

Regional Arts Fund

Quick Response Grant

Case study:

Spiderbait and the Wangaratta Horns



Spiderbait and the Wangaratta Horns of Death
Photograph by Paul Martin

Project Summary

Wangaratta Festival of Jazz and Blues facilitated a community engagement project involving dozens of regional brass and woodwind musicians. Led by Adam Simmons, this project involved a series of workshops culminating in a unique performance with Spiderbait on the main stage during the 2017 festival.

Artist Experience

The main challenge faced by the project was early engagement of participants. There were, however, significant increases in numbers and enthusiasm with each rehearsal. In the end, the total number of participants exceeded the initial estimate.

Adam and Spiderbait entered the project with the aim of creating something different musically with the added horns, but they had not anticipated the strength of the ensembles contribution to the overall show. The horns were a feature throughout the entire show and were acknowledged as such by both Spiderbait and the audience.

Public Outcome

The performance was held as the penultimate concert for the main Blues Marquee in Merriwa Park at the Wangaratta Festival of Jazz and Blues. There was an influx of local day ticket sales prior to the concert, indicating the positive economic boost this community engagement project created for the festival. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and the performance was lauded a highlight of the festival.

The project generated increased regional coverage for the festival in traditional media. There were a number of articles in the Wangaratta and Albury newspapers, and several interviews on ABC and commercial radio.

Community Benefits

The ensemble was extremely inclusive, including instrumentalists that would not normally perform alternative rock, especially at an elite level. Participant ages ranged from primary school to retirees, with people travelling for up to two hours for each rehearsal in order to be involved. They were predominantly students and amateur musicians.

A strong sense of belonging was fostered through the process. One participant talked of how she had been told she would never be a musician as a teenager. To be invited to play at this concert thirty years later, and told that “there were no wrong notes” was an extremely empowering experience.

Through the formation of this group informal networks have been established, and some participants have been invited to get involved in other projects.



Wangaratta Horns of Death Rehearsal 2
Photograph by Adam Simmons



Australian Government

Regional Arts Fund

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ARTS
VICTORIA

Project Start Date	26/07/2017
Project End Date	05/11/2017
Project Location	Wangaratta
Federal Electorate	Indi
No. Audience	2500
No. Participants	60
Project Beneficiary	Youth
Main Art Form	Music
No. Artists Paid	4
No. Artists Unpaid	60
No. Arts Worker Paid	10
No. Arts Worker Unpaid	5