



Western Edge Youth Arts Annual Report 2008



'The scene I created has launched a one woman show that I will perform and it's inspired me to take off my mask. I loved extending my acting abilities'

Excavations performer age 21, Chicks Theatre Lab

About This Report

This report has been produced in collaboration between the board and staff of Western Edge Youth Arts.

Throughout the year, Western Edge actively gathers ideas and feedback from our participants, young artists and broader community through research, forums and audience feedback.

This report includes quotes from participants, artists and audience which critique and comment on Western Edge programs and processes. These quotes appear in italics and, unless the person quoted has indicated otherwise, the quotes are anonymous. All quotes have been recorded for publication with permissions where appropriate.

About the Reporting Period

Western Edge Youth Arts Inc. is reporting on program activities for the period from January 1st to December 31st in 2008.

This annual report is presenting financial statements for the twelve-month calendar period from January 1st to December 31st, 2008.

For more information about Western Edge and its programs please contact:

Western Edge Youth Arts
Phoenix Youth Centre
72 Buckley Street,
Footscray VIC 3011

info@westernedge.org.au
www.westernedge.org.au

Ph. +61 3 9362-0046



'Marilyn' Excavations Show, Chicks Theatre Lab,
Photographer John Sones

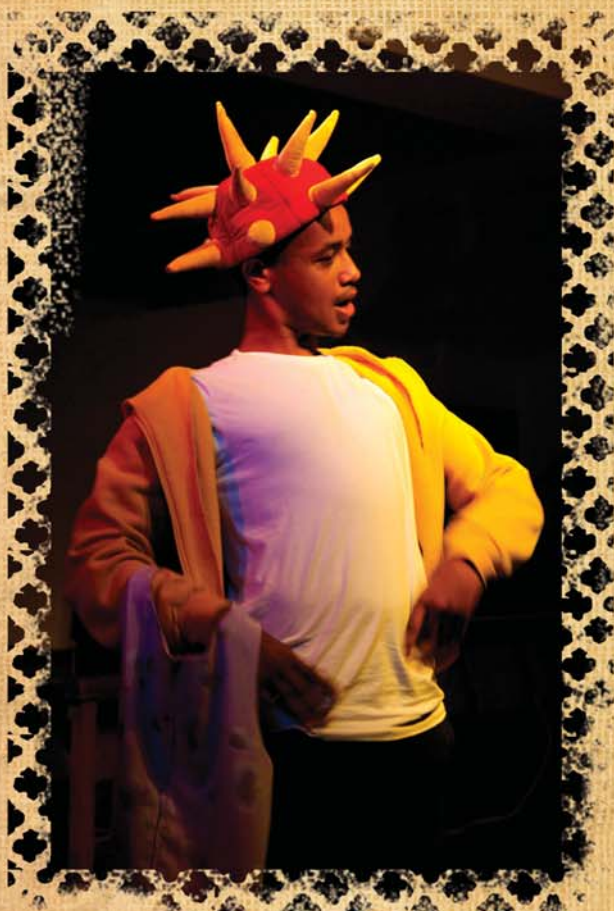


'This is the best thing I've achieved this year. They think we just come on the boat, they thought 'they can't do it.' When I came I was too scared to talk in front of the class. On stage I saw people laughing, it gave me energy and I got happy. We were celebrities. We proved it to ourselves'

Young person's comment, Shakespeare at Debney Park project

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'Lear's Fool' Searching for Lear, Debney Park After School Project, Photographer Martin Wurt, Working Photos



'Poor Cinderella' Excavations Show, Chicks Theatre Lab Project, Photographer John Sones

About Western Edge Youth Arts

Creating dynamic links between the arts, education and community

Our mission

Western Edge Youth Arts is a non-profit organisation established to provide positive arts and performance experiences to culturally diverse young people living in the western suburbs of Melbourne and the western region of Victoria.

Our mission is the empowerment of all young people, particularly those facing social or cultural disadvantage, through access to quality arts experiences and the creation of artistic works that have an authentic youth voice.

We are committed to innovation and excellence in youth arts and education, professionalism, accountability and social justice.

Our vision is to be a leading youth arts organisation in Australia, empowering young people in the community through the use of innovative arts processes that embrace cultural diversity.

What We Do

Western Edge Youth Arts provides high quality multi-arts programs to young people living in the West of Melbourne.

Our programs are run both in schools and in the community and span the arts spectrum from theatre, music, dance and other performance arts to filmmaking, animation, writing, radio and v-jay/d-jay events.

Good art-making is central to Western Edge practice. Our performances and artistic outcomes are lively, complex, beautiful works that stand up as artistically excellent within the broader arts context.

We support young people in their art-making practice from entry-level experiences through to emerging professional young artists.

Professional development, mentoring and peer education are key elements of the Western Edge annual program.

Cultural diversity is intrinsic to being part of the community in Melbourne's West. Western Edge is committed to access to our programs for young people of all cultural backgrounds and to increasing the representation and profile of our culturally diverse young artists to the wider arts and media sectors of Victoria.

At the heart of Western Edge is the involvement of our community of young people across all programs and levels of our work.

'I'm just amazed at the transformation that everyone went through. It was so satisfying and I couldn't compare it to another experience. I loved bringing my character to life as it's been an issue (human trafficking) that I've been really passionate about'

Excavations performer age 22, Chicks Theatre Lab

The 2008 Program at a Glance

Chicks Theatre Lab

Continued to support leadership roles for young women in the arts. The 2008 sold-out show *Excavations*, which explored contemporary interpretations of fairytales, goddesses, real life women and historical figures, was a huge success both critically and with audiences.

105 workshop participants **25** project participants **11** young performers **3** shows **150** audience members



'A Chorus Line' Excavations Show, Chicks Theatre Lab 08, Photographer John Sones

Radio Play

2 short radio plays were developed with 12 young people from the Youth Enterprise Hub in Braybrook. The Radio plays were set in a mythic restaurant in which the dramas of life play out. These are being released as a CD in mid 2009.

12 participants **2** new works
1 published audio CD

Explosion

Continued in its third year as Western Edge's art-making mentorship program. This year saw young and emerging professional artists Joana Pires and Jenna Corcoran mentored by Artistic Director Cymbeline Buhler with specialist consultation from Christos Tsiolkas and Alex Martinis Roe to produce some very exciting work.

2 young artists **1** mentor **2** specialist consultants
1 show **30** audience members

Shakespeare at Debney Secondary College

Brought *Macbeth* and *Romeo & Juliet* to new life through melding of the original texts with new writing by the students and young artists. The performances to large and enthusiastic community audiences were gripping and represented a major achievement for these young people and the artists and teachers working with them.

38 participants **5** shows **500** audience members

The Government Project

Kensington Community School

Explored the otherwise dry subject of Government through the moving and sometimes brutal stories of East Timor's struggle for independence, the Tampa refugee crisis and the Stolen Generations. Feedback from the cast and audience members testified to the power of this documentary theatre, incorporating mask, song, dance and new media.

70 participants **2** shows **400** audience members

Searching for Lear

Debney Park and Footscray City Residency

These after school projects, funded by Arts Victoria, aimed to provide further opportunities for young people who had expressed an interest in continuing their work as artists and who were emerging as young leaders. They created an extraordinary work that will be further developed in 2009, *Searching For Lear*.

105 workshop participants **25** project participants **11** young performers **3** shows **150** audience members

'Smaller' Projects in Schools

The Schools Program also delivered smaller scale, but equally in-depth work with Kensington Community School, Debney Meadows Primary and a Professional Development project with Travencor School. Each of these projects involved exploring complex and artistically important issues and produced work that was shared with both communities and other education professionals.

96 participants **4** shows
3 professional development presentations
420 audience members

'I'm really happy with how my confidence grew over the nights, I most liked that I learnt from everyone else'

Excavations performer age 16, Chicks Theatre Lab

Western Edge Chair Report

Since incorporating 4 years ago, Western Edge Youth Arts has come from taking its first steps to leaping in giant strides in becoming an organisation with a strong identity that exceeds its own expectations. As Western Edge has developed, its identity has really strengthened and is now carried by a fresh, enthusiastic team from new premises we call home, the Phoenix Youth Centre. While Western Edge has been learning and growing, so too has the board.

2008 certainly presented the Western Edge board with the challenge of a 'transition' year. With key staff on leave or moving on it was a year of a little anxiety and greater responsibility for our board members. The benefit of change is that it brings about new opportunities and it is with great delight that I accept the wonderful opportunity to contribute to the organisation in a leadership role as Chair. Having seen the organisation evolve over the years, becoming clearer and stronger in its practice, I am particularly excited about leading Western Edge into the future to continue delivering innovative, progressive arts programs to young people while staying faithful to its original commitment to young people as artists and as voices for their diverse communities.

Leadership is demanding but rewarding. The responsibilities of Chair are ones that I do not take lightly. Having said this, I have the support of a highly skilled board together with very talented and dedicated staff to share the challenges.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Maureen Ryan, who chaired the Western Edge board from 2006 until 2008. Maureen provides the example of a steady hand to steer the ship, having guided Western Edge from its inception and through the uncharted waters of its first two years. The Artistic Directors are the lifeblood of Western Edge. As expected, their importance to Western Edge was reflected very strongly through the tremendous programs that emerged in 2008. Naomi Steinborner (Artistic Director Communities Program) and Dave Kelman (Artistic Director Schools Program) worked together to create a strong, collaborative program that is clearly responding to the needs of our young artists and our communities in the West. The "3019 - On the Radar" project is a good example of the Directors responding to community needs, the project being created from a parents' request for us to work with their young people in Braybrook (one of the most disadvantaged suburbs in Victoria). That project, which has just received important two-year funding from the Department of Planning and Community Development, will



'Stepsisters' Ball' Excavations Show, Chicks Theatre Lab Project, Photographer John Sones

be a long-term and highly consultative process incorporating cultural training, theatre, workshops and forums.

Our artistic team have also maintained a clear focus for arts and education partnerships with schools in the West, further developing significant and again, long-term collaborations with each of Debney Secondary College, Footscray City College, and Kensington Primary and Community Schools. In addition, our young emerging artists have been central to the organisation, with new artistic work being created by Chicks Theatre Lab, mentorships offered through our "Explosion" program and professional development opportunities for those young artists throughout the year.

Of course, the lifeblood cannot exist without the heart of the organisation, our Executive Officer/ General Manager, Heather Marsh. Heather's astute business nous and creative influence combined make her a force that keeps Western Edge sustained and able to deliver what it sets out to achieve. In Heather's absence on parental leave, Christine Healey stepped into the role of Executive Officer. Christine took the challenges that come with the role in her stride and her diligence in the role was noteworthy. On behalf the board I wish to thank Christine for her hard work and commitment. I am pleased to say that we truly are honing our vision and our practice as an organisation and, I believe, growing stronger by learning through the challenges, changes and experiences we take away as a community.

My sincere thanks go to all of our board members, both current and past, for their dedication and commitment to Western Edge. On behalf of the board I also thank our talented and driven Western Edge staff who work tirelessly to make it all happen. I look forward to an exciting 2010 in our new home, the Phoenix Youth Centre.

Melanie Rice, Chair

Western Edge Executive Officer's Report

Teething is terrible. I can report on this with some authority as I have a wonderful one-year-old who has howled and yowled his way through many a long night with the reward of a hard won tooth.

I'm calling 2008 our teething year.

In 2008 Western Edge had a change of Chair, a change of Treasurer, a change of Artistic Director in Communities, a looming change of venue and I went on parental leave.

Not that we didn't already cut our teeth on some incredibly rewarding and challenging work in previous years, but organizational change presents very particular challenges. Maintaining process, creating continuity of experience for our participants and external contacts, inheriting major projects, and making big decisions when only new in a role – these are the kind of challenges that call people to really step up and rise to the occasion or alternatively that can make you want to whimper and hide. I am very proud to say that the staff and board of Western Edge Youth Arts did the former.

Our new Chair, Melanie Rice has already begun to take strides in the large shoes left by Maureen Ryan, by leading our policy update project. Melanie brings to the role her serene presence, her astute thinking and a thorough understanding of Western Edge practice, having served on the Western Edge board as an ordinary member since its inception in 2006.

Naomi Steinborner, who acted in the role of Artistic Director Communities Program, left us to go to Queensland. Her irrepressible energy, artistic vision and commitment to community partnerships will be missed. In her stead, Western Edge has been blessed with another extraordinary Artistic Director. Cymbeline Buhler has an impressive track record – having worked in the arts in over fifteen countries and has won awards for her work including Yakumo International Theatre Festival (Japan) for Best Director, Best Production and Best Ensemble and from the Liverpool International Theatre Festival (Canada), for Best Director.

Western Edge also welcomes Treasurer, Arthur Perdios, who joined us after the close of the year, but who immediately set to work completing financial statements for this report. Arthur replaces Gary Charman who stepped into the breach during the year and was a wonderful support for the Western

Edge office. We thank Gary for the energy and time he devoted to Western Edge before unexpected circumstances called him away.

Then there is the small matter of my having a baby. It is certainly not easy to leave one 'baby' for another, but the path towards motherhood was made easier by having Christine Healey step into the role. Christine inherited an already large job, made even more challenging by our impending departure from our birth-place, Footscray Community Arts Centre and move to the new mother-ship at Phoenix Youth Centre. At the end of a long and busy year I can happily report that mother and baby are fine.

Western Edge not only delivered a strong, critically applauded and popular program, with positive feedback from all of our partners and full houses at almost every performance, but also delivered on key planning goals.

We progressed our very important goal of becoming sustainable in the long-term by securing a strategically positioned premises at the Phoenix Youth Centre, receiving Annual Operational funding for the first time from Arts Victoria, and by building our very important schools partnerships with another three years funding from the Department of Education.

We have also furthered our goal of creating a 'Community of Practice' through an increased commitment to mentorships and work placements for our growing team of young artists and by deepening the link and collaboration of the two artistic streams – in schools and in communities.

2010 looks to be a year of fulfilment, success and celebration for Western Edge as we go from strength to strength. I thank our team both present and past for making this possible.

Heather Marsh

Executive Officer and General Manager



'The old man tells the story' Romeo & Juliet, Debney Park Secondary College, Photographer Ben Mastwyk of RiverRiver



'Lola the Showgirl' Excavations Show, Chicks Theatre Lab, Photographer John Sones

Projects in Communities

Naomi Steinborner – Acting Artistic Director

I had the pleasure of acting in the role of Artistic Director at Western Edge between Chi's departure and as the board decided on the direction to take before employing the new ongoing Artistic Director. I had worked on a few Western Edge projects over the years and was already engaged as the director of Chicks Theatre Lab, so stepping into the role made sense. With an imminent move interstate, the short-term nature of the role worked out well for all of us.

It was a year full of changes with GM Heather away having baby Rufus and many challenges facing Western Edge in regard to securing ongoing funding and continuing to find our feet as an independent organisation.

My major work was around the development and presentation of Chicks Theatre Lab - with the new work Excavations developed over 16 weeks and presented at the Dog Theatre in June.

Chicks Theatre Lab had been developed by Chi Vu and Sandra Long in 2006 to provide opportunities for professional and young emerging female artists to collaborate. Sandra and I led a creative development period in 2006 where a structure was developed which included researching female icons from film, history, literature and the everyday including interviews with professional female artists working in Melbourne.

Whilst the cast in 2008 was mostly different from the original creative development we retained many of the structures including the interviewing of professional artists which created an interesting performance angle and also connected young women with inspiring role models, career paths and possibilities.

A major feature and success of the project in 2008 was the employment of four emerging artists in key roles - Emmaline McCartney as assistant director, Rachel Antonick as sound & lighting designer, Katherine Branch as set & costume designer and Alexandra Athanasiadis as a facilitator. This was an excellent opportunity for these artists and a rich addition to the project with each artist bringing such fantastic ideas, existing skills and energy to the creation of Excavations. With excellent dramaturgical input from Sandra Long, dynamic creations from a strong cast of culturally diverse young women Excavations proved to be a great success.

"As they move confidently toward a life in the arts, these young women have sounded out a rallying call to their colleagues, male and female, about what the future may hold for them and have done so with a poise and intelligence that belies their young years and with a heart as loud as the cries from the appreciative audience who witnessed their work."

Excerpt from review by Freelance Director Matt Scholten

Excavations included contemporary interpretations of fairytales, goddesses, real life women, historical figures such as Marlena Dietrich, Lola Montez, Marilyn Monroe and Annette Kellermen. For me the most inspiring aspect was seeing how the young women engaged with these historical characters and brought their contemporary perspectives to their interpretations and theatre making. It was an incredibly enjoyable and rewarding experience that showed the strength of these young theatre makers. A big thank you also to technical volunteer Alashanee and our production manager Julie Wright.

Another major project in development in 2008 was 3019 - On the Radar to be creatively developed and presented in 2009. 3019 - On the Radar will work closely with African young people in Braybrook,

community and local organisations to address issues around relationships with police. 2008 saw the development of key organisational relationships with Western Edge sitting on a steering committee and in collaboration with YEH (Youth Enterprise Hub) in Braybrook. We facilitated two forums between African families and police as well as with young people and police to discuss these issues and work toward community solutions.

Following previous successful projects at the Sudanese Australian Integrated Learning (SAIL) Western Edge facilitated a series of 6 workshops led by Simon Tengende with emerging artist Ezeldine Deng. The workshops culminated in a small performance at the SAIL birthday party in August.

I enjoyed the collaboration with Dave Kelman and the board as we developed the program for 2009 and was very happy to pass over the reins to Cymbeline Buhler who brings a wealth of artistic experience and passion for communities to Western Edge.

Cymbeline Buhler – Artistic Director

It was an exciting intensive end-of-year beginning in the job for me. I arrived eight weeks before the summer break and launched feet first into Explosion_08. Joana Pires, a long standing participant in Western Edge programs wrote and directed an extraordinary first draft of *The Rose of Angola*, the true story of her father's experiences

in the Angolan wars - as a child experiencing the war of independence then retuning as a young man to fight in the civil war. Jenna Corcoran, new to Western Edge with Explosion_08, stated in her interview that she was ready to 'admit' that performance is an important part of the body of work she is building. She developed a solo titled 'This is Reality TV and You're the Star'. I acted as mentor in each project with specialist artists offering consultation, Christos Tsolkas working with Joana and Alex Martinis Roe working with Jenna.

The other project I squeezed in before the year ended was the creation of two short radio plays, working with 12 young people from the Youth Enterprise Hub's Kitchen Culture program, Braybrook. Ben Grant worked with Emilie Collyer and Helen Huyhn to whip up a miraculous pair of witty playful radio plays set in a mythic restaurant in which all the romantic dramas of life play out. These are being released as a CD accompaniment to the Kitchen Culture book of stories and recipes which will be launched mid-2009.

In taking the reins from Naomi, I feel greatly appreciative of the warmth and generosity with which she has steered the company and the exciting visionary directions she has pointed it in. I am delighted to have the opportunity to work alongside Dave and Heather in moving forwards into the next chapter of this dynamic company.

'A Girl Needs Her Lipstick' Excavations Show, Chicks Theatre Lab 08, Photographer John Sones



'It's a better way of learning history. With a book you learn and then forget. But you remember this 'cos it was an amazing play, so you remember the information that went with it. I take it all in 'cos it's the big night. That's how I remember. I still remember last year's!'

Young person's comment, Government Show-Kensington Primary

Projects in Schools

2008 was another year of excellence for the schools' program developing innovative arts-education practice in on-going, long-term and collaborative partnerships with state schools.

To give you an idea of Schools Programs' scope from a numbers point of view: we worked with a total of 170 young people and 20 teachers in 8 different state schools producing 7 different original performances that were performed to community audiences totalling 1600 people. Projects generally lasted for 20 weeks and had a total of 60 contact hours and featured a high teacher-artist to young person ratio.

In terms of the quality, these projects were particularly rich in their use of challenging content and complex blending of different artistic elements with a strong emphasis on young people's 'voice'. Real ensemble process and performance led by our team of artists (there were no 'stars') and original creative writing by the young people were intrinsic to

'*Lear, Regan & Fool*' Searching for Lear, Debney Park After School Project, Photographer Martin Wurt, Working Photos



the process. Some of these exceptional projects have been documented in a series of short films by Hoang Tran Nguyen. New media artist Tiago Pires worked extensively on schools projects both with young people and as an artist in his own right bringing a powerful and innovative dimension to Western Edge's work.

These were the projects:

Shakespeare at Debney Park Secondary College.

This project involved the making of two highly innovative works exploring Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, a project for year 7 students supported by year 9 peer educators and *Romeo & Juliet*, performed by a group of year 11 VCAL students who were mostly new arrivals to Australia. These projects developed the young people's English language skills as they grappled with complex Shakespearean text and wrote their own poetry. The performances to large and enthusiastic community audiences were gripping and represented a major achievement for these young people and the artists and teachers working with them. *Macbeth*, in particular, integrated high quality young people's writing to produce a modern adaptation set in Melbourne's gangland. The street-kid witches' choral performance was a particular highlight.

I loved how all the students had their turn to shine. It was magical. Both plays were excellent.

Audience Member's comment

As the project went on I became more confident. That's how I was able to play a confident Lady Macbeth in the press scene. But I've changed everywhere, in school, at home and with my friends. Now I'm able to be myself.

Young person's comment

Very meaningful – great juxtaposition of classic Shakespeare and the kids' interpretation. Fantastic for the kids to be exposed to Shakespeare in such a meaningful context.

Audience comment

Debney Park Secondary College and Footscray City College Artists' Residency

This after school project based in two schools aims to develop the artistic leaders in the two schools and extend the work of the in-school program. The residency led to a work-in-progress performance of new works created by young people working with resident artists. Young people from Debney Park produced *Searching For Lear* a play that took elements of *Waiting For Godot* and Shakespeare's *King Lear* and integrated them into a modern teenage street story. The result was extraordinarily funny, fast paced challenging theatre with powerful thematic content. This work in progress will be further developed in 2009.



Macbeth kills Duncan' Macbeth, Debney Park Secondary College, Photographer Ben Mastwyk of RiverRiver

Kensington Community School

Western Edge artists Jo Trevathan and Cuong Nguyen devised and directed Tales of a Twisted Forest with young people and teachers from Kensington Community School. This powerful work based on folk stories used physical theatre, shadow puppets and song in rich, dream-like theatre that was well performed to an enthusiastic community audience.

Debney Meadows Primary School

Mostly recent migrants with limited English from this school adapted African Folk Stories and used their own creative writing and art work in a rich telling of these tales that incorporated mask work, dance, song, shadow puppets and puppetry leading to a beautiful community performance.

Travancore Professional Development Program

Western Edge developed and delivered an innovative Professional Development program called The Authentic Teacher in collaboration with teachers from the mental health unit at Travancore School. This program that used forum theatre to address conflict and power in the classroom was successfully delivered to teachers from Staughton Secondary College and Kuranjang Secondary College in Melton.

I found the session extremely useful in giving us the opportunity to objectively reflect on some of the situations we encounter in the classroom. We should do this more often as a measure of support for each other. It wasn't long enough. Would love to do this on a regular basis.

Teacher's feedback on PD session

The Government Show at Kensington Primary School.

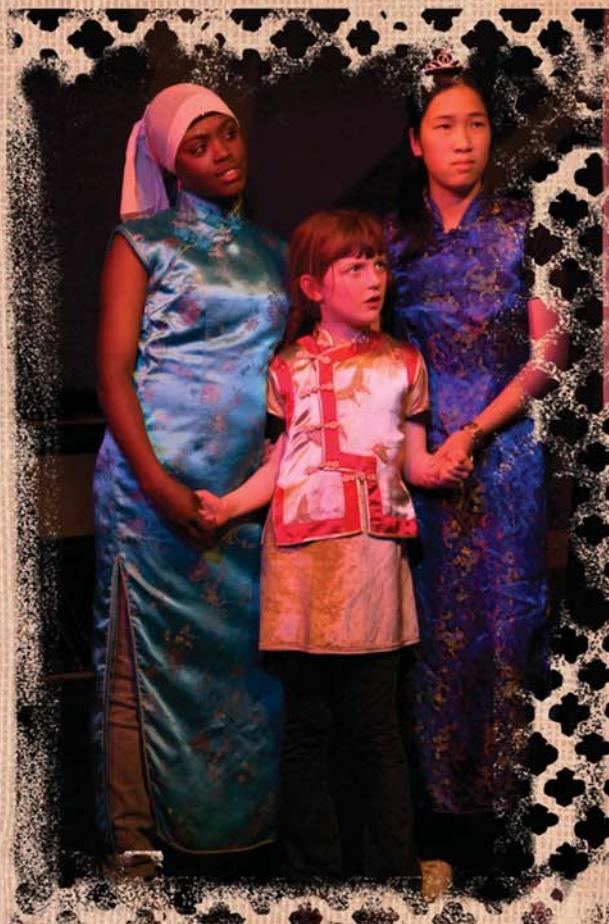
When Kensington Primary asked the Western Edge schools team to create a show about 'government' it caused some initial concern about trying to deliver such a dry topic to 11 and 12 year old young people. We tackled the problem head-on and produced three short innovative plays that looked at the role of

the Australian Government in East Timor's struggle for independence, the Tampa refugee crisis and the Stolen Generations. This hard-hitting documentary theatre incorporated mask work, visual theatre, dance, song and new media components to produce a powerful and challenging community performance. This innovative work has been documented in a major qualitative research study.

This was a powerful work. I feel completely wrung out. I was in tears during the performance. I was equally uplifted and hopeful by the experience of our young people, our future, gaining such a direct understanding and experience of the power of kindness and empathy. The things that hold our world together and make us human.
A parent's comment on the performance

These plays, well they get messages out to people, but they also say you know 'remember what happened' With the refugees stories, it showed how people think refugees aren't human, and the same with Stolen Generation they're not treated as human.

Boy H, Grade 5



'Lear's sisters' Searching for Lear, Debney Park after school project, Photographer Martin Wurt, Working Photos

Western Edge Youth Arts Board

Melanie Rice, Chair

Melanie is a lawyer who has experience in general commercial litigation and now currently works in media law. She has also worked on many pro bono projects including conducting consultations with community groups and preparing submissions on behalf of the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) in support of a Victorian Charter of Human Rights. She currently regularly attends the Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO) on behalf of the Public Interest Law Clearing House (PILCH), an independent not for profit legal referral service, and meets with clients and provides legal advice.

Tarquam McKenna, Deputy Chair

Dr Tarquam McKenna is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at Victoria University. He has been working with arts psychotherapists and educators using creative processes as psychotherapies and for wellness as a primary focus all his professional life. He has managed arts based projects in Indigenous knowledge and understanding, arts for wellness, and civic participation in varied community contexts. In the last two years Tarquam presented action based participatory arts workshops using Playback Theatre in Finland, Brazil and Hong Kong. He currently works as the Coordinator of Research and Postgraduate Research Training and coordinates Creative Studies in Education at VU. Tarquam's own art making process engages with visual images and he also continues to work as a performer, director and conductor in Playback Theatre. Tarquam is a member of the International Playback Theatre Network and is published in Playback as a way of researching community engagement. He is a registered Art Psychotherapist and edits The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art Therapy.

Arthur Perdios, Treasurer

Arthur Perdios is a Chartered Accountant and a member of the Taxation Institute of Australia with experience in public accounting, practicing and consulting in the areas of accountancy, taxation and business. He is currently completing a Master of Taxation postgraduate course at Monash University where he graduated with a Bachelor of Business majoring in accounting. Having been involved with various charities and associations over the last ten years his passion for the arts, youth and education is being fulfilled by joining the board as Treasurer in April 2009.

Bernadette Fitzgerald, Community Cultural Development Expert

Bernadette joined the Western Edge board in 2008 as our Community Cultural Development expert. She is the Producer for Education and Learning at Footscray Community Arts Centre managing the Arts Education and Workshops program. Bernadette holds a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Performing Arts, Community Theatre and Contemporary Dance (Mill Theatre, Geelong) and is currently studying for her Masters in Arts and Entertainment Management at Deakin University.



*'Little Red Riding Hood' Excavations Show
Chicks Theatre Lab, Photographer John Sones*

Gail Crennan, Educational Expert

Gail is an English and ESL teacher at Debney Park Secondary College. She began teaching there 27 years ago, but left to travel; to have two children; and (for a 10 year period) to teach at and then manage a transitional setting for newly-arrived, non-English speaking, secondary age students. She has always enjoyed doing drama with her students, because she sees that it promotes - among other things - fun and engagement, confidence and connection, and the acquisition of language. She collaborated with Dave Kelman and his SCRAYP artists on drama projects at Debney Park in 2004/5.

Basil Varghese, Ethics and Social Justice Expert

For over three decades Basil Varghese has been dedicated to working with and for the disadvantaged in Australian society. Basil is committed to building awareness and understanding about the reality of poverty and disadvantage, so that we can better work together to create a fairer and more compassionate society for everyone. Since 1988 Basil has worked with the Brotherhood of St Laurence as their Education Coordinator & Ambassador.

'This was the best cast I worked with, everyone was into it. I never saw a group so enthusiastic'

Young person's comment, Shakespeare at Debney Park project

Western Edge Youth Arts Staff

Heather Marsh,

Executive Officer/General Manager

Heather Marsh has worked in the arts since 1993 in both artistic and administrative roles. She has a BA in theatre and qualifications in business management and bookkeeping. In 2006, Heather was awarded an Australia Council 'Flying Start' mentorship in arts/business partnership and strategic financial planning.

Her artistic career has spanned working as a community artist and performer in Queensland with companies such as Hands on Art, Frank Productions and the Out of the Box Festival. Her current arts practice, which has shifted to writing and drawing, has seen her awarded an Australian Writer's mentorship, national poetry prizes and the International Waterhouse Prize (overall winner, 2007).

Cymbeline Buhler, Co-Artistic Director

Cymbeline Buhler has worked as a director, producer, scriptwriter, actor and workshop facilitator. She has run training programs in over fifteen countries within Australasia, Europe and North America. Her social change work has included creating and leading projects for the Latino Pastoral Action Center (New York), the United Theatre for Social Action (Bangladesh), the Bombay Playback Theatre Company (India), Makhampom (Thailand), various grass roots organisations in Hong Kong including the Centre for Cultural Development, Arts for the Disabled, A Generation and the Asian People's Theatre Festival Society.

She has regular working relationships with many organisations including the Japan Directors' Association, Tokyo; Arturo Acting School and the International Film School, Germany; the School of Playback Theatre, New York; Aquatoria Institute, Moscow and the Inter-Institute University, Macau. Since returning to Australia in 2008, she worked as Outreach Director of Shopfront Theatre before taking up the role of Artistic Director of Western Edge Youth Arts.

Her directing has received awards from the Yakumo International Theatre Festival (Japan) for Best Director, Best Production and Best Ensemble, and



'Street witches' Macbeth, Debney Park Secondary College, Photographer Ben Mastwyk of RiverRiver from the Liverpool International Theatre Festival (Canada) for Best Director, Best International Act and People's Choice.

Dave Kelman, Co-Artistic Director

Dave Kelman is Artistic Director of the Schools Program of Western Edge Youth Arts and has worked for the last twenty years as a director, writer and drama educator in Australia and UK. He has directed a number of youth theatre performances at Footscray Community Arts Centre including the innovative Casino City and 1 Nation and has run theatre residencies across Victoria. He has created original youth theatre and outdoor events in his hometown of Torquay and initiated youth theatre work at the Court House in Geelong. He has toured nationally with his own award-winning TIE Company Dog Theatre and pioneered hip hop theatre in UK and Australia. In the UK he established the nationally acclaimed South Leeds Youth Theatre and wrote work for the West Yorkshire Playhouse. He is currently a consultant and writer for theatre projects at the Sage music centre in Newcastle UK.

Kelman co-founded SCRAYP, an artists in schools program, in 1996 and this work has involved the mentoring and training of young artists from diverse backgrounds to work in education and community. Working with SCRAYP he has created dozens of original performances throughout Melbourne's West working with hundreds of young people in demanding culturally diverse, inner city settings over the last twelve years and playing to extensive community audiences.

Kelman has a background in teaching and is currently a researcher and lecturer in drama education. His papers have been published in books and journals and he is a regular contributor to drama education conferences both nationally and internationally. He recently completed a PhD in drama education at the University of Melbourne as part of an Australian Research Council funded research project examining the impact of arts partnerships in education.

"This is a work that deserves a larger audience and should be seen by as many young people as possible: it is equally portentous and entertaining, a difficult enough feat in itself and its successful marrying of character and message is both a challenge to other groups and companies working with young people as well as a confident statement and demonstration of the talent this group has unearthed from Melbourne's West."

Excerpt from review by Freelance Director
Matt Scholten

'Aphrodite takes wing' Excavations Show, Chicks Theatre Lab, Photographer John Sones



The Western Edge Creative Team

Western Edge had a very strong team for 2008, representing the cultural diversity of the West as well as established and emerging artists.

Artists in Community 2008

Chicks Theatre Lab

Emmaline Mcartney (Assistant Director), Rachel Antonick (Sound & Lighting Designer), Katherine Branch (Set & Costume Designer) and Alexandra Athanasiadis (Facilitator).

Radio Play

Ben Grant (Sound Design Facilitator), Emilie Collyer (Script Writing Facilitator) and Helen Huyhn (Assistant Script Writing Facilitator).

Explosion

Cymbeline Buhler (Mentor), Christos Tsiolkas (Specialist Consultant) and Alex Martinis Roe (Specialist Consultant).

Emerging Artists: Joana Pires and Jenna Corcoran.

Artists in Schools 2008

Lead Artists

Cuong Nguyen, Tibor Gede, Jane Rafe and Jo Travathan.

Emerging artists

Jo Pires, Kris Juresko and Alex Athanasiadis.

New young mentored artists

Daniel Halle-Michael, Maki Issa and Soloman Salew.

Admin Support

Book-keeper

Margaret Burrows

Admin Trainee

Kassi Poliski

Financial Report

The board of management is pleased to present their report on the entity for the financial year ended 31 December 2008.

Directors

The names of each person who has been a director during the year and to the date of this report are:

Bernadette Fitzgerald
Heather Marsh
Tarquam McKenna (appointed 09/09/2008)
Arthur Perdios (appointed 06/04/2009)
Melanie Rice
Basil Varghese
Gary Charman (resigned 17/12/2008)
Gail Crennan (resigned 06/04/2009)
David Everest (resigned 18/08/2008)
Pansy Kwan (resigned 23/06/2008)
Maureen Ryan (resigned 07/12/2008)

Directors have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

Company Secretary

The following person held the position of entity secretary at the end of the financial year:
Heather Marsh

Principal Activities

The principal activity of the entity during the financial year was:

to provide positive arts and performance experiences to culturally diverse young people in the Western region of Melbourne.

No significant changes in the nature of the entity's activity occurred during the financial year.

Operating Results

The financial surplus of the entity for the current financial year amounted to \$2,996.

Review of Operations

A review of operations of the entity during the financial year indicated that public and private sector grant funding led to an increase in revenue by 11.56%. The increase in revenue allowed for an increase in expenditure which contributed to the overall surplus for the year.

Significant Changes in State of Affairs

No significant changes in the entity's state of affairs occurred during the financial year.

After Balance Date Events

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the entity, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the entity in future financial years.

Future Developments

The entity expects to maintain the present status and level of operations and hence there are no likely developments in the entity's operations.

Environmental Issues

The entity's operations are not regulated by any significant environmental regulation under a law of the Commonwealth or of a state or territory.

Board Member Benefits

No Board member or office bearer has received or become entitled to receive a benefit of any description during the year.

Indemnifying Officers or Auditor

No indemnities have been given for any person who is or has been an officer or auditor of the entity. Western Edge Youth Arts Inc. has paid premiums for insurance policies covering the liabilities of all current directors and officers of the Association.

Proceedings on Behalf of the Entity

No person has applied for leave of Court to bring proceedings on behalf of the entity or intervene in any proceedings to which the entity is a party for the purpose of taking responsibility on behalf of the entity for all or any part of those proceedings. The entity was not a party to any such proceedings during the year.

Auditor's Independence Declaration

The lead auditor's independence declaration for the year ended 31 December 2008 has been received and is attached to this annual report.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board.

Chair


Melanie Rice

Dated this

27th day of May 2009

Treasurer


Arthur Perdios

Dated this

27th day of May 2009

Financial Performance

Western Edge Youth Arts Inc
ABN: 72 251 184 593
Statement of Financial Performance

For the Year Ended 31 Dec 2008

	Note	2008 \$	2007 \$
Income from Ordinary Activities			
Earned Income			
Box office and merchandise		804	31
Workshop and project fees		45,436	78,940
Other earned income		231	176
Granted Income			
Federal grants (Australia Council for the Arts)		53,245	35,000
State grants		98,477	91,836
Local council grants		-	455
Philanthropic and others		93,647	55,475
Sponsorship and Gifted Income			
Donations		750	4,150
Other revenue	2	4,239	-
Total Income		296,829	266,063
Expenses from Ordinary Activities			
Administration and infrastructure expenses		24,835	21,808
Depreciation	3	2,706	1,802
Documenting and marketing expenses		6,966	8,966
Program and production expenses		22,092	24,108
Wages and related expenses			
Artistic direction		63,852	61,613
Business and administration		52,319	31,272
Creative and technical personnel		88,124	80,944
On-costs, allowances and fees		32,939	22,850
Total Expenses		293,833	253,363
Net Surplus		2,996	12,700

Financial Position

Western Edge Youth Arts Inc
ABN: 72 251 184 593
Statement of Financial Position

For the Year Ended 31 Dec 2008

	Note	2008 \$	2007 \$
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	4	149,304	142,867
Trade and other receivables	5	33,706	42,533
Total Current Assets		183,010	185,400
Non-current Assets			
Plant and equipment	6	2,736	4,850
Total Non-Current Assets		2,736	4,850
Total Assets		185,746	190,250
Current Liabilities			
Trade and other payables	7	130,011	132,707
Short term provisions	8	9,052	13,856
Total Current Liabilities		139,063	146,563
Total Liabilities		139,063	146,563
Net Assets		46,683	43,687
Equity			
Retained earnings		44,683	41,687
Set up Fund		2,000	2,000
Total Equity		46,683	43,687

Income and Expenditure

Western Edge Youth Arts Inc
ABN: 72 251 184 593
Statement of Income and Expenditure

For the Year Ended 31 Dec 2008

	Retained Earnings \$	Total \$
Balance at 1 January 2007	28,987	28,987
Surplus attributable to the entity	12,700	12,700
Balance at 31 December 2007	41,687	41,687
Surplus attributable to the entity	2,996	2,996
Balance at 31 December 2008	44,683	44,683

Cash Flow

Western Edge Youth Arts Inc
ABN: 72 251 184 593
Cash Flow Statement

For the Year Ended 31 Dec 2008

	Note	2008 \$	2007 \$
Cash Flow from Operating Activities			
Receipts from customers		46,471	79,147
Payments to suppliers and employees		-318,398	-246,564
Interest received		4,239	-
Operating grant receipts		293,542	233,012
Receipts from donations		750	4,150
Goods and services tax paid		-19,575	-20,805
Net cash generated from operating activities	12(b)	7,029	48,940
Cash Flow from Investing Activities			
Payment for property, plant and equipment		-591	-6,652
Net cash used in investing activities		-591	-6,652
Net increase in cash held		6,438	42,288
Cash at the beginning of the financial year		142,866	100,578
Cash at the end of the financial year	12(a)	149,304	142,866

Notes to the Financial Statements

Western Edge Youth Arts Inc
ABN: 72 251 184 593
Notes to the Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 31 Dec 2008

Note 1 Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

The financial report is for Western Edge Youth Arts Inc as an individual entity, incorporated and domiciled in Australia.

Basis of Preparation

The financial report is a special purpose financial report that has been prepared in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, Australian Accounting Interpretations, other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board to the extent considered relevant to this Association and to satisfy the financial requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act of Victoria.

Australian Accounting Standards set out accounting policies that the AASB has concluded would result in a financial report containing relevant and reliable information about transactions, events and conditions to which they apply. Material accounting policies adopted in the preparation of this financial report are presented below. They have been applied to the extent relevant to this Association.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical costs.

Accounting Policies

(a) Revenue

Grant revenue is recognised in the income statement when it is controlled. When there are conditions attached to grant revenue relating to the use of those grants for specific purposes it is recognised in the balance sheet as a liability until such conditions are met or services provided.

Donations and bequests are recognised as revenue when received unless they are designated for a specific purpose, where they are carried forward as prepaid income on the balance sheet.

Interest revenue is recognised when it is received.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

(b) Plant and Equipment

Each class of plant and equipment is carried at cost or fair values as indicated less, where applicable, accumulated depreciation and impairment losses.

Plant and equipment

Plant and equipment are measured on the cost basis less depreciation and impairment losses.

The carrying amount of plant and equipment is reviewed annually by directors to ensure it is not in excess of the recoverable amount from these assets. The recoverable amount is assessed on the basis of the expected net cash flows that will be received from the assets employment and subsequent disposal. The expected net cash flows have been discounted to their present values in

determining recoverable amounts.

Depreciation

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets, is depreciated on a straight line basis over the asset's useful life to the entity commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

The depreciation rates used for each class of depreciable assets are:

Class of Fixed Asset	Depreciation Rate
Furniture and fittings	5%
Plant and equipment	40% - 100%

The assets' residual values and useful lives are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each balance sheet date.

Asset classes carrying amount is written down immediately to its recoverable amount if the asset's carrying amount is greater than its estimated recoverable amount.

Gains and losses on disposals are determined by comparing proceeds with the carrying amount. These gains or losses are included in the income statement.

(c) Leases

Lease payments for operating leases, where substantially all the risks and benefits remain with the lessor, are charged as expenses in the period in which they are incurred.

(d) Employee Benefits

Provision is made for the entity's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to Balance Sheet date. Employee benefits expected to be settled within one year together with benefits arising from wages, salaries and annual leave which may be settled after one year, have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled. Other employee benefits payable later than one year have been measured at the net present value.

Contributions are made by the entity to an employee superannuation fund and are charged as expenses when incurred.

(e) Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at-call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

(f) Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of expense. Receivables and payables in the Balance Sheet are shown inclusive of GST.

Cash flows are presented in the Cash Flow Statement on a gross basis, except for the GST component of investing and financing activities, which are disclosed as operating cash flows.

(g) Unexpended Grants

The entity receives grant monies to fund projects either for contracted periods of time or for specific projects irrespective of the period of time required to complete those projects. It is the policy of the entity to treat grants monies as unexpended grants in the balance sheet where the entity is contractually obliged to provide the services in a subsequent financial period to when the grant is received or in the case of specific project grants where the

project has not been completed.

(h) Income Tax

No provision for income tax has been raised as the entity is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997.

(i) Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the entity has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured.

(j) Comparative Figures

Where required by Accounting Standards comparative figures have been adjusted to conform with changes in presentation for the current financial year.

(k) Critical accounting estimates and judgments

The directors evaluate estimates and judgments incorporated into the financial report based on historical knowledge and best available current information. Estimates assume a reasonable expectation of future events and are based on current trends and economic data, obtained both externally and within the group.

Key estimates — Impairment

The entity assesses impairment at each reporting date by evaluating conditions specific to the entity that may lead to impairment of assets. Where an impairment trigger exists, the recoverable amount of the asset is determined. Fair value less costs to sell or current replacement cost calculations performed in assessing recoverable amounts incorporate a number of key estimates. No impairment has been recognised for the financial year ended 31 December 2008.

(l) Economic Dependence

Western Edge Youth Arts Inc is dependent on public and private grants for the majority of its revenue used to operate the business. At the date of this report the Board of Directors has no reason to believe the public and private sectors will not continue to support Western Edge Youth Arts Inc.

Note 4 Cash and Cash Equivalents

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
Current		
Cash at bank	149204	142767
Cash on hand	100	100
	149304	142867

Note 5 Trade and Other Receivables

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
Current		
Trade receivables	32,500	42533
	32,500	42533
Other receivables	1,206	0
	33,706	42533

Note 6 Plant and Equipment

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		
Plant and equipment		
At cost	7243	6652
Less accumulated depreciation	-4507	-1802
Total plant and equipment	2736	4850

Movements in Carrying Amounts

Movement in the carrying amounts for each class of property, plant and equipment between the beginning and the end of the current financial year:

Note 2 Revenue

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
Other Revenue		
Interest received	4,239	0
Total Other Revenue	4,239	0

Note 3 Profit

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
(a) Expenses		
Depreciation		
—	2706	1802
Total Depreciation	2706	1802
Rental expense on operating leases		
—	4366	2656
Total rental expense	4366	2656

	Office Equipment \$	Office Furniture \$	"Production Equipment \$"	"Total \$"
2007				
Balance at the beginning of the year	-	-	-	-
Additions at cost	5,853	-	799	6,652
Depreciation expense	(1,348)	-	(454)	(1,802)
Carrying amount at end of year	4,505	-	345	4,850
2008				
Balance at the beginning of the year	4,505	-	345	4,850
Additions at cost	-	591	-	591
Depreciation expense	(2,340)	(20)	(345)	(2,705)
Carrying amount at end of year	2,165	571	-	2,736

Note 7 Trade and Other Payables

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
Current		
Trade payables	2737	4744
Grants received in advance	127274	111536
Other current payables	0	16427
	130011	132707

Note 8 Provisions

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
Current		
Employee Benefits		
Employee leave accrued	9052	13856
	9052	13856
	2008	2007
Analysis of Total Provisions	\$	\$
Current	9052	13856
Non-current	0	0
	9052	13856

Note 9 Contingent Liabilities and Assets

No contingent liabilities or assets existed at reporting date.

Note 10 Events After the Balance Date

No significant events have occurred since the end of the financial year.

Note 11 Related Party Transactions

There were no related party transactions in the financial year.

Note 12 Cash Flow Information

	2008	2007
	\$	\$
(a) Reconciliation of cash		
Cash at bank	149204	142767
Other cash	100	100
	149304	142867
(b) Reconciliation of cash flow from operations with profit after income tax		
Profit after income tax	2996	12700
Non-cash flows		
Depreciation	2706	1802
Changes to provisions	-4803	570
Changes in assets and liabilities		
(Increase)/decrease in receivable and other assets	10032	-5551
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	-3902	39419
Cash flows provided by operating activities	7029	48940

Note 13 Entity Details

The registered office of the entity is:
Western Edge Youth Arts Inc
Pheonix Youth Centre
72 Buckley Street
Footscray, Victoria

The principal place of business is:
Western Edge Youth Arts Inc
Pheonix Youth Centre
72 Buckley Street
Footscray, Victoria

Statement by Members of Committee

Western Edge Youth Arts Inc

ABN: 72 251 184 593

Statement by Members of the Committee

The board of management has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the board of management the financial report as set out on pages 16 to 21:

1. Presents a true and fair view of the financial position as at 31 December 2008 and of the performance for the year ended on that date of the entity.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the entity will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the board of management and is signed for and on behalf of the board by:

Chair

Melanie Rice
27th May 2009. Melanie Rice

Treasurer

Arthur Perdios
Arthur Perdios

Dated this 27th day of May 2009



'Lady Macbeth and her therapist' Macbeth,
Debney Park Secondary College, Photographer
Ben Mastwyk of RiverRiver

Independent Audit Report

To the members of Western Edge Youth Arts Inc.

Scope

I have audited the special purpose financial report of Western Edge Youth Arts Inc. ("the Association") for the financial year ended 31 December 2008 comprising the Income Statement, Balance Sheet, Statement of Recognised Income and Expenditure, Cash Flow Statement, and Notes to the Financial Statements. The Committee of Management is responsible for the financial report and has determined that the accounting policies used are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of the constitution of the Association and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. I have conducted an independent audit of the financial report in order to express an opinion on it to the members of Western Edge Youth Arts Inc. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used are appropriate to the needs of the members.

The financial report has been prepared for distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the Committee of Management's financial reporting requirements under the constitution of the Association. I disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

My audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial report and the evaluation of significant accounting estimates.

These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly in accordance with the accounting policies described in the Supplementary Information to the financial statements. These policies do not require the application of all Accounting Standards and UIG Consensus Views.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

Audit Opinion

In my opinion, the financial report of Western Edge Youth Arts Inc gives a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 31 December 2008 and of its financial performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1.

Kimberly Smith FCA
Registered Company Auditor

Dated: 27th May, 2009
Kew, Victoria

Auditor's Independence Declaration

To the Committee of Management

I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, in relation to my audit of Western Edge Youth Arts Inc. for the year ended 31 December 2008 there have been:

- No contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the Corporations Act 2001; and
- No contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct.

Kimberly Charles Smith
Chartered Accountant
Registered Company Auditor

Dated this 20th day of May 2009
Melbourne, Australia

Acknowledgements

Western Edge would like to thank the following organisations for their invaluable support and partnership:



Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development



Western Edge Youth Arts is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



Funded by



Western Edge Youth Arts

Phoenix Youth Centre
72 Buckley Street,
Footscray VIC 3011

info@westernedge.org.au
www.westernedge.org.au

Ph. +61 3 9362-0046

