary funds to expand some programs and fully realise our artistic vision for the future.

Sustaining existing government and philanthropic funding and a bolder move into fundraising and income diversification activities will be integral to WEYA's capacity to deliver on its strategic vision.

Our Markets

Participants

In-school participants are aged 13–17 years who have not previously participated in a theatre making process. They often start out thinking theatre is not for them and finish the project with an increased sense of pride in themselves and what they have achieved.

In-school participants attend schools that service low socio-economic communities and highly culturally diverse communities. A high proportion of children have learning difficulties and 30% speak English as a second language.

Over the next four years, WEYA will work in three to four public schools offering projects that enhance education outcomes and support the development of critical thinking in young people. These students will be given the opportunity to extend their participation of theatre making in after school programs and may go on to be independent emerging artists in the future.

2016 Collaborators: Geelong High, North Geelong Secondary College, Whittington Primary School, Victoria University Secondary College (Deer Park), Diversitat North Geelong, Victorian Department of Education

Emerging artists and after school workshop participants are aged between 14–25 years and identify as being creative and/or artists. They are from CaLD communities who were exposed to theatre through WEYA in-school programs or WEYA open access workshops. They love making theatre because it's fun, they make close friends and they have a desire to express themselves.

They take pride that they may be contributing to social change by expressing their stories through theatre making and are often involved in other creative activities such as hip-hop, dance, and music.

After school programs allow students to extend their participation beyond the classroom.

In the next four years, WEYA will facilitate after school ensembles in Footscray, Geelong and Deer Park, extending into either Werribee or Point Cook in 2019. These after school ensembles are integral to the development of future emerging artists and cultural leaders.

2106 Collaborators: Victoria University Secondary College (Deer Park), Maribyrnong Youth Services, Brimbank Youth Services, Maribyrnong City Council, Department of Human Services, Gandel Philanthropy, Sidney Myer Foundation, Diversitat North Geelong.



Audiences

Family and friends of participants make up approximately 80% of our audiences. These audiences are reached through word of mouth, 40% of which have not attended a theatre show in the last 12 months and the same percentage speak English as a second language at home. Languages spoken at home represent the emerging and migrant communities of Melbourne's west.

80% of these audiences think our shows are relevant to them.

Reaching this group requires sophisticated audience engagement paired with targeted marketing collateral that encourages word of mouth conversations.

This segment is the lifeblood of WEYA's marketing strategy. Initially these audiences are motivated to support their family and friends. The organisation seeks to convert them to engaged arts audiences. WEYA's capacity for sophisticated marketing has greatly increased in 2015 with the introduction of a part-time marketing position, development of a new website, branding overhaul, a concerted effort into the world of audience engagement through social media, and the use of a new customer relations database, Salesforce CRM. These initiatives are showing real results with sold-out performances in communities and professional theatres in 2015, greater online engagement and regular and consistent communications with stakeholders and audiences.

2016 Collaborators: artists, school partners, councils, participants, local youth services, Arts West.

Engaged arts audiences

We reach traditionally engaged arts audiences via traditional marketing activities.

We know that:

- 70% are over 25
- 80% think the show was relevant to them
- 57% attended a theatre show in the last 12 months and have an interest in social issues, cultural diversity and socially-engaged art practice
- Are more likely to attend an Edge Ensemble production than any other show.

2016 Collaborators: Arts West, Maribyrnong City Council, network of stakeholders including funders and creative partners, media.

Government funding bodies

WEYA is funded by a good mix of local and state government bodies, agencies and departments who share a common purpose in supporting arts, justice, youth engagement or social impact outcomes combating social inequality.

An annual cycle of engaging with these partners requires relationship building, transparent reporting and ongoing engagement with the projects they support. Sophisticated research methods enable us to demonstrate the impact of our programs.

WEYA will focus on retaining support from existing government agencies as well as looking at opportunities to engage with agencies in the areas of multiculturalism, health and family violence to support its 2016–2017 programs.

2016 Collaborators: Maribyrnong City Council; Victorian Departments of Human Services, Education and Justice; City of Greater Geelong; City of Melbourne; Creative Victoria; Australia Council

Philanthropic trusts and foundations

WEYA's focus on building long-term relationships with trusts and foundations has been highly successful. The connection with WEYA for this market usually centres around social cohesion, diversity and equality. They have a deep understanding of our work and trust our capacity to deliver. WEYA will continue to secure multi-year agreements with existing organisations.

Donors and sponsors

WEYA sponsors and philanthropists are mostly small local businesses, know a young person who is involved with the organisation or have a close connection with the organisation and like what we do. Donors are reached through an annual fundraising drive and ongoing relationship building throughout the year.

In 2015, WEYA carried out its first online fundraising appeal. Due to the success of this campaign annual online fundraising appeals will be undertaken.

Project delivery partners

WEYA project delivery partners include public schools with a high percentage of refugee and migrant students; local governments in Maribyrnong, Brimbank and Geelong; local arts festivals; state government departments (Health, Justice and Human Services) and youth arts organisations and creative organisations in Melbourne's west.

Strategically important stakeholders and partners

- Westside Circus – creative partnership
- Brimbank Council and Brimbank Youth Services, Deer Park
- Victoria University Secondary College: Deer Park
- North Geelong Secondary College
- Victoria Multicultural Commission
- Maribyrnong Council – Phoenix Youth Centre
- Trusts and foundations – existing and expanding: Ian Potter Foundation, Australian Communities Foundation, Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund, Victorian Multicultural Commission among others
- Regional Arts Victoria – touring
- Diversitat and Courthouse Youth Arts in Geelong
- Afghani and Karen/Karenni community in North Geelong and the Pacific Islander communities in Brimbank

Responding to changing audience and community interests

Participants after school projects:

WEYA targets young people from communities who have little or no engagement in the arts due to a range of social, cultural and economic barriers. Providing projects and performances in local venues for little to no cost is part of how we achieve this. We also employ emerging and established artists from similar cultural backgrounds to the communities we work with. Our practice places emphasis on creating inclusive spaces that acknowledge the different circumstances of our young people and allow for flexibility and support.

To meet the challenges of competing leisure and online activities and family and social demands, WEYA has invested in creating content that bridges the digital and real-world spaces and integrating different art forms such as dance, hip-hop, puppetry, visual art and media art into our practice.

Our offer to our markets

Participants (Based on survey data for 2015)

- 98% have high satisfaction ratings
- 96% value relationship with WEYA artists
- 92% gain performance skills, confidence, connection and agency
- A high number of participants and return attendance indicates that young people value our work
- Value a supportive community and a safe environment
- Tell us that theatre is seen as 'lame' in their peer group because it is not for or about them. They value WEYA for making work that they see as 'real' – i.e. reflecting their experience
- Value artistic excellence and enjoy installation work and narrative complexity.

Artists

- **Experienced teaching artists** – the opportunity to grow and develop their practice as part of a supportive, collaborative community of practice
- **Emerging artists** – mentorship and training, employment opportunities, artistic control and an opportunity to showcase work in mainstream venues
- **Industry professionals** – a chance to develop teaching artistry working with leaders in this practice

Audiences

Analysis of audience responses over the last 3 years (some of which published in *Applied Theatre Researcher Journal* November 2015):

- Overall 66% rated WEYA's Artistic Merit as 'Excellent' and 34% as 'Highly Relevant'
- The Artistic Merit was rated higher (71%) for *Iago* at the Malthouse with a lower proportion of the respondents knowing the cast (50%)
- Our audiences value experimentation in the form and place value on new styles of work
- Our audiences value an authentic youth voice

- Although a majority of our audiences see the work as 'Relevant' they do not see it as 'Highly Relevant'. This is a challenge to the company to increase the impact of the work across ages, cultural backgrounds and economic backgrounds.

Partners

- **Arts Partners** – opportunities for new collaborations particularly between emerging artists
- **Community Partners** – these partners value WEYA for our ability to engage with young people and to forge relationships with them through arts processes
- **Education partners (schools)** – these partners value WEYA for the rigour of our arts education practice and our ability to motivate and engage young people.



Management

Role of the Board of Directors and governance

The role of WEYA's board and governance is a serious undertaking.

WEYA's governance structure and framework is clearly stated in the Charter of the Board of Directors and Rules of Association (Associations Incorporation Reform Regulations 2012 and Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012).

The board charter and rules of association allows the board and management the freedom to drive the organisation forward but to exercise that freedom within a framework of effective accountability and control.

WEYA's governance framework includes the rules, relationships, systems and processes within and by which WEYA is exercised and controlled. It encompasses the mechanisms by which WEYA, the board and management are held to account. These governance rules influence how the objectives of the organisation are set and achieved, how risk is monitored and assessed and how performance is optimised¹.

WEYA's governance framework ensures:

Clear management oversight

In December 2015, the board will introduce a formal statement of delegated authority to management in light of this Strategic Plan.

As outlined in WEYA's board charter key areas of board accountability include:

- Developing and maintaining WEYA's vision and values in partnership with management
- Support WEYA's artistic vision and

¹ *Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendations with 2010 Amendments* 2nd Edition. ASX Corporate Governance Council

- approve level of artistic risk
- Ensuring WEYA complies with relevant legislation and has well-documented policies and procedures
- Developing, monitoring and approving financial strategy, budget and forecast expenditure
- Appointing the CEO, General Manager, Artistic Director (Executive Officers) and establishing terms of contract
- Establishing a process for evaluating the performance of Executive Officers
- Ensuring no single individual has unfettered powers²
- Developing and extending WEYA's networks
- Recruiting, inducting and evaluating board members
- Administrating board meetings.

Board Structure: The composition of the board includes a chair, a deputy chair and a treasurer plus three ordinary non-executive members. WEYA's General Manager performs the role of secretary.

Board meetings and sub-committee meetings occur bi-monthly. There are sub-committees established for finance, marketing and governance.

In 2016 the board will be recruiting an additional three new members, increasing the composition to a maximum of nine. The board will be targeting representation from local CaLD communities, young people and artists across Victoria's west to ensure greater diversity of skills and knowledge necessary to support our growth. Additional skill sets targeted will include product design, marketing and fundraising.

² *Essential governance practices for arts organisations* Australia Council for the Arts Publication: September 2011 Author: Kevin Golding p5

Board performance

The board undertakes performance evaluation on an annual basis through survey and team based dialogue across forty-six key evaluation points. In 2016, an ongoing process of evaluation will be introduced.

Ongoing evaluations will include reviewing the effectiveness of each board meeting. This process will ensure members are keeping performance issues 'front of mind'. It provides a means of easy, quick feedback and encourages discussion and interaction between board members. All members are engaged in the evaluation process. This process builds on WEYA's shared set of board norms, inculcating a positive board and organisation culture³.

Succession

Leadership continuity is essential to WEYA maintaining current levels of output. We also recognise the importance of replenishment and bringing in new ideas and innovation to our practice.

A new focus on talent acquisition and development will be a key initiative across all critical leadership roles.

Board replenishment

As outlined in WEYA's board charter, effective 2016, all board positions will be held for two-year terms (alternating) with any director positions not extending beyond three terms of two years. There is a fixed period of two terms of two years for board office holders (Chair, Deputy Chair and Treasurer).

Management replenishment

Effective 2016, WEYA will focus on developing future Artistic Directors.

WEYA intends to identify and develop two Associate Artistic Directors to ensure continuity, innovation and transfer of organisation knowledge. These roles will be under the mentorship of our Artistic Director Dave Kelman.

Our legacy: WEYA is charting changing Australia through the emerging voices and stories that make our art.

In ten years, today's new and emerging groups will culturally reconfigure the west.

The nature of our work must change as the communities with whom we work settle into the 'mainstream' and are no longer new communities.

Our work will reflect those new configurations with appropriate stories, forms and themes and as communities settle, merge and regroup, WEYA will focus on future challenges as well as those of the past and present.

Our legacy will be to have created an artistic record of what has gone on in the west over the past ten to twenty years. To have constructed this in a way that allows current young people to make sense of their world, and to ensure that the next generation can understand it in retrospect and use that understanding to reflect on that present and shape their future.

³ *Seven steps to effective board and director evaluations Key Issues* By Geoffrey Kiel, Professor, University of Queensland; Founder and Chairman, Competitive Dynamics Pty Ltd; and James Beck, Managing Director, Competitive Dynamics Pty Ltd

Executive Officers



Dr Dave Kelman
Artistic Director



Sally Farr
General Manager & Board Secretary

Board Directors



Bernadette Fitzgerald
Chair



Angela O'Brien
Deputy Chair



Narelle Sullivan
Acting Treasurer



Susan Russell

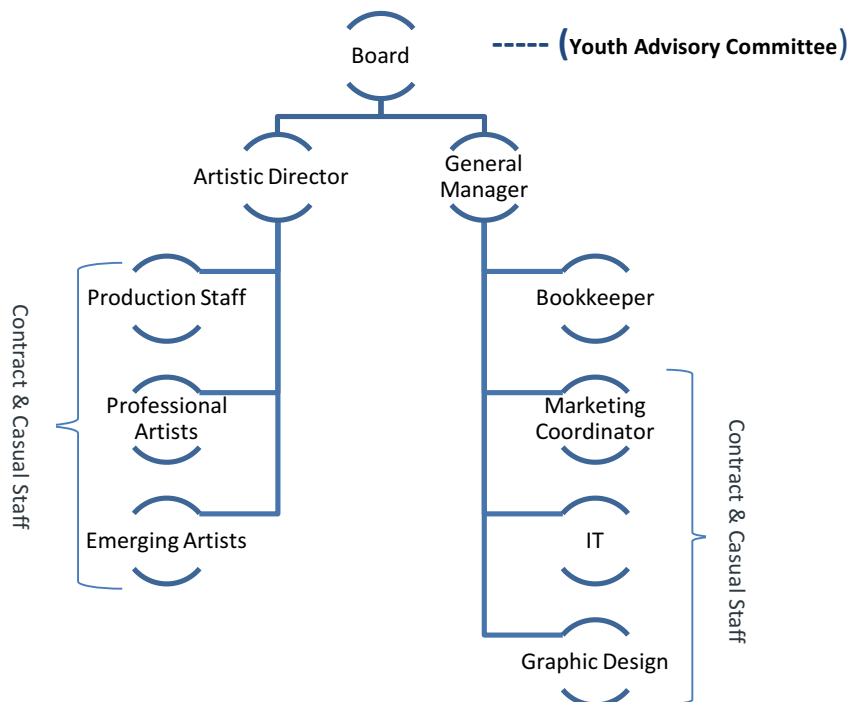


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Organisation Structure 2015



About Us

WEYA is a not-for-profit organisation that is committed to providing high quality opportunities for young people in communities who have no or very limited access to the arts.

Incorporated in 2005, WEYA is the evolution of ten years of prior work under the auspices of Footscray Community Arts Centre.

Each year, WEYA teaches more than 600 young people in performance, film, creative writing and research. Our programs are highly respected within national and international education communities for its leadership in arts education pedagogy.

WEYA engages young people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities (CaLD) and has a reputation for addressing challenging local issues via complex art.

Many of WEYA's mentored emerging artists have built reputations of their own practice and are making positive contributions to the sector and their local communities.

WEYA's significant body of peer-reviewed research demonstrates WEYA's prowess in engaging difficult to reach communities and young people, creating complex narratives that building genuine community development and cross-cultural community understanding that reflects the diversity and complexity of contemporary Australian life.

- 2015 **Iago**, a contemporary, fast paced exploration of gender identity and sexual politics in a rapidly changing world
- 2014 **Scheherazade**, set in a haunted warehouse by the Maribyrnong River with a cast of more than 50 young people
- 2013 **Fate**, a fast and funny tale about luck, chance and destiny
- 2012 **Zamunda**, a re-imagining of the 1988 comedy movie *Coming to America*
- 2011 **Beagle Bay Chronicles**, from Broome to Melbourne and back again: retelling oral histories from Beagle Bay Aboriginal Community elders
- Black Face White Mask**, a hard-hitting comedy about what it means to be Afro-Australian
- 2009 **Moved to a new home at Phoenix Youth Centre** in Footscray, hosted by Maribyrnong City Council's youth services team
- 2005 **Western Edge Youth Arts incorporated** and became independent from Footscray Community Arts Centre
- 2005 **Y3P and SCRAYP** (two performance programs run by Footscray Community Arts Centre in the community and schools) joined forces to become Western Edge Youth Arts
- 1996 **SCRAYP** (Schools, Community, Research, Arts, Youth and Performance) ran in schools in western Melbourne. Young people presented six big performances a year with guidance from artist teachers
- 1993 **Y3P (Young Peoples' Performance Projects)** held community drama and performance making workshops, culminating in a spectacular annual gig at Footscray Community Arts Centre.

The Australian Government through the Australia Council assists Western Edge Youth Arts for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body, the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria and the Department of Education and Training, and Maribyrnong City Council. Western Edge Youth Arts is proud to be part of Arts West, a unique alliance of arts organisations who reflect the exciting, vibrant and diverse arts and culture thriving in Melbourne's inner west.



Achievements

Mainstream theatre

2015: *Iago*: Edge Ensemble performed a sold-out season of this 'poor theatre' re-imagining of *Othello* at the Coopers Malthouse Theatre to critical acclaim. Toured regionally.

'Compelling' *The Age*. 'Visceral and provocative re-imagining' *Time Out Melbourne*.

2013: *Black Face White Mask*: Flemington Theatre Group's exploration of living between two cultures. Toured regionally.

'Confounds expectations by exploding myths and stereotypes' *The Age*.

Innovative community collaborations

2014: *Scheherazade*: Beautifully designed multi-space interactive installation in partnership with Footscray Community Arts Centre. Dance, digital art, interactive theatre, puppetry and live music; a powerful artistic statement against male violence.

2013: *Fate*: Collaboration with Massive Hip-Hop Choir and Big West Festival. Integration of choral music, hip-hop and physical theatre, exploring chance and destiny. Toured regionally.

Key artists 2013-15: Dave Kelman, Cuong Nguyen (writer), Tariro Mavondo (director), Naomi Rukavina (director), Amy MacPherson (dancer) Katherine Branch (designer), Georgia Symons (writer) and Hoang Tran Nguyen (digital artist).

Education

2013-15: Arts Education Program delivers nine acclaimed school performance residencies through excellent teaching-artistry, including two innovative, student-devised, multi-art form interactive installation performances at Footscray City College (2014) and Hume Anglican Grammar (2015).

Recognised by Creative Victoria, International Drama Education Association (IDEA) and Department of Education (Victoria) for consistently delivering excellence and innovation in arts education.

Research

2013-15: Six major article publications internationally through award-winning university partnerships. Featured in: *How Drama Activates Learning* (2013), a peer-reviewed arts education book; and UK journal *Research In Drama Education/Applied Theatre* (2013).

Pathways

2014: Flemington Theatre Group (Afro-Australian youth company created by WEYA in 2010) independently developed professional work through partnerships with the Victorian Arts Centre and Metanoia, demonstrating real industry pathways. Five other emerging artists have gone on to work for other arts organisations.

**WESTERN
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YOUTH
ARTS**

