

(Music)

ELIZABETH ROGERS:

Morning. Thank you. And yes, I guess from the size of the audience there are a few people getting over last night's festival club. So, first of all, I'd like to acknowledge that we're meeting today on Widjambul land on Bundjalung country and pay my respects to the Elders past and present, and all other First Nations people here.

But before we get started on the second day of our conversation, I have some exciting news. And I'm reading it off my mobile phone so it is correct. Yesterday, to mark its 100 years of service, Live Performance Australia held its 2017 centenary awards and among them (inaudible) and when these extraordinary prestigious awards were being handed out at the Sydney Opera House, (inaudible) was here talking to us. Her commitment to regional arts is clear.

I hope you enjoyed the arts program last night. I was lucky enough to see (unknown term)'s performance last night and if you missed it, do see that session this afternoon. It's amazing.

Now, there are a few things to mention that I should have done yesterday but didn't due to the late start and to give the speakers their fair allotted times. So I'm going to take a little bit more time this morning. Firstly, I'd like to acknowledge the Honourable Don Harwin, who has made a commitment to attend the whole event. He has regularly stated his commitment to regional arts and we are honoured that he has taken the time to be with us. For this new event to have four years of generous funding support gives us the opportunity to build on each version of Artstate and to demonstrate the strengths of the regional arts sector in NSW. We plan to move Artstate to a different region each year to reflect on the different landscapes in which we work across this diverse state.

I hope you will join us on this journey each year. I know that many of you have driven extremely long distances to be here, or have had complicated flight plans and long stays in airports waiting connections. I think the gold star has to go to Cherry Pratt, executive director of West Darling Arts, who drove from Broken Hill, closely followed by those from the far south and the Riverina regions.

Your turn will come. You might notice that the Artstate conference bags are printed in four colours. This was done so you can collect all four if you attend all of Artstate. But there are two stars and two colours that are exclusive to Artstate delegates and you can get one at morning tea or lunch. I do suggest you try them on. Small seems to be larger than the medium, just a word of warning. And our team wear the pale grey one, the production crew as you've seen are wearing charcoal but the most important ones are the volunteers in yellow. These are the local heroes gives us their time and skills to help Artstate run smoothly. Please be especially nice to them and give them a big round of applause.

(Applause)

The NSW government support has enabled us to leverage additional funding from the Australian Government through the Building Better Regions fund and to bring on the Lismore

City Council with both funding and support. I would like to mention Mitch Low and his team for assisting us in the application process and all the other behind-the-scenes risk management plans. They're all part of the work required to deliver an event of this type. And also the support of the council, that promoted Artstate on all their street signages and print material as well as delivered promotion for Artstate into every letter box in Lismore on Monday morning.

I'd also like to acknowledge the enormous assistance given to us by Southern Cross University, and thank Vice Chancellor Professor Adam Shoemaker and the Deputy Vice Chancellor for their support, which has included use of their technical equipment for the arts program, accommodation and rehearsal space for the wonderful young musicians of the Regional Youth Orchestra, who have come from all over the state, and even to the detail of providing a driver and a bus to get the amazing dancers from the opening ceremony to Ballina Airport for a rather early flight on Friday morning. All this contribution in kind saves us money and allows us to put more money into paying the artists and the arts program.

We have two wonderful members from Southern Cross University, staff members Associate Professor Adele Wessell and (unknown term) they have agreed to act for the program and their final report of the themes for Lismore will be used in plan schemes for 2018 and will be published on our Artstate website in late January.

The allied local arts organisations in the Northern Rivers have all welcomed and supported Artstate Lismore in ways too numerous to mention, but a big thanks to NORPA, Northern Rivers Conservatorium of Music, Screenworks, RealArtWorks and Creative Lismore and finally and critically, our brilliant partners Arts Northern Rivers. Peter and his team have been fabulous to work with, providing huge support for us on their home ground.

The biggest strength of regional arts development in NSW is our unique network of 14 regional arts development organisations, who develop programs that respond to the communities in which they live. It's an amazing network of extraordinary and totally committed people and I thank them all.

So, on with the show. Welcome to Artstate day 2, where we will continue our conversation on the theme of creative partnerships and the first session for this morning is all about festivals. Festivals play a huge role in regional communities, creating identity, providing economic benefits and community engagement. And, hey, they're also fun! So to kick off our conversation about partnerships, I'm delighted to welcome Karoline Trollvik from the Riddu Riđđu festival in northern Norway, an area as regional and remote as any in NSW, with, I suspect, rather different weather challenges to those we have faced this weekend in the Northern Rivers. It has rained a bit, but it hasn't been cold.

Karoline is the current festival director of Riddu Riđđu Festivála, an international Indigenous arts festival hosted since 1991 in the coastal Sami community... And this is where my pronunciation will probably go off the rails, so I hope you will forgive me - Olmmáivággi in Gáivuotna municipality in Norway. I'm going to be multilingual as well, for anyone that sat in Adam Shoemaker's question yesterday about how many languages we need to get our tongues around, and unfortunately I'm not good at any of them. So Karoline was born and raised in Gáivuotna, gained a masters degree in Anthropology of Development at the University of Bergen, where she focused on contemporary Indigenous identities in relation to her fieldworks

in Taiwan. She returned home for the position of festival director in 2014. Please give a warm welcome to Karoline - she's come a long way to talk to you about the Riddu Riđđu Festivála, the 'little storm on the coast'.

(Applause)

KAROLINE TROLLVIK:

Thank you, Elizabeth for inviting me. I want to pay my respect to the traditional owners of the land, the Bundjalung people, on which we are meeting. I pay my respect to their Elders, past and present, and the Elders from other communities who may be present here today. And I pay my respect and admiration for your leaders, past, present and future. Many who have inspired me these days. I send my blessing to my (unknown term) leaders back home because it is their fearless and integrity that have brought me here today.

I am, as Elizabeth said, the current festival director of the international Indigenous arts and music festival Riddu Riđđu. And I am happy to share our story with you today. The festival is held in Olmmáivággi, in the county of Gáivuotna in northern Norway, which is also my home. We are about 2500 inhabitants and we live scattered around a fjord with a mountain area behind that covers most of the area. We have been ethnically mixed for a long time, but the question of ethnic identity was very difficult in our community in the decades running up to the festival.

Riddu Riđđu means 'little storm on the coast' in northern Sami and is a reference to the festival's nature as well as the impact it has had and keeps on having for our Sami community as well as the Sami community as a whole, stretching over four countries from Norway in the west to the Kola peninsula in Russia in the east. The festival has also connected with many other Indigenous communities around the world that have crossed our paths during the 27 years we have been running.

I took over the role as director in 2014 and with it a legacy that the generations before me had so fiercely created. When they started this gathering place for people highlighting Indigenous arts, cultures and knowledge in 1991, our municipality and the communities within it had for decades tried their absolute best to hide any public sign of Sami heritage and culture.

This did not, however, mean that they didn't practice the culture and speak the language in private. They did. But the language was not passed on to the next generation and had become a secret language for the adults.

We as Sami people suffered decades of assimilation from four national states, and we were not allowed to speak our language or practice our traditions and ceremonies in public. In the case of (unknown term), the public space in the 1980s was Norwegian and that was all anyone needed to know. Norwegian was the future and Sami belonged to the past that shouldn't be mentioned. These policies create an internal shame in our people and a trauma that we are still dealing with today. It was in light of this that young Sami activists in (unknown term), well-educated and politically conscious, decided that they would form a Sami youth group, (unknown term) which later created and developed the festival. They posted questions about the ethnic status of the community and went public with their own identities as Sami. From being a private and hidden matter, people's ethnic roots became a matter and an issue which demanded a view to be

expressed.

Around the same time, the (unknown term) was recognised as a (unknown term) municipality and the ethnic (inaudible) antagonism followed for 10 years and is the backdrop of the festival. The message of the festival, its form, and those who attend the festival provoked other members of the local community, particularly members of the (unknown term), members of a religious sect that has a strong position in our community.

And also in other communities in (unknown term). Others were so against the inclusion of Sami culture in our municipality that they destroyed the Sami road signs whenever they were set up. It was, in short, an ethnic conflict carried out with words and contempt. It was also a sign of a deep shame that some had big troubles confronting. The youth organisation had a clear program, despite this. And they worked to promote Sami language, culture as well as a clear environmental profile in form of fighting for the rights to continue the local traditional livelihood of small-scale fishing. The tool that eventually created a far reaching social environment in (unknown term), (unknown term) started modestly in 1991 as cultural days. During the meeting and the annual celebration of the Norwegian (unknown term) association. The Sami youth organisation was in charge of the event. The aim was to reinvent traditions by interpreting the past and creating roots for future generations.

It is important to explain the context of our municipality when talking about Riddu Riđđu. And how the festival made its momentum. Although the question of Riddu Riđđu was a heated public discussion for almost 10 years in our municipality, it never stopped existing. The people who run it, the families, friends, Sami artists, politicians and academics never doubted that this festival needed to exist in the world, despite all the negative reactions it received from parts of the community. The festival also managed to gather strong support outside the community, both nationally and internationally. It became clear quickly as we started to include Indigenous artists, performers and guests from other parts of the world that the space we had created was also important for Indigenous people in other places in the world and could serve as a model for other communities in how to revitalise culture.

During the early days of the festival, some strategic choices were made. And the most important decision they made was that the festival should highlight art. Art symbolises freedom and a secular from religious valuings. As part of the art and culture approach, local artists were involved in the development of the festival. And Indigenous art and music were given priority in the festival program. A connected seminar program was initiated early on to post questions and discuss vital local cultural issues.

Local people, young and old, were also involved as volunteers, tutors and course holders. Later on becoming festival directors and (unknown term) ambassadors. The gradual increased support for the festival amongst several groups in the municipality and the county proved that the festival was fulfilling many functions that the municipality would otherwise lack. It contributed to a public debate which revealed prejudices and, therefore, helped clear the air. The festival, as an arena for battle, changed as the Sami language and culture found its place in public institutions and everyday life in (unknown term).

It's changed as the festival became accepted locally, regionally and nationally. The festival became an interesting partner for institutions working on relations with Russia in the north,

highlighting - and one of our core international exchange programs highlights other Indigenous communities of the circumpolar north and is annually funded from the municipality. Throughout its existence, the festival's general profile has given to the local (unknown term) content and meaning. It grew out of a search for what it means to be coastal Sami. In the inner parts of (unknown term), the local and cultural trades was much more resilient to assimilation due to the harvest of reindeer. They kept the reindeer culture and the living Sami language. For us, the coastal Sami, to find its shape (unknown term) included a wide range of activities in the festival work from food to creating life in historic buildings, making local arts and crafts visible, music, stories, theatre and dance and they gave it a coastal Sami profile. They realised that the coastal Sami life was the life they were already living, along the fjords and it was the history of the local community which everyone could share.

Riddu Riđđu, with its foundation in the local Sami culture, is today an important arena and gathering place for all Sami communities. We invite Sami artists all over (unknown term) and commission works between Sami artists and international Indigenous artists. Our alliance with Sami people are crucial - we are one people who vitalise our culture by learning and sharing from each other. And by supporting our local struggles. For the Riddu Riđđu festival, it's natural, as we now live under four national states.

The further Indigenous network and collaborations stretching all over the circumpolar from Alaska to Canada and the southern Samis grew out of a curiosity and an already existing international Indigenous section connections. An international perspective was a part of the way the (unknown term) generation understood themselves. The ones who were politically active were dealing with international Indigenous laws and participating in international forums, making friendships that they wanted to extend to the informal and cultural aspects of Riddu Riđđu. They saw themselves as stronger being a part of an international fellowship. And they wanted to give the festival a new direction.

Riddu Riđđu has continued its focus on innovation, and it is an important part of what we do. An example is that the festival director who functions as the artistic director only sits for four years at a time, allowing new leaders with new ideas and visions to come forth and shape the festival in new ways. The intense ethnic conflicts surrounding the use of Sami language and the (unknown term) symbols which characterise the municipality throughout the 1990s lessened around the turn of the century and are barely present today. There are several reasons for this but the Riddu Riđđu festival and its work throughout the year preparing it has without a doubt been an important part. During the '90s, it was completely volunteer based, the festival. When we gained annual funding from the Norwegian Minister of Culture in 2009, we gradually created an administration of four people who were full-time to prepare the festival and would initiate and collaborate the events throughout the year.

Many of the original founders still participate as volunteer staff who annually makes up about 120 people. The volunteer staff also has the role as stock holders in our non-profit organisation, that (unknown term) organised in 2009. We have meetings, evaluate and point out new directions together during the year.

During the festival, an additional several hundred volunteers contribute. Over half of them from the local community. The work inspires and unites craft people, farmer, unemployed, (unknown term) politician, national politician, secondary school students from the region and academic, to

list some. There are never been any ethnic conditions attached to participating as volunteer staff, although it has been clear to everyone that this is a Sami arena. The formal meeting places and networks also function as an arena where people from different backgrounds can work through their feelings of trauma, concerning the coastal Sami situation, and it brought people together to reconcile their differences.

Riddu Riđđu was also an arena where different kinds of youthful rebellion often directed at the dominant (unknown term) culture amongst many of their parents, which the younger generation considered to be suffocating and narrow-minded. Things have also changed among the older generation. People are proud of what their children and grandchildren have achieved and even practitioners of (unknown term) now contribute as volunteers to the practical works surrounding the festival.

Today, Riddu Riđđu attracts between 3,000-4,000 visitors every year from (unknown term), Scandinavia, Europe, and the rest of the world. And it runs over five days. The festival balances between the traditional and the modern and with program curated around (inaudible) events. The festival serves the local community where we live and work and is an important annual income for local businesses and important creative arena for development and income for Sami artists and an attraction for people who want to settle in the area.

Over the years, and with its success, it has become a huge pride amongst most of the members of the municipality, even the ones who in the beginning opposed it. A big part of our year-round work is to develop some young Sami talents, to nurture their confidence as artists and to give them arenas to develop and prosper. Since 2010, we have announced a young Sami artist of the year within any field that we think have the potential to become established artist in the future. Many of them have been performing internationally, created stable careers as artists. And they have come back to perform in new constellations and in commissioned works for the festival.

We have also established a talent program where the artists are challenged to work together in new ways within the artistic fields. (Unknown term) session is the name of this talent program and it has become a create success, not least for the artists themselves. Although we have made our mark and are recognised as a flagship for Sami arts and culture expressions, we are still dependent on regional and national political support. As well as securing a vital part of our annual funding, it also gives us an acknowledgement of importance as the Sami cultural organisation in a landscape of Norwegian institutions.

We, therefore, collaborate closely with the municipality, the county and the (unknown term) Parliament. There is still an essence of rebelliousness to Riddu Riđđu. But the festival has grown up and become professional in a way no-one had perceived. And it is because of that that we have acquired a status as a recognised place and a forum for Sami and other Indigenous groups and further a flagship for (unknown term) arts and culture globally.

A researcher once posed a question, though - how can the creativity, innovative power and the political (inaudible) of Sami become bigger and becoming better organised and even integrated in the national web of festivals? And the answer in one of the founders was, and I really love this answer - he said don't worry, (unknown term) will always be anarchistic youth, power and rock'n'roll. And youth power is our driving force and there have never been more young coastal

Sami who wear their (inaudible) with pride and they are eager and ready to make their mark. We have around 30 young volunteers from the community between 13 to 18 who work like heroes and engage in activities and help organise during the year. It creates a social bond and makes them being proud from (unknown term) and it also challenges us to find the best ways of preparing and motivating them for the future.

We are currently in an innovating process to map out, together with our volunteer staff, how we can share knowledge more efficiently and create a mentorship program between new members and old of our staff.

As much as it is important for the initiators, my parents' generation now, and many of our young volunteers' grandparents to be able to speak about their Sami identity with pride, to confront the past and give our culture a place in the contemporary, it was also important for them to create this space for us, the next generation who is growing up alongside (unknown term) and who they wished would be raised feeling Sami culture as a living and important part of themselves and that we would feel less struggle connecting to who we are and where we are from.

They also knew that we - there also knew that we would have to take over at some point and should understand the importance of doing so. Luckily for them, we did. Riddu Riđđu serves as a safe ground for global identity negotiation. It is a festival that accepts you as you are and that lets you connect and understand Indigenous practices and art forms of today in an informal manner. Whether you are Indigenous yourself or of other heritage.

I am very happy to be here and it's been so inspiring to meet many of you and especially the artists from the region and I would like to end my keynote with sharing an artistic work that we commissioned for the festival this summer. It is part of the talent program that I mentioned, the (unknown term) sessions, and we challenged two incredible young visual artists to find a way of working together in a new field. And they were both very clear that they were very curious about animation that but had never worked with it before. So we found them a mentor in Stockholm, these two artists are from Swedish (unknown term) and we set up a studio for them and we gave them time and space to work and we presented the film, the animation, first at the festival this summer and, since then, it's been travelling to Taiwan, Canada, and Greenland. And in Canada they even won the Jane Glasgow emerging young artist award for the film. Yeah, it was a brilliant moment.

So I would like to end by sharing the story that they told. It's an important story for us as contemporary Sami people as well. Even though Riddu Riđđu has managed something incredible by building a festival for Sami people in the community that didn't want to acknowledge it 20 years ago, we still have a lot of struggles as Sami people in Scandinavia and a lot of it is connected to land rights and to be able to continue our traditional livelihoods of reindeer herding. So the film talks a little bit about that, too, and our colonial history, but it's also a beautiful poem running over the film by one of our great poets. So I thank you and I hope you enjoy the film.

(Speech in foreign language)

(Applause)

ELIZABETH ROGERS:

You can tell I'm getting tired, I missed my cue! Karoline, thank you so much for that inspiring story. I think Norway is on my bucket list as well. The Riddu Riđđu Festival. What I just thought was amazing about the whole story of reclaiming identity and the handover to the next generation, which I think is something pivotal that we need to think about as senior arts leaders and how we actually do put that on to the next generation. An inspiring story. Thank you for coming all this way. A small, light, portable token from one of our fabulous Aboriginal Northern Rivers artists to remind you of your trip to Lismore. Let's thank Karoline again.

(Applause)

ELIZABETH ROGERS:

I tell you - the north coast has possibly more festivals than any other region in NSW. Therefore, our next panel, 'The Art of Festivals', will look at these three quite different events. Unfortunately, on your program we had hoped to have Glenn Wright from the Mullum Music Festival, but he's unfortunately ill and not able to attend today. But we have three fabulous panellists and let me introduce them.

Jessica Ducrou is the co-founder and co-producer of Splendour in the Grass and co-producer of The Falls Music and Arts Festival. She is also the co-owner of Village Sounds Booking Agency, which represents scores of Australian's top artists, a partner in Secret Sounds Touring, which tours international acts throughout the year, and a partner in Secret Sounds Connects, which specialises in major events sponsorship. Please welcome Jessica.

(Applause)

ELIZABETH ROGERS:

It certainly reinforces our theme that we can work regionally and think globally. I would also like to welcome Edwina Johnson, who has moulded the Byron Writers' Festival into one of the greatest. She also manages the year-round program including events and workshops. Previously she was the Artistic Operations Manager at Sydney Writers' Festival and has held several company writing roles. And it's been interesting in the programming of the papers that we've had more focus on literature in this particular event than we have had in other regional arts events, and I am sure that is an absolute direct response to the Writers' Festival. Please welcome Edwina Johnson.

(Applause)

ELIZABETH ROGERS:

And our third panellist today is Chris Spencer, a proud Aboriginal man an current manager of Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance Aboriginal Corporation, located in Coffs Harbour. Being born in Garlambirla, Coffs Harbour, within the Gumbaynggirr Nation has enabled Chris to continue his cultural development with local Elders and express his cultural pursuits within the local Aboriginal communities. He holds a strong backgrounds in NSW Aboriginal Land Rights and Cultural Heritage, and it combines well with Saltwater Freshwater, which showcases a festival on Australia Day each year. Chris has been a great contributor to our regional network of arts officers and I appreciate that. Please welcome Chris Spencer.

(Applause)

ELIZABETH ROGERS:

And our moderator, we are so fortunately that Wesley Enoch has agreed to come back. He is the Director of the Sydney Theatre Company. He has directed six programs over the years. He has been artistic director in Brisbane and... I'm sorry, my printer ran out of ink and I can't read that. He is the Director of the Sydney Theatre Company and a trustee of the Sydney Opera House. He's worked on almost every festival in the country and we are really excited to have Wesley come back and moderate this panel. Please welcome Wesley.

(Applause)

WESLEY ENOCH:

Thank you so much. And am I tired! Hello, hello, welcome. I'd like to pay my respects to the Elders of this country. It's interesting last night going to a performance where they talked about this being a floodplain and a place of waterfalls, and the need to run when both of those things happen at the same time. Which I think is a great lesson for all that we can all learn. This great knowledge that comes from our Indigenous heritage that is the knowledge that we all have access to if we just have the ears and the eyes.

Just fantastic to have this panel, it's great that Elizabeth has introduced them all. We've got a small presentation from each of them for about 10, 15 minutes each and then we will have a Q&A up here to wrap us up. The interesting thing about festivals and the idea of created partnerships is festivals are incubators and accelerators of ideas and practice of communities coming together. What we see across the nation and across the world is millennia of practice around festivals, this need to gather, to share ideas, to share common interests, to build communities in different ways. Each festival has a way of doing that which is responding to its own communities.

So today we've got three, well, different but similar in many ways festivals bringing people together. So we will start off with Jess to give us a bit of a chat.

JESSICA DUCROU:

Thanks, Wesley. Can you hear OK out there? Thanks, Artstate for having me here. It's nice to be at an event and talk about the arts, which is something I'm particularly passionate about. At art festival Splendour in the Grass, I've been lucky enough to work with all disciplines and it's an incredible luxury that I'm grateful for. I'm assuming that most people here haven't been to Splendour in the Grass or may not know what it is. So I thought I would start with a quick video that will give you an overall vision for what the actual event is. So if we could play the video, that would be great.

SPEAKER:

This is going to be the furthest place that I could go from home, and to perform there is insane - I'm still getting over it.

SPEAKER:

We've been working on this show for the past month. Got to chill last night and really didn't burn the candle at both ends so we can enjoy tonight and tomorrow.

SPEAKER:

Even though we're from England, we wanted to go Splendour in the Grass.

SPEAKER:

(Sings) # Baby, I've got you on my mind
You'll never know how much I need you by my side...

SPEAKER:

Australia is on point with the music (inaudible)

SPEAKER:

There are story about how our music sound track is for moments in your life and that's just amazing.

SPEAKER:

The main guiding principle should be that everyone should be dedicated to promoting the best art, you know. I still see music as more art than it is entertainment.

SPEAKER:

(Inaudible) every day, that just doesn't happen.

SPEAKER:

The bands are from anywhere, people are singing in their true and unique voice, there's no way a character or put on. So it hits you harder than hearing someone in a radio American voice.

SPEAKER:

I (inaudible) desk job.

SPEAKER:

Splendour in the Grass feels like the last great Australian...

SPEAKER:

They put so much creative energy into it. Into making it into something that's interesting every year and trying to improve it.

SPEAKER:

The bands that can come out of Australia from the underground and get sort of showcased here at Splendour I think that's an amazing thing for Australian music.

SPEAKER:

The vibe of the entire festival and the vibe of the people that come to the festival is so (inaudible).

SPEAKER:

You look out on stage and there's 10, 20, 30,000 people and it fries your brain.

SPEAKER:

It felt like everyone was up for a good time and jumping and sweaty and I really appreciate them.

SPEAKER:
(Inaudible)

JESSICA DUCROU:

I guess my background is music. I have been seeing bands from a very young age and I think the heart probably why - well, certainly in the first instance why people come to Splendour in the Grass is for the bands. I think as an event producer, what interests me is - is challenging people once they're actually at the show, what kind of experience will they have? If they only see a handful of bands and they get caught up in other areas of the event, I feel like my job is done. There's a lot of job satisfaction knowing that someone got sucked into listening to some discussion in the forum or, you know, making a hat in the craft tent or, you know, it's kind of what gives me the sort of greatest job satisfaction.

It's an interesting festival and having been involved in a number of them, Splendour for some reason seems to have its own unique energy where there's contribution. People come to us all the time with these fantastic ideas and, I guess, one of my other jobs is filtering those ideas and working out understanding our audience and how we can engage and challenge and present the right kind of art pieces.

The various disciplines of art are... in a festival environment it's quite a challenging environment for artists to work in. Over the years, we've tried a lot of different approaches. Some of the slides I'll just kind of take you through now talk about the different areas that we've worked in, in no real particular order, but probably most importantly starts with our visual arts manager Craig Walsh, who has been with us for 17 years, since the festival started. He is a fantastic inspiration to me and he was a... I guess he played a key role in a partnership we did in 2009 with the Australian Council and Lismore Regional Gallery and NORPA. We managed to secure some funding for a 3-year program that started with a... It put artists, a series of artists through this program. It brought together creative professionals from public arts and theatre, from visual arts, architecture, design. They did - they spent time apart from what they're doing year round, three weeks in a house in Lismore, and they presented us the ideas at the ends of their 3-week process and we were able to sort of identify the most appropriate disciplines to present at the show.

For instance, a fine art presentation in a festival environment is a very difficult execution and something we haven't done particularly well to date. We're trying to. So it's understanding your audience.

Some of those artists that came out of the program, a terrific guy named Bennett Miller. He has an installation called 'Barnraiser', and I guess it was something that it's evolved over two to three years. It was a two to three-year program with Bennett. We ended up actually building a barn, the sort of like the bottom image, on site at the festival. We were incredibly committed to his program. We also hoped to use that space - well, we have actually - in further - with further artists. But that was something that we as a festival are committed to doing and have the luxury when you do have your own venue of being able to build a barn and leave it there year on year. So that was quite an exciting process for us. I think Bennett's work, he blended sculpture and

installation and performance art and I think it was about the juxtaposition of living simply in a simple environment against the sort of millennials that go to these festivals and how they sort of navigate their way through life is really interesting.

Some of the other work that we've done outside of our 3-year program, over the year we put in over \$100,000 into various presentations at festival. Craig Walsh curates, you know, a myriad of ideas. He challenges us all the time to push the boundaries at festival. We had our inflatable resting-bitch-face Kanye which is up in the top, which we loved. We got a lot of criticism that we were criticising depression through Kanye, so we decided to call him Happy Kanye rather than Sad Kanye. For instance, the people that made that installation, I was overseas at another festival and I liked they had a Lionel Richie inflatable head who was on a phone and you could get inside Lionel's head and you could call him up and someone could answer the phone and talk to you. And I thought, wow, I really want that at Splendour in the Grass, who are these people? So I tracked them down at the festival and we had Lionel Richie's head about there's years ago, good job satisfaction for me! But he - they've continued every year to do installations with us and they're based in Barcelona. So, you know, they're the kind of the - I guess the privileges I get with my job is I get to go to other shows, see what they're doing and invite them and Craig has been fantastic at that, at the same time making sure we're supporting local artists.

We worked with Andy Forbes and his team who lived in the Byron area for 16 years, I think they've actually been on Splendour. They're provocative, they're challenging - they challenge me, they challenge Craig as well. But their quality of work is fantastic and I think that's what is so exciting about living in an area like the Northern Rivers is the sort of standard of work that's coming out.

They ended up actually taking over the barn that we had built this year after Bennett Miller's program wrapped and did Pickles Funeral Parlour. Sometimes I can't quite look at what they're doing because I sort of have - I'm touring people around the festival and I think we don't want to go in there because I'm sure it's probably not quite what we should be doing at the event or maybe we should. I don't know. I think that's what's so interesting being an art producer is challenging people that are at the show and that's what we sort of try and do through our presentations.

What have we got here? The Tipi Forest is another way that we try and engage people. We've been working with Dee on the Tipi Forest. The work that he does to present that area astounds me. He engages lots of local artists, the visual installations, the experience, it's very Northern Rivers again. It's just incredible.

Splendour in the Craft came from - which is another area of our festival which came from a woman who was my assistant and our publicist from the event they craft on the side so I thought, let's craft at the show. So they've turned an area of the festival into a sort of a day-time crafting centre, which is, you know, there are queues out the door. I don't know why people really want to craft when they go to a music festival, but it seems to be popular.

And then we have Art Camp, where we engage a number of art students and there are various things that we need to produce for a festival, whether it's jazzing a fence line or making our signage look more interesting, or doing little sort of postcards around the site for people to get

photos with. So we have a program that we put people through there and that's run by a chap called Paul McNeil who used to work with the Beastie Boys, and with Mambo as well.

One of our sort of more recent collaborations has been with Samsung. It's interesting, I'd always been very averse, I think, to sponsorship and how to integrate sponsorship into a festival with credibility. It's a difficult task and I think we're lucky enough to work with a very inspired sponsorship company who understand that we need to present in a way that is credible to our audience. We don't want to see - we want to limit the amount of signage. We want to, I guess - I guess we don't want to look like we're selling to people at the same time using their money to create something that is a valuable experience to people is what we're trying to do.

So we did this year created a virtual reality space with a Sydney artist called Brooklyn Wheeler. He had a painting called 'Cloud Runner'. He does a lot of paintings that are of clouds and mountains. And what they did is they took his painting discipline, they turned it into a video, a 3D video that you could sit in a space with some, I guess, goggles on and move through his artwork. It was incredible and it's a really - and Samsung, you know, they're a telephone, mobile phone, I'm not quite sure what the relevance is, but I was more than happy to kind of take their money to make - you know, to showcase Brooklyn's work and also how that can evolve from what he was doing in his day-to-day world.

SPEAKER:

Jess, that's 15 minutes.

JESSICA DUCROU:

I think that is - we're probably just getting to the end. I think the - the overall experience of Splendour, though, for me has been while people are coming to see the music, I feel that, through my - through my job if I can inspire and challenge and give them an experience at the festival, perhaps that they might not have in real life, then I, you know, feel I get great job satisfaction and I'm lucky enough to work with some incredibly talented people that contribute so much to this process.

WESLEY ENOCH:

It's great listening to that, also the idea of public accountability, the idea that you can't just take a sponsor's money and promote them, because the audience doesn't want that. You have to keep true to what the audience expects and the idea of not to have one experience - like the music festival let's have a range of things that stimulate the audience at different times. They can go in and out of the key things in that way. It's interesting that conversation you had about public funding, too, how public funding could start you off in a certain direction but then going, well, to be independent of public funding after a while. Is that a big issue?

JESSICA DUCROU:

Yes, and the public funding is fantastic but it has its limitations about what we can do with the festival and there are various KPIs that they needed to give us the fund money in the first place and sometimes that doesn't work as well as it could when you have the independence to spend the money the way you want to.

WESLEY ENOCH:

We have that experience with, where you're dealing with local council, you are dealing with what

they think is good or bad or what their cousin or child can do better than what you can. There are often these attitudes that comes with arts funding. Edwina, coming to you, do you get public funding?

EDWINA JOHNSON:

We do get public funding, but to the envy of other writers' festivals, the vast majority of our funding comes from ticket sales and then we have some corporate sponsorship and about 18% of our funding is public funds, we're very grateful for that funding but we're also quite, as I say, I have had other writers' directors saying they are envious of the tickets. But we are an outside festival. We had a bad weather event a couple of years ago and that impacts on ticket sales for the following year. We get there eventually but we age a lot in the process.

So I was just reflecting, listening to Jess, when I worked in book publishing, my favourite part of working in book... not many things I love but one of my favourite parts was going to the writers' festivals around the country to see this group of writers to come together and to discuss all manner of ideas that made us laugh and cry and inspired us and galvanised us. I thought, I love that. So managed to transition to working with festivals and the Sydney Writers' Festival and the Shakespeare and Company festival in Paris was wonderful. So when I was offered the opportunity four years ago to move up to my favourite holiday destination, where my favourite sister and favourite cousin live, it wasn't hard to say yes and to have such a wealth of festivals to attend throughout the year. You know, Jess's festivals, the (unknown term) music fellow, the blues festival you don't have to go very far. But for those of you in the audience who haven't been to the writers' festival before, I just want to give you a bit of an overview of the festival and then talk about in more detail about some of our creative partnerships.

So, Byron Writers' Festival is Australia's largest regional celebration of storytelling, literature and ideas and the festival was established 22 years ago as a not-for-profit member organisation.

We present a year-round program of workshops and events as well as the annual three-day festival, and so for the purposes of today's panel, that's what I will be focusing on. It's held in the first weekend of August each year.

So the festival line-up includes approximately 140 predominantly Australian writers and thinkers. Over the years, those writers and thinkers have included Helen Garner, Bruce Pascoe, Julia Gillard, Wesley has attended, Magda Szubanski. The 2017 festival was a big hit with authors and patrons alike. We had 117 on-site festival session, 20 offsite events, 14 workshops, six primary school events, more flooding, as well as a day of programming for secondary schools.

In addition, the Writers' Festival for the past few years has taken the Byron Writers' Festival road trip on tour before the festival. So we take three authors in a van to three regional towns and they have a great time, and people fight to get on that tour. So we love extending the reach of the festival, because we realise not everyone can come to Byron for the festival. We also raise more than \$8,000 for our festival charity, which is the Indigenous literacy foundation, who do really wonderful work. So we love having that focus for the festival as well. Festival Saturday sold out for the third year in a row and book sales reached a an all-time high of \$190,000. We love our schools program and more than 3,000 children attended the program, including 350 children this year from flood-affected schools who attended for free, thanks to the generosity of donation from festival ticket purchases.

The festival's primary school days is about connecting young students with Australia's best loved authors including people like Jackie French, Lee Hobbs, Mem Fox, Terry Denton, Tristan Bancks and Sally Rippin. So it's - we know that reading is a pathway to literacy and the interactive sessions we offer are a really powerful way of engaging and encouraging reluctantly... I have parents tell me constantly about how their child loved the attending the sessions. There is a huge range of genres and topics. It provides this opportunity very cost-effectively ensuring accessibility and inclusion, which really matters in regional areas where there are fewer opportunities for students to engage with cultural activities.

The artistic vision of the festival is formed in the power of literature in shaping our lives. We saw that yesterday in the panel here with Rhoda and Kirk and Karla and Sharni when they read that poem at the end and they were all in tears and we were in tears and the audience too, it has such a strong capacity to move us. So we're really passionate about the importance of stories, ideas and debate in influencing our culture and this we feel is represented by our tag line, 'where stories take you'. So it's about coming on a journey with us.

We like to describe the festival as returning the story tell to the tribe and the philosopher to the town square, and in January this year I travelled to India as part of the Australia Council's annual India literature exploratory to attend various writers' festivals, including the Jaipur festival, which is a crowded and passionate gathering. One of the founder has described it as being like a supercharged university, which I think is an apt description of a festival because it curates across a range of topics. And one festivalgoer last year told me she felt she had learnt more in one day at the festival than in her entire secondary schooling, which doesn't reflect well on her high school, but it gives an idea of what can be achieved.

We have had people declare books to become their own personal bible. Festivals are about bringing people together and the people often tell me the festivals resonate in their minds for weeks and they take the conversations out into their communities so the ideas continue to spread.

The festival has an estimated \$3.8 million indirectly to the Northern Rivers of NSW and it's a primary source of income for our organisation. The festival is made up of 54% of people from outside the region. It attracts healthy numbers of newcomers each year so we had 30% of people who attended for the first time this year, which was up from 25% the year before. And as I have already referenced, unlike our city-based counterparts, the Byron Writers' Festival receives very little public funding, at approximately 18% of public revenue, and the rest is self-generated. At the core of our festival, and as we have discussed, the focus of Artstate today, are successful creative partnerships across a range of organisations. Whilst it's impossible to cover all of them, following a broad sweep to give you an idea, our team work year-round. Remember, we're not-for-profit. We have several types of partnerships that are critical to helping us with what we do.

A one-day workshop for authors and content creators who want their work to be noticed. Another is the Tweed Regional Gallery to create a body of work inspired by the region. The resulting exhibition was launched at their gallery during our festival and listed as a feature event in our program and then Josh participated in various sessions across the main festival too and his book 'Surrender' was one of the bibles that people referred to, having discovered him at the

festival.

Collaborations take other forms as well such as with the (unknown term) music festival, who generously share their resources with us year on year. Outside the region, we collaborate with major writers' festivals across the country. Arts organisations including Brisbane Powerhouse, Sydney Opera House, National Library of Australia, Red Room Poetry and the (unknown term) to name a few. I maintain close links with most of the directors of writers' festivals around the country. And notably we continue to collaborate, particularly in sharing international offers with our colleagues at Bendigo in Victoria and Newcastle Writers' Festivals. Both of whom face similar challenges to us at Byron. So within the cultural partners there are also publishers who clearly significantly contribute to shaping the program, providing us access to a lot of their writers from year to year and provide opportunities for author events throughout the year.

The next category we've traditionally called sponsors, either cash in-kind, such as Southern Cross University and Elements of Byron, who host the festival in their beautiful grounds and I will talk more about this in a minute. Media partners such as ABC North Coast, the Saturday Paper and the Byron Shire Council, and these partnerships are vital to the success of promoting the festival, given we have zero markets.

And lastly, philanthropic donors. So creative partnerships help us to enhance the festival experience for our writers and audiences. For example, we have partnerships with (unknown term) who all contribute to making towards a stylish and comfortable green room for our writers, which really pays dividends when they go on stage happy. Our festival audience benefits from partnerships with organisations such as Brookfarm, who have a sumptuous breakfast bar on site. And we really do find that these creative partnerships make a big difference to the overall experience of the festival. Writers talk about it in the green room and at other festivals.

So not only do these partnerships help us stay financially sustainable, they also bring fresh ideas, perspectives and audiences to what we do. In the last two or three years we have had to change our approach to managing partnerships, especially sponsorships. Historically, sponsorships are handled by a contractor who would start in April and finish in August straight after the festival. To quote a highly successful Melbourne fundraiser who offered us some advice, this led to a sense of sponsors to think they had had a one-night stand with the festival, making it difficult to maintain a long-term relationship.

We have decided to invest in a permanent partnership manager, who brought a more permanent time to help this area. And she's done a wonderful job. We saw a 30% increase in cash sponsorship in the first year and noticed a marked improvement in partner relationships having that year-round contact. Indeed, we have changed our language around sponsorships, which we now call partnerships, and we always find our best partnerships which are those which are truly a two-way street. Southern Cross University is our longest standing partner. They enjoy high profile branding opportunities such as naming rights to a main stage, but the partnership goes much deeper than that. That they have a student reporting team, you can see them here. Students from the Bachelor of Digital Media and Communications who report from the front line of the festival over the day three days. They post to the blog and these are shared on social media across the weekend. This gives students a sense of what's required in real journalism practice, but it provides us with incredible content for our digital channels.

This kind of symbiotic relationship is what we strive for and is what is expected from our partners, and rightly so. We're finding that some partners want to extend festival partnerships to year-round activities and just last month we co-hosted an event with Southern Cross University, the annual Greta Bird Lecture, which was a great success. Having said this, as Jess and Wesley have touched on, we do sometimes wrestle with the invisible line between partnership and curial integrity. When partnerships don't last long sometimes, and overpromising and underdelivering is a big no-no and that's a sure way to burn a relationship quickly.

WESLEY ENOCH:

That's 15 minutes.

EDWINA JOHNSON:

Wesley said, "I'm going to tell you when it's 15 minutes," and I said, "There's no way I will get to 15 minutes!" I will quickly touch on some of the challenges in curating the program. So as I said, we focus on Australian writers, but we do like to have about 10% international authors there. But it's just very difficult for us to compete with the big city festivals. So all of them align their dates with another city festival to be able to offer an attractive overseas trip for a writer.

So Perth and Adelaide combine, or Melbourne and Brisbane, but we do manage to partner with some of these out-of-season events, and we have had some success in attracting international talent to the festival over years, including Jeanette Winterson, Tariq Ali, PJ O'Rourke and this year David George Haskell, who wrote 'The Songs of Trees'.

Finally, I just wanted to share what some of the participating writers say about the festival, it's on the screen now, and I wanted to read from Tex Perkins. He wrote to us after to say, "Byron Writers' Festival was the most enjoyable festival of any kind I've been to for a long, long time. This is a world-class event that I am now totally in love with."

And so, again just bringing it back to creative partnerships that we absolutely believe they're at the core of the success of our festival.

WESLEY ENOCH:

It's like 'partnerships' is slightly the wrong word. It's relationships as well.

EDWINA JOHNSON:

It is relationships.

WESLEY ENOCH:

The way you were talking about the relationship with the audience, but this notion that school, donors, ticket buyers they're coming together to support it

EDWINA JOHNSON:

And they're supporting each other. The way our audience wants school children of the region to be able to access that, one of our partners and accommodation partner now pays for a bunch of teachers in the region to come to the festival, because they want the teachers to be experiencing this so they can feed that back to the students at the schools here.

WESLEY ENOCH:

One of the things I enjoyed was taking the solitary experience into the community. This notion that reading is often solitary and writing is often a solitary experience.

EDWINA JOHNSON:

Yes.

WESLEY ENOCH:

Taking to it the community is quite powerful.

EDWINA JOHNSON:

It is, and writers often comment on that. This is where they come together as their community, too, which is why we place so much emphasis on having that green room space as beautiful and nurturing as possible because so much happens there. Stories and ideas come out of there that they take home with them and it really kind of gives them a sense of where they belong in the community.

WESLEY ENOCH:

Shaping those lives through ideas and stories really important. Chris, you do a lot of that work as well through that... You see that segue that happened there! That sense of going - shaping through story and shaping through relationships with a much longer traditional was well.

CHRIS SPENCER:

Thank you, Wes, that's what it's all about for us. Before I start, I'd like to acknowledge country as a visiting Aboriginal person from the Gumbaynggirr nation. I pay my respects to the traditional owners of this land where we meet today, the Bundjalung people, and their Elders past and present.

We started our festival back in 2010 and it's about showcasing the work that we do throughout the year with Aboriginal communities from the mid-north coast from Coffs Harbour south to Karuah. We're very fortunate that the Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance is owned by 10 local Aboriginal communities, and that gives us the opportunity to get first-hand real-time knowledge about the needs and desires of those particular communities.

Our focus is really on engaging with our Elders and giving the Elders the opportunity to then further engage with our young people, being our next generation. It's extremely important for Aboriginal people but mainstream Australia also that this knowledge and cultural custodianship is passed down from generation to generation.

So, yeah, as I said, back in 2010, we kicked off the festival. We've been working in community for around two or three years prior to that to build up some meaningful cultural content that represented not just the Gumbaynggirr nation but the four Aboriginal language groups or nations that we cover, being Gumbaynggirr, Dunghutti, Biripi and Worimi.

The very special thing about the Saltwater Freshwater festival is that it's an all-inclusive day. It's a free event that is about reconciliation in participation. So what we want to see is the encouragement of all people, not just Aboriginal people, but all people, coming together as other festivals do to celebrate and enjoy each other's company, but learning some new things along the way as we go.

The 2010 festival caught us a little bit by surprise. We had originally anticipated for maybe two or three thousand people to come along. In the end, 12,000 people turned up and we were quite shocked. We had sold out of food by 11:00 or 12:00. All around the venue was double and triple parked. It was phenomenal. So obviously we had to reconsider some of the - some of our misgivings in that initial stage. But then the response that we'd received we felt that it was important that we actually went into each of the language groups as well knowing that not all people were able to travel. So we ended up heading to Port Macquarie in Biripi country. From there, we went down to Taree, which is also Biripi country but on the border of the Worimi people, and then back to Kempsey in 2014. We've held a festival in Coffs Harbour in 2015 and, again, earlier this year unfortunately we weren't able to go ahead in 2016 due to insufficient funding and support. And it looks as though, unfortunately, we won't be going ahead in 2018 either for that particular reason.

However, in saying that, new opportunities arise and it gives us a better lead-in time to really thrash out our emerging Aboriginal talent from the mid-north coast to come and perform at our festival.

So, yeah, it's amazing how we're able to get so many people coming along and wanting to enjoy Aboriginal culture. But that wasn't an idle decision that was made in terms of what we wanted to achieve. We were actually recognising some shifting in thinking and also new generations coming through that had an expressed interest in Aboriginal culture. So we seized that opportunity.

So, we like to showcase all the richness of contemporary and traditional cultural practices from our communities, and we have people from all ages and all backgrounds. Another important thing that we do through the year is that we provide our performers or our artists with the opportunity to further their business development through Saltwater Freshwater Arts by providing a whole range of personal and professional development workshops and forums and seminars for them.

So, again, I did mention it earlier but it's very important for us through the consultation that we take throughout all of our life, essentially as Aboriginal people, we're always learning and taking guidance from our Elders. They're our custodians, the ones that give us the permission to share all of this information with the wider public, and without their support we wouldn't be in a position that we are. So I'm very thankful to all of the Elders who are engaged with Saltwater Freshwater and provide us with those opportunities.

The other thing is they take a lot of our children on culture camps and workshop camps and this is the opportunities where the intergenerational knowledge transfer occurs and the Elders are also giving our young people guidance with the way that they are able to portray themselves, but the knowledge that they receive, how they can express that, in the form of their artistic expression.

We believe our culture is our art and everything to do with Aboriginal Australia has some inkling with our culture, therefore it's always part of our art system.

Yeah, so the children, they are led by professional dance choreographers, for example, and

they come up with their own reflective dances in consultation with the Elders group or the local Elders of the area. And they put together a contemporary and traditional dance that tells a story or a songline of the nation that we're representing or showcasing at the festival. It's through this interaction that our kids are really starting to thrive and get a real thirst for who they are, so their identity is being realised. They're learning language across the way from their respective nation and obviously as I've said many times, engaging with Elders.

So it's very important that we keep the festival open to everybody, and for this reason we have it as a free event. We do invite people to make a gold coin donation, if they like but we understand that not everybody can afford that, particularly us, blackfellas. Yeah, we don't always have those opportunities, unfortunately.

But the festival costs are essentially covered through a lot of sponsorship, partly government funding and some sales of Saltwater Freshwater merchandise. Some of the questions that I'm often asked about why we do what we do on Australia Day in particular, to the majority of Aboriginal Australians it's always going to be Invasion Day or Survival Day. However, we worked with the Elders to ensure that we weren't going to see necessarily any more negativity around Australia Day towards Aboriginal people. We wanted to send some positive messages and, hence, the festival was born.

It was strange sort of not knowing how it was all going to happen or how it was all going to come together, but we had a very dynamic team back in the early days. The Saltwater Freshwater Arts Alliance was founded by a lady, the name of Alison Page. She is a very well-known Aboriginal designer and has worked in architecture and those sorts of things, but her design background gave us the way forward, so to speak, with getting a whole heap of other Aboriginal people to come together and showcase their talent, get it out there and we have so many talented Aboriginal people it's unbelievable.

The other part of that was as east coast Aboriginal people we were tired of hearing that Aboriginal experiences only happen in Arnhem Land, the Kimberley, or the NT, the desert, those sorts of places, where in fact it's everywhere. You've just got to know where to look.

So the continuous feedback that we get and you may have seen some of the quotes through the PowerPoint presentation, but, yeah, a lot of the feedback that we get, particularly from non-Aboriginal Australians, is that this is fantastic opportunity for them to get an understanding and some better knowledge around Aboriginal Australia and what we do on a daily basis, as Aboriginal people. And how our continued connection to country is still there. It may be an intangible type of situation that you can't see, but us as Aboriginal people we feel, we live it, we breathe it every single day.

The other thing that I just wanted to touch on was a couple of the little stats that we have around our festival, and we've been able to ascertain that 45% of our audience actually travels to our festival from other areas outside of our region. We only have a 25% uptake of Aboriginal people attending. 75% of the people attending are non-Aboriginal. We have anywhere up to 40 acts, workshops and activities across a nine-hour program. We have around 190 Aboriginal performers, artists or facilitators, volunteers are extremely important and critical to the success of any event. I'm sure Artstate is no different. And we're thankful that we get anywhere up to 80 to 100 volunteers and another 35 events crew and staff.

The other unique part with our festival is, I mentioned earlier about reconciliation. We purposely look to link and collaborate with our local government who are responsible for the Australia Day ceremony awards and citizenships. And for this particular reason we have collaborated a joint initiative where the ceremonies that take place transpire prior to our festival kicking off in the same location on the same stage. It gives our Elders the opportunity to welcome the new arrivals.

In particular, a lot of the new arrivals come from a cultural background so they are extremely appreciative of the Elders going out of their way to welcome them to country with a smoking ceremony, and everyone is encouraged to come along and participate in the day at our festival. We have a whole range of different markets as well as food stalls, but we only open our market stalls to Aboriginal businesses. Aboriginal people who are trying to make a go of it in life trying to make a head start, they're the ones encouraged to come along and sell their paintings, their crafts, their wares, whatever it may be that they've got on sale.

It's busy in Saltwater Freshwater land. We always have something to do and to learn and we're always on a continual journey. Thank you.

(Applause)

WESLEY ENOCH:

Chris, that whole notion of being free is being a very important factor for you. Do you ever see in the future, especially when you're talking about not being able to get the resources every year to put the festival on, do you imagine that you will look at charging into the future, or is being free the most important part?

CHRIS SPENCER:

We actually did try to charge this year, and it didn't work quite as well as we hoped.

WESLEY ENOCH:

Why?

CHRIS SPENCER:

We were charging \$5 entry and \$10 for a family up to eight. We were still able to attract around 7,000 people but, yeah, it was - it wasn't quite the model that we hoped it would be. So we're revisiting that at the moment and seeing what we can come up with. I believe the collaborations and the partnerships are critical. That's where a lot of the sponsorship-type of money can come from, as Edwina and Jess alluded to with their festivals as well.

WESLEY ENOCH:

I think that whole idea of the buy-in of each of those partners that say, "Yes, we believe in what you're doing in the way you're doing," as opposed to, "We want you to do it on our terms." Jess, you were talking about that with the sponsors, saying it had to be done on your terms, on Splendour in the Grass's terms, or it won't work. What are the repercussions of those partnerships being uneven, do you think?

JESSICA DUCROU:

I mean, I guess it depends how we as producers want our - the festival experience to be

portrayed. I am a fierce protector with our partnerships. I think they see the value in it and I think they understand that, you know, we're lucky enough to charge substantial ticket prices and have the show sold out in under an hour, as it's done for over 15 years. Because I think we're very, very... We've been likened to North Korea with how protective we are over our event, which would make me Kim Jong-un, which I'm slightly concerned about! But I think because we are so fierce with our message and our experience, the sponsors or the partners see the value in that because it gives them more currency as well.

But there's an art to doing that and sometimes we do have to accept some terms that we probably wouldn't like to, but I guess it's a negotiation.

WESLEY ENOCH:

The key is to make sure that you can be very articulate about your organisation's vision so they can understand what they're getting into as well. Edwina, you would agree with that sense - how do you articulate to the partners the relationship that you want?

EDWINA JOHNSON:

Our partnership manager makes it very clear, and this has been the case throughout the history of the festival, that the program stands alone. You know, you're not buying into the program, but however we're happy to talk about creative ways of them being represented on the festival site.

So for example, we have an aged care provider the region as one of our major partners of the last few years, and they will do writing competitions. They put up a wall in front of their marquee that had their name on it and everyone was encouraged to come up and write "As I age..." and it was filled in the first couple of hours of the festival. So just making sure that it's a way that's appropriate to be represented on-site.

But it is interesting, because I think particularly in this region, we have to be extremely careful about who we have partnerships with. It just - I mean, we know examples and they were discussed yesterday from (unknown term) when your participants and audience don't like where the money is coming from, they will let you know and tell you. So we are very careful about that. Again, there was a meeting at (unknown term) festival with the festival directors and some of them were saying we will take money from everyone and I was like, there is no way we could do that.

CHRIS SPENCER:

And that's completely different for us. See, we've been offered quite substantial amounts of money from breweries, for example. But it doesn't sit well with our values as an organisation. For too long, our people have been dying from alcohol abuse and for us to potentially take some sponsorship dollars from them would be unethical and against our moral values. Whereas opposed to having someone like Reconciliation Australia come on and sponsor a yarn-up session, a couple of sessions in a yarn-up tent where we give non-Aboriginal people an opportunity to come and sit down for an hour and just a Q&A, question and answer.

WESLEY ENOCH:

We are all in search of clean money.

How to find it and then how to make sure they don't ask too much of us. We are going to wrap

up there. There are so many ideas to come through but this idea of festivals of sites of partnerships with audiences, artists and stake holders and people who participating in allowing the funding of things to happen. Could you please thank the panel, Chris, Jessica and Edwina. They're fantastic ideas, and just make sure that you use festivals to get your ideas out there, because I think festivals are there to be used as much to be attended. Thank you very much.

ELIZABETH ROGERS:

Thank you. I'd like to also add my thanks to the panel and coming to Lismore, contributing on this exciting topic of festivals. I love festivals obviously, and enjoy your morning tea. Thank you all.

(Tea break)

ELIZABETH ROGERS:

Welcome back. I hope everybody is now full of caffeine and refreshed to keep going for the final haul of Artstate. This is our final plenary session, and we're going to be looking at cross-sector partnerships. Programs and projects where the arts delivers great outcomes for other sectors such as education, health, science, environment and so on.

Our next keynote, all the way from Kalamazoo in Michigan in the regional United States, is going to talk to us about his innovative arts and education program. Nick Mahmat is the aesthetic education program coordinator for Kalamazoo RESA Education for the Arts program.

Trained in Lincoln Center Education's model of aesthetic education in 2002, he has worked as an aesthetic education practitioner with students of all ages for over 10 years.

That is a really interesting terminology. I am interested to find out what an aesthetic education practitioner does. In his current role, he works with over 30 professional teaching artists and more than 300 classroom educators, organising and overseeing the creation of education experiences based around the professional, performing and visual works of art. Through this work, Nick cultivates and supports long-standing partnerships between schools and the professional arts community.

Additionally, he has worked with Education for the Arts and Lincoln Center Education, to design and facilitate many professional development workshops for educators, school administrators, arts specialists, and artists throughout the United States and in Adelaide, in South Australia.

Please give a big, warm welcome to our final keynote, Mr Nick Mahmat.

NICK MAHMAT:

Good morning and thank you, Elizabeth.

I would like to start I saying how thrilled I am to be here with you today and how honoured I feel to be part of this inaugural Artstate and how welcomed I have felt by the community here. I want to also thank and acknowledge Stephen Champion for thinking of me for this opportunity.

My name is Nick Mahmat and I'm from Kalamazoo, Michigan, in the United States. I would wager that most of you have not heard of Kalamazoo. That is fine and I'm not at all offended,

because the response in the United States is that people are shocked to find out we are a real town at all, that we are not just something that exists in songs because it is a unique-sounding name that it is fun to rhyme things with.

Yes, Kalamazoo is a real place with the unique sounding name. But I would argue it is a good name because there are some unique things that are happening there that are not happening in other places in Michigan or our country.

I want to talk to you today about one of the unique collaborations happening in Kalamazoo, Education for the Arts. Our focus is on arts education and we have been doing that in Kalamazoo for more than 20 years. It is quite well-established in our community.

I would like to share a bit about what we do and how we got started and the challenges we have encountered along the way.

I should probably say little bit more about Kalamazoo. We are small regional mid-sized town. The city of Kalamazoo is about 75,000 individuals. And the larger region that surrounds it, Kalamazoo County, 260,000 people. So it is not a major metropolitan city by any means.

That being said, Kalamazoo has always been very rich in arts and culture. We have three universities with strong arts education and arts programs in music, dance, theatre, visual arts and design.

We also have strong museums and a range of theatres, both community theatres – one of which was just ranked the third best in the country – as well as equity-level performing houses and a range of presenting houses bringing in artworks from all over the world.

I say that not just to brag about what is happening in Kalamazoo, it was an important factor in shaping how Education for the Arts was formed.

In the mid-1990s, there were a series of conversations on a committee level involving art leaders and cultural institutions and our local school districts and the leaders of those schools. To summarise the conversations, they centred around the following ideas.

There was a recognition of the rich array of arts that was occurring in the community that also an acknowledgement that while the art scene was thriving, it was really only being accessed and engaged with by a small portion of the community. I'm sure this is something many of you can relate to.

To that note, it was also noted that schools in particular were not really engaging with the resources that existed in the arts community.

That is not to say that nothing was happening. A lot of these arts educations had education departments and were doing things with schools, outreach, getting schools to come to their events, but it was piecemeal, one-off events. It was agreed by all those parties that it could be stronger, deeper, more holistic.

And there was a major desire for all of those efforts to be more coordinated.

Education for the Arts was born out of this and in response to the thinking and challenges that were coming up. Because of that, we function in a specific way. We were created with the following mission. It is kind of a long one, so bear with me. It was created to enhance arts education for all kindergarten through 12th grade students in Kalamazoo County by making dance, literary arts, media arts, music, drama and essential parts of communication between schools and the rich array of arts institutions.

We are talking about a standalone organisation whose sole purpose was there to enhance arts education that was occurring in schools. A coordinated effort, no longer this piecemeal approach. But that it was also owing to further arts education specifically through partnerships between the schools and these arts organisations. You have Education for the Arts making the connections happen between the schools and arts organisations.

That was a pretty big task for us because anyone who has tried to work with schools knows that they present a huge range of challenges in terms of getting into the schools and making those partnerships. And we were tasked with doing it on a countywide level.

The main reason that this was a feasible idea to look at was there was already an educational system in place that supported that thinking. I need to give you a bit more structural information that is kind of boring but it is important.

In the state of Michigan, we have regional education service agencies. It is not a common concept in the United States, only a few states have them. These RESAs are government agencies organised at a countywide level. They are there to provide local school districts with additional support and services. They tend to provide things like accounting, auditing, curriculum support, career and technical education.

In Kalamazoo County, we have nine local school districts that exist within that county, all of which have their own buildings and student population. On top of these districts is the regional educational service agencies. They provide resources to them.

So when we were looking at how we could provide a coordinated effort for regional arts education, we looked to the RESA because it was an argument for providing arts to the school district. It was something that the schools were familiar with and it got a foot in the door.

It became really crucial for us. So when we instituted this, we became the arts arm of the RESA. Kalamazoo remains the only one that is doing art on a countywide level.

The work has evolved over 20 years. Also in terms of the type of programming that we offer. When we first started, we started with high school classes which we called the excellence in the arts program. We started working with schools at the start of this to find out what they were already doing. As you move around the world, education systems work quite differently.

In the state of Michigan, local school districts were providing a certain amount of arts education to their schools. Elementary school students, school district had dedicated visual arts specialists, dedicated music specialists, that were providing education. As they got into high school, schools were providing more specialised arts courses. Students tended to elect the

courses, but they were getting more intensive instruction.

There was work that was happening on art education provided by the local school districts. But we wanted to know, what did that look like, what was happening and how could we further enhance and supported?

When we started the conversations, we wanted to know what we were offering but also what you weren't and why not. A lot of the courses were specialist and advance, and the students were so few that they couldn't justify the resources. We then took the information from them and we went to our other partners and started to look for what resources existed in our community that could also help support these desires. From that we developed a series of specialised high school arts courses.

These high school art courses, they take place in the same way that any other high school class takes place. The students can sign up to attend these courses. They go to these classes as part of their school day and receive credits needed for graduation. These classes took place at various locations throughout Kalamazoo County at professional arts practices.

Say if a student was taking part in a playwriting course. Their instructors are working professional playwrights and they work with film directors as well. They also happen to be certified high school educators. We were fortunate in that. Or if they didn't have that, we paired them with an educator. That meant that the credits were all accountable. There was accountability.

The main idea of the high school programs with the idea of taking the students out of their schools, putting them into professional facilities, working with professional equipment and working with professionals in the art industry.

They were intense studio courses, they went every day for the whole school year, and they were pushing students both creatively as well as towards mastery. Students were furthering their arts education while at the same time learning about the organisations that exist in their own backyard and establishing connections to several arts professionals.

Because the program was also countywide, it had students from a range of different school districts they would normally never see working together. You have really diverse student bodies working together and building a network of youth artists from around our region. That became a really interesting dynamic as well.

In addition to the high school programs, we also started developing kindergarten arts programs, which were designed to provide for kindergarten to eighth grade students. This is when the partner and got really interesting in terms of how we work with schools.

Obviously there were a range of different art programs that we have developed. Creative dance and creative drama residency programs, programs designed to work with special needs populations and special needs bodies. Programs that are designed to help students engage with works of art. Professional development opportunities for teachers. The whole range of different things that fell into this art school category. I won't go into everything today.

They all have different educational purposes and intent behind them, which then affect how the programs roll out in the school. That being said, there are some common features in mind in the high school models. The high school models were about taking the students out of the school and putting them into an authentic community. The younger program was about bringing the art community into schools.

Most of the programs function predominantly between teachers and trained professionals. We have scoured the communities for these people, we are working with the best and brightest, and we are providing an educational training on top of that.

The teaching artists are going into a variety of schools and working alongside classroom teachers, not just specialist, but general education teachers.

This asks so much more from schools in terms of a partnership. When you think about a high school partnership, when a student is leaving school and graduating, that's great for the student, but the school doesn't have to do much other than allow the student to do it. Because we were coming into the schools and working alongside the teachers, we had much more of an impact on the culture of the school, it had much more of an impact on the teachers and educators we were working with because they were witnessing the change that was happening in their students. They were also, in some programs, they were delivering instruction with the teachers. It was being taught.

Depending on the program, they were developing curriculum with the teacher as well. They were planning together. There was an inherent professional development in there.

I think the other thing is that this addressed one challenges we face when we first started teaching in schools. When we talked with teachers, one the challenges that would come up repeatedly was that teachers said they didn't feel, they recognise that the arts are important, but they didn't feel armed or capable or knowledgeable of how to work with it within their classroom. By having a teaching artist come in, it took some of the pressure off them. They felt like there was an art expert there, so if they didn't know, there was someone in the room that could help support them.

It also, because they were witnessing somebody who was from the arts field and knew how to really unpack the learning that comes from studying a work of art, it really opened their eyes up to things they really didn't think they could do, things they weren't aware of, because they can engage with it.

Aside from teaching artists coming in, almost all of them involve attendance at a professional workshop. Students are working with these professional artists in the communities, but they are also connecting with the arts organisations in their communities, from an early age, they are doing these programs from kindergarten. Some of them are doing them every single year up until their eighth grade year.

Over the course of the year, you get a really knowledgeable student body about what are the resources in the community.

I want to highlight one programs, because I think it is one strongest models that we have. It is

also the program that started expanding our work outside of Kalamazoo County. That is the aesthetic education program.

The focus of the aesthetic education program from Lincoln Center Education is to alter the skills to deeply and meaningfully engage with a work of art. Some people might say that it is about developing expert art audiences. This started in the 1970s and it came about, I have a short story to show you that kind of explains where this thinking came from.

Mark Schubert, the education director in the '70s, was one day at a student performance where students were coming to see the New York Philharmonic. Thousands of kids are running out of the theatre to go back to their buses, he is feeling very proud, thinking about how he has impacted their lives, until he hears a conversation between a student and a teacher.

The teacher says, "What did you think of the concert?" The student said, "Meh." Then the student asked the teacher what they thought and they also said "Meh."

So we're talking about some of the best musicians in the world. But it got him thinking. The moment got him thinking that arts exposure is great and it is important to expose young people to the arts, but I think we're being naive by saying that all you have to do to cultivate, for a person to have a meaningful, engaged experience with a work of art, that all you have to do is put the two in the same room.

Engagement does require a certain set of skills and we could be doing more to further develop the capacity in individuals. Maxine Greene is an educator at a teachers' college, she really worked hard to shape this program. She would often describe aesthetic education as, "We are trying to develop the skills in individuals that know what is there to be noticed."

Another way that she differentiated aesthetic education, she wasn't to say that one is more important than the other, because we know that they are very much links, but what she was acknowledging is that in the United States at the very least, the majority of art education programming that was occurring was very much focused on the expressive side of art. There was not really much attention paid at all to the perceiving of it, but how we engage with the work of art. The specialised attention towards that was in response to creating a more comprehensive arts education program as a whole.

So what does that look like in a school? In Kalamazoo, schools that are involved in the aesthetic education program, they commit to studying two or three professional works of art during the career. Most of them choose to do three. It is pretty rare that they do two. Then they collaboratively develop the aesthetic education program. They do a blend of art making and students learning the artistic concepts that make up the ideas they will later see.

When they see the art, there is an 'aha' moment. And students have also developed a language in which to talk about these concerts. So when they talk about the performance, they can talk about it afterwards and think critically and analyse the choices, the outcome and effect and what personal meaning they are getting out of it.

For each of these works of art students study, there are eight workshops around this work of art. When you think about 2-3 works of art to view, you are looking at 16-24 hours of focus just on

studying this work of art.

It also required us to have an annual repertoire of focused works of art. So we curated an annual season of visual and music works of art. The season will consist of 8-12 works of art and students will have the option of a dance-based or theatre-based work of visual arts and music that is available to them in both the fall and spring semester. So they have access to all of those.

What are some of the things we have noticed in our community since this has happened? First up, there is more obvious connection between the arts organisations and the schools. There is constant interaction. Students are going to the venues and artists are working with the schools.

A very quantifiable measure can be seen in the increased attendance by students of concerts and museums. If we just look at the students in the program, there is an average of about 4000 students involved in that program each year. Each of the students are going to see 2-3 works of art per year. An average of 12,000 student admissions to performances and museums that occur just in that one program alone.

And if you look at the whole of the Education for the Arts programs and the student admissions to the professional works of art, we will consistently average over 48,000 student admissions to performing arts and museums in the course of the year.

This is also a community that the K-12 student body (inaudible) so it is a good chunk of that percentage. What is impressive is we not only got that many students into the arts body, but the students were more knowledgeable about the arts because the one experience was tied to a larger educational approach that was expanded outside just the performance time and fit into things that were happening in their schools.

They are able to engage with these works of art on a deeper level because it is no longer a one-off experience. And our schools noticed this. They noticed the critical thinking and communication skills that are being developed in the programs transcend the arts and they see it other areas of their curriculum.

The programs have increased the number of shows that can be programmed in a season and artist and performances could come in that were previously not able to do, because they could have them in town for a longer stay, or because we're pooling resources, there are the finances to bring an urban dance company to a small regional town.

And it expanded the market for presenting houses, which opened up other funding options because they were not doing a youth program before. While our focus has always been on Kalamazoo County, another outcome of the work is it has led to many partnerships outside of our company as well. An example happened when Education for the Arts brought Patch Theatre to Kalamazoo.

Patch became very interested when they learned they were coming to present and there was a little community engagement before they even came to town. It was interesting to them, as they were also in Adelaide, on the other side of the world from us, exploring the questions of how we extend the performance we are doing into a larger community engaged exchange.

So the shared interest in this has led to several cultural exchanges between Patch and Education for the Arts and myself. It involved me going to Adelaide for a month and working with the artistic director, Naomi Edwards, to help on the envisioning of what an educational platform for Patch could look like.

It also allowed me the opportunity to work with many of the artists of Patch providing professional development, but also established a partnership with the Art Gallery of South Australia when I was there, doing official development with some of their visual arts staff.

It led to Naomi and Patch coming back to Kalamazoo a year later and it also led to Naomi conducting a Patch satellite workshop with some of our districts to support the devising of 'Can You Hear Colour?' which will premiere at the Adelaide Festival.

The work seems to lead to more opportunities.

We had to overcome some problems on how you partner with schools, and it became an important structure, looking for partnerships that already existed. One of the questions I get most often about the challenges deals with the idea of the financials, the cost. Where is the money coming from, is the question.

I won't lay out our financial structure for you today, but I want to talk about two things related to finance that I thought were interesting that we did over the years. One of those things, when we were first forming, you are trying to build money but also the knowledge in the community of who you are and what you do.

So one of the ways we decided to address both of these issues is we organised a community endowment campaign. The community can make charitable donations to an endowment fund which will then an interest which can be pulled annually to support Education for the Arts programs. This remains one of the funding sources that is most sustainable. And the interest that the endowment fund generates that we can pull from annually is still to this day one of our major sources of funding. It has afforded us an amazing amount of flexibility compared to the other public dollars we receive.

Something else we did that relates to funding and had a big impact on the quality of the program is when we first started the aesthetic education program, schools paid a per-student fee to participate.

After a few years of doing this, the fee started becoming a problem for schools and they couldn't afford it. We had all of these teachers who were very devoted to the practice and wanted to keep doing but the principals just didn't have the money.

So we thought about, how do we find the money, how do we find someone to sponsor this. Rather than just finding a donor and some grant money to subsidise that, we came up with a professional development plan where we would credit the teachers at the rate of \$15 per hour for coming to our professional development and the credits and over the year within be taken off the school's bill.

It became a really interesting solution to a financial problem that has also benefited the overall program. For those schools who didn't have the financial resources, it allowed them the mechanism for continuing to participate in the program and created a mechanism for ongoing training and instructional development and increased the number of professional development opportunities we conducted with our schools.

When we first started out, we were looking at about 54 teachers that we might work with in professional development and now we're working with almost 300 teachers a year.

The last I want to say about challenges is not so much about specific challenges, but more about the ideas of encountering challenges in partnerships. Sadly, it is not a very profound statement, but it is true. That is the fact that there will always be challenges and that you can't take them personally. And to not feel like it is your job to solve them all on your own.

When I first started, I felt like my job was to eliminate the challenges and problems that schools saw that got in the way of them participating in the arts. Which we all know, it is part of our jobs, right? And I felt like it was my job to swoop in and rescue them and take care of it before they realised there was a problem.

That is a dangerous habit to get into, and not just in the interests of self-care. It is not always good for yourself, but the reality is, it is worse for the partnership. Because when the challenges arise, it is rare it is ever solely on one of the parties to solve.

The reality is that all of those individuals need to be involved in the work of addressing that challenge and finding the solution together. That the true solutions come from the honest dialogue with all of those involved sharing ideas. So I think the most important lesson I've learned about partnering with schools and partnership is it is not about me solving the obstacles. It is about ongoing conversations with our collaborators, and in doing so to spend a little less time on the question of, "So, what do we do?" and more time on the questions of, "Where do we meet and what do we care about?" And let the 'what we are going to do' come out of those questions. Thank you.

(Applause)

ELIZABETH ROGERS:

Thank you so much, Nick. And a small token for you to take back to Michigan.

And you will be around later to be chatted to in the various parallel sessions this afternoon.

On to our next panel. Some of the most innovative cross sector partnerships have been developed in regional NSW by the Regional Arts Development Organisations that make up our regional network.

I have four of the directors from the network who have agreed, under some coercion, to share their progress in a session moderated by Arts Executive Director Peter Wood. Peter does not need a lot of introduction to the local people in the audience, but for those who have travelled, since taking up the role with Arts Northern Rivers, he has been delivering arts and creative industry projects across the region, working with the music, design and visual arts sectors in

particular.

A key project for Arts Northern Rivers has been the development and rollout of the North Rivers Creative brand through the development of a self-publishing portfolio platform as well as a program of empty space activations that take place across the region, interstate and eventually internationally.

In 2016, Peter managed a regional partnership project called If These Halls Could Talk. Focusing on a number of local community halls within his large region... I think you have five or six councils?

PETER WOOD:
Seven.

ELIZABETH ROGERS:
..and activating these much-loved spaces by renowned artistic teams, the project resonated with local, national and international audiences and generated media across the country. Please welcome Peter, and he will introduce his colleagues.

(Applause)

PETER WOOD:
I'm not going to quite introduce them just yet. I will introduce them just before they go into their presentations. This morning it is a panel made up of four Executive Directors who manage regional arts development organisations across NSW.

It comprises of 14 spread across the state and we are supported by a Sydney-based service organisation, Regional Arts NSW. We receive our core funding through Create NSW and our other stakeholders are the local governments that deserve it.

So we are looking at the cross-sector partnerships taking place in NSW. We are going to look at four case studies that my colleagues are going to present.

One of the attributes of executive directors is they can speak if even they have marbles in their mouth. I'm keeping them to a tight time limit of 10 minutes. And following the presentations, we will look at the partnerships in more detail and look at the complexities of managing the relationships and the benefits of establishing new partnerships within and outside the sector.

Our first presentation is going to be from Tracey Callinan. She is the executive director of Arts OutWest, covering 11 council areas in NSW Central West. Before joining Arts OutWest in 2009, Tracey worked in arts management in various roles, including working for Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Creative Partnerships at Arts Council England, and Future Music in Adelaide. She has also worked as a music educator in NSW, South Australia and the UK, which include writing and presenting teaching resources for Musica Viva in schools in South Australia.

She is finally in the dying part of a PhD, investigating creative industries and regional settings. In 2015-16 she was a member of the NSW Taskforce for Health and the Arts. And has presented at many arts conferences in Australia and in the UK.

Today she is going to be talking about those health and art projects.

TRACEY CALLINAN:

Thank you, Peter. I'm constantly presenting about arts and health. Our partnership with Lachlan Health Service was no simple thing to explain, so having been given about 10 minutes to talk, I have chosen a project that was really 35 projects in one. I'm not going to try to tell you all about them, that's why I have the rolling photos there. But I will tell you a bit about the work that we have done, and we will pull out some of the issues that are of interest.

I also chose this because I am a real believer in partnerships. It is a funny term, partnerships, what does it mean? It is really just about relationships. I am not a fan of the projects that are up and deliver something very quickly, it is all very nice, and two years down the track you have forgotten all about it. I am much more interested in ongoing relationships, and that is what we have got with Lachlan Health Service. We now take an approach where I say we only do projects if they are in partnership, because it is the best way of working.

Crossing a partnership is interesting. One of the ideas of a partnership is what you both bring to it. We were usually working with people very similar to us. But I think the best partnerships come from diversity. In our partnership with the health service, what we bring as an arts organisation is extremely different to what the health service brings.

I think the strength comes from the different skills that you have. It is also about the challenge. We have had to work to understand and respect each other's ways of working.

When I say it is a partnership with Lachlan Health Service, it was effectively a partnership with them and PwC, PricewaterhouseCoopers, who are managing the business side of it. They are the most important, the health service, because when the initial project finishes in three months' time, it has been two years in delivery, that is who we will have the ongoing partnership with.

In this project - this is the only tender we have ever had and so I can say that we have a 100% success rate - part of it was to design a consultation, deliver it, out of the development program at work and deliver the program of work. That's what we're now in the last stages of doing.

I would like to spend a moment saying why that consultation was so important. This is where levels of partnership become really interesting. While we have named the main partnerships, hospitals are such a big part of our communities. In this project was about connecting across all aspects of the community. Therefore we had to consult across all aspects of community.

In the consultation phase, a lot of the consultation led to direct involvement in the process. The health service covers two main towns, Parkes and Forbes. The two towns are very different. The councils were absolutely crucial. They supported it, that once it got into program, the councils have their own art collections, but councils have been loaning work from their collections to go into the hospital. That is an example of how the consultation led to practical outcomes.

We had to consult with Aboriginal groups, of course. That's not as easy as it sounds. A lot of our towns have divisions in them. In some of our towns, Aboriginal communities are represented by

different groups. People don't necessarily get along with each other. But we have to take a line of saying that we will consult with everybody and it will be equal and fair in listening and respecting each other.

Plus, they have a really active language group in Parkes, they teach the Wiradjuri language in school, so we needed them involved.

They had the yarn groups, the craft group, the painters, and they became involved in the project as well. Disability groups were consulted and out of some of these things, such as consulting with House with No Steps and the aged care community, we ended up with separate projects, because the partnerships developed. Was that a reminder that I don't have more time?

Mitchell Conservatorium became a partner as well. Eventually led on to the musicians in hospitals work that we did there. Schools were consulted, and that manifested itself in a program where a lot of children made work with the hospital.

Museums became really important because the heritage aspect of those towns needed to be respected, and indeed the heritage of the hospitals themselves.

These are all the multi-partners. Not partners on the same level as the health service, but partnerships on a different level.

Not only we were working with the health service, but we have all of the aspects of help. We needed to talk to the mental health people, the community help people, palliative care people, health, Council. When we're talking about cross-sector partnerships, this was fairly complicated.

Out of the consultation came the program. Before we do that, what developed from all that were six guiding principles. I think that has helped us to shape a program that then we have been able to be consistent and has enabled the community buy-in, because they know that they were listened to. The principles about what type of work they wanted, who they wanted the work to be by, where they wanted the work to go, a number of things like that. Now we can say this is a type of work that you wanted, and we have done it.

It has absolutely minimised the issues of feeling disenfranchised from any of these projects. Particularly when I say this is a community resource.

We have developed a whole lot of different projects for different reasons. It would have been so much easier in some ways, because health infrastructure gave us \$200,000, to work with the health service.

But we had to respect the consultation. As a result, the community remained engaged. It was worthwhile to do, and in doing it, we have been able to respect those things and still put the level of quality that we require in.

The good things I think are coming out of it, there is an ongoing relationship, there is a connection to community, the staff are really supportive of this project right across the hospital, and that is not always the case with art and health programs. It is not always what we thought we would do, but we have a program that has, I believe, really engage people. Thank you.

(Applause)

PETER WOOD:

Three minutes left. We will move straight onto our next presenter, who is Andrew Gray. Andrew is the executive director of South East Arts, which covers the Bega Valley, Eurobodalla and Snowy Monaro. Andrew has worked as a leader in cultural development at a national, regional and community level. His work in the national cultural institutions of the Australian War Memorial, Museum of Australian Democracy and the National Film and Sound Archive focused on engaging diverse audiences in Australia's cultural history and heritage.

As the regional arts development officer for South East Arts, Andrew has supported and developed the cultural life of the region, across a diverse range of art forms. This has included touring live performances, creative industries support for visual artists, strategic development for museums, commissioning theatre and music performances, and initiating a range of creative partnerships with a range of local, state and national organisations.

Andrew is now going to take us through this.

ANDREW GRAY:

Thank you. The partnership I'm going to look at is originally picking up on the theme of this morning, funnily enough. It is a festival. On 22 September next year we are going to host, work with our partners to host Giiyong Festival at Jigamy Farm, which is a Aboriginal keeping place off the coast.

In many ways, it will take its inspiration from the Saltwater Freshwater, the presentation from this morning, in that it includes dance, visual arts, we are working with projections, theatre writing, talks, presentations, a whole range and a whole day festival.

The partnership we are involving in this is with the local Aboriginal Land Council and Twofold Aboriginal Corporation. We met with them to work out how we could develop the site that has been developed there. They have a property called Jigamy Farm. The property has a cultural centre that was established about 10 or 11 years ago now, but for various reasons, it never had its final occupancy. One the key reasons it hasn't been able to meet its potential was that it did not have a turnoff off the highway for buses and cars to come in successfully. Roadworks are even more expensive than arts projects, which is amazing.

Luckily they were able to get some support and have them completed. They were saying, we're almost there, we're getting close and what we would like to do is work towards having a festival there in 2018 that in effect launches the site to the public, that activates the space, and they are keen to see it as an ongoing festival.

As Peter mentioned, we were successful in getting support through the regional partnership fund, which Create NSW provide. I think that is a fantastic funding round that they have created, getting a good chunk of money and a timeframe that can extend over two years.

I think for developing partnerships, it is really important, a partnership that we developed over the year or so, we were able to bring on other partners. It has also given is the time, space and

ability to leverage other financial and in-kind support.

Just a brief context... I forgot to press my slides, didn't I. There is an aerial shot of the shot at Jigamy Farm, on the shores of Pambula Lake, and it is a fantastic site. It's great because it is not within a town, people will have to drive there, but it enables us to manage the audience that come through a lot easier. Then there is the other side that people will not be able to just walk there, and we will have to think about providing transport.

That's another aerial shot of the keeping place building that I said, it was established for a while, but it has not really been used. It is on the side of the house, and a key part of this is the Elder Ossie Cruse, who has been a significant activist in many parts of Australia.

They are all long and narrow boundaries going up to the mountains, which reflects in a lot of ways the travelling paths that people use to move up and down between the two areas. More recently, the Bundian Way has been established. This is the 200km track that runs from Bilgalera to Targangal, Mount Kosciuszko.

They took on a good part of the track and kept a detailed diary. While the tracks have existed up and down the coast, the fact that he documented this one has enabled the researcher to in effect re-establish the path of the Bundian Way. There are a lot of resources going into developing that at the moment, and it is a track that people will be able to come and walk and go from the ocean up to the top. That is another driver for this festival, the development of this project.

We have been developing project in our region for many years now. Many times we work with individual artists, we don't have many Aboriginal or cultural groups. And we mainly focus on visual art, dance and music.

One example of those is recently, we have been working with a group called Grow the Music for three years.

The project of building the festival involves a range of development projects in the lead up to it. The first one we did in July this year was an Aboriginal writers' forum.

It was to give us experience working with our partners and also to just start putting Jigamy Farm on a map and get it recognised and get both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal visitors used to coming there.

The writers forum included writers such as Ali Cobby Eckermann, who won a significant poetry prize, Jan Thomas, and a presentation by an actor, Glen Shea, who has developed a fantastic storyteller game which explores Aboriginal culture in an interactive and interesting way.

And then in late October this year, we worked with Grow the Music and they did a residency at Wallaga Lake and then we brought them down to Eden. They presented one of their concerts with artists from local schools as well as musicians such as Robbie Bundle and Nooky and a collaboration with a visual artist to create some backdrops.

The project is moving into the next phase, which is a range of community engagement projects.

One of our challenges is that we get our Aboriginal audiences there. So we have worked on the principle that one of the best ways we can do that is to involve the younger generation of the original community. We have developed a partnership into our schools.

I mentioned Eden schools and we are also working with two other town schools to get students involved. And we are working with organisations such as Desert Pea Media, Erth Visual and Physical Theatre, as well as local artists and musicians to develop a range of artists to be part of the program who will be performing with some of the other artists and performers we will be bringing into the festival.

That gives us a scope of what we are looking to do that and we'll probably pick up on other things in Q&A, but just considering where we are in the project now and where we have to get to, there are a lot of challenges for us in managing this partnership, picking up on some of the comments Tracey made in terms of working with a range of Aboriginal communities across the area.

We are pleased that we have our two key Aboriginal partners in it, but to move beyond that and look to work across the region is going to be quite a challenge, I think.

PETER WOOD:

Thank you. Our next presenter is Jamie-Lea Hodges. Jamie-Lea Hodges is the Executive Director of Regional Arts Development Organisation Outback Arts, which is probably one of our bigger areas that covers Bourke, Cobar, Coonamble, Walgett and Warren.

Jamie-Lea completed her Bachelor of Art Education at the College of Fine Arts UNSW, with a major in sculpture and a minor in photography.

In 2009 she returned to her hometown to take on the role with Outback Arts, Jamie-Lea also maintains an artistic practice and has exhibited works as part of 'String Theory: Focus on Contemporary Australian Art' 2013, which brought together over 30 Aboriginal artists and arts groups from across the country at the Museum of Contemporary Art, in Sydney.

And also in 'Country: Connective Understanding – a focus through contemporary Aboriginal art', a collateral event at the 56th Venice Biennale, 2015.

JAMIE-LEA HODGES:

Usually I will be presenting an Aboriginal project, so it is interesting for me to choose a project that is a little left of centre for us. But I think it is important for us to choose a project that we have been running for five years and talk about some of the partners that have been involved along the way.

I have written extensive notes because my baby brain has kicked in and I can't remember much at the moment.

I will start off with telling you the combination of the partnerships we have got. The NSW Minister of Mental Health, Primary Drought Assistance Workshop and some other seed funding.

Each partner has contributed staff time or resources, or it might just be purely funding support.

For Outback Arts, it is critical to look at that because we have such a large land mass to cover and a lot of small, remote amenities. We have no large city centres, a high Indigenous population and a region that is reliant on prime industries limited to no cultural infrastructure.

Developing the project over five years, it started with passive seed funding for one town, and then moving on to delivering 13 workshops across the region.

We partnered with the project partner in the first year to cover the core project cost with this community group, and see if it was really going to be something that was relevant to the community at the time.

And each partner bringing with them their own set of requirements and maybe challenges as well, whether that was targeting in their mental health and well-being in a small rate community, or men or children that we needed to work with. And quite often drought-affected farming families.

The most important partner was our workshop extraordinaire, Waltraud Reiner. If you are working in the arts, the critical point is that you need to make sure the artist working on the project is the right person for the job. Especially for this one, we needed somebody who was going to deliver into such remote communities with really high emotions at stake at the time and even more vital that the artist was well equipped to deal with those factors.

Without the driving artistic partner, Waltraud Reiner, the project would not have had a same outcome and she says if she wasn't working with someone like Outback Arts, it would be difficult for her to reach these communities as well.

Outback Arts being based in the region and across the area, it means that local partnerships are already embedded. Even though I might not mention a local partner, they are there all the time working with us throughout the year and negotiating venues and timing of the year because for farming families, it is really crucial.

I thought I would give you some context of the project. It is made up of a couple of different areas, but the main workshop component is the arts workshop. The other important part for this project is the mental well-being and we also deliver some talks around raising awareness and mental health through an artistic positive engagement.

Each workshop runs over two days and participants are equipped with materials and tools and guidance and beginners can complete a hat without any previous skills and then others get exposure to more complex millinery skills. People come together and socialise and get relief from the usual daily stresses. Usually people show up in dark clothes and are frazzled and stressed and wondering why they put themselves into another bloody workshop, "I don't even like hats."

And by the afternoon of the second day we're trying to push them out and the next day they arrive early and are dressed in bright colours. And they rush in and start on their hats and don't take breaks. They just grab coffee share food and by the end of the last day they have changed posture and shared their stories and laughed and cried and made new friends. Even in the small towns, people that they knew but never got a chance to sit with.

Our artistic partner is originally from Austria and now calls Melbourne home. She has been inducted into the millinery hall of fame and has a serious CV. She has overcome many challenges in her own life, whether it is family history and eating disorders, and marrying her love only for him to have a work accident and lose the use of his legs and what she says is his great bum.

With two small children, dealing with a wheelchair in the house was the next challenge. So she took her millinery to a whole new level, creating the mobile teaching venue touring the countryside and using hats as a metaphor for life. She is currently studying a counselling qualification to assist with the mental health aspect of the workshops.

"Hats are my soul food. They bring me joy, they give me strength. My hat can tell you a story about me and how you want to read me, or how you want to see me. When you wear a hat, people smile at you for whatever reason, but they smile. A hat helps people to start a conversation. Wearing hats and changing hats is what we do in our lives. And my assorted metaphoric hats are with me all the time. More often than not, they help me through the day to help me deal with my own stories and worries."

In the first year, we had seed funding for a support program with regional arts. If you are in arts admin and you forget your own creative practice, wherever there is a workshop, even if you are only attending for photos, like I was this day, you need to participate sometimes because it is a critical moment that you need for your own arts mind and to keep in touch with your community.

So I went along to the first workshop on the first day just to take the pictures of the ladies and see what everyone was so excited about. And it wasn't a drought year and things were positive, but everyone has their own stories going on at home.

I went along and realised almost immediately that the workshop wasn't what I thought it would be. I called the office and said I wasn't coming back in, I would be staying for the workshop. I was enchanted into the world that Waltraud Reiner introduced me into.

After that experience, I was really quick to react to be enquiries from other places around the region, people hearing about the project on the grapevine. We needed to find some funding partners especially.

In the next year, we were working with the Minister for Mental Health and we were able to roll out into five locations. By this time the drought had really kicked in. We brought participants together for what was a really new creative practice in the area.

I know some of you will know what the effects of drought are in a community, but in a lush coastal environment where you can grow hydrangeas easily, it's hard to imagine these dusty roads for miles.

Sometimes a project challenges aren't as the partners or even funding, but the participants themselves. Having people with such emotional vulnerability is really trying situation for an arts worker who may not be trained to deal with the upset that people are feeling, whether they have missed the deadline to get into the workshop, or if they are wanting to get in, while they are

feeding thousands of sheep and watching their lives turn to dust around them.

Our region is just so reliant on farming industries. It is a huge factor and puts a lot of pressure on these communities. Suicide rates increase, and there is much evidence of stress around the region. Thank you, Peter.

The third year, we hit our straps and with the Mental Health Minister's support, we got some other agencies involved, other councils. We went in and delivered to 10 communities that year, over 100 participants and many thousands of kilometres, you can see from these pictures where we were heading to.

That year was also probably for me one of the most powerful projects I have been involved in, and I have thrown morning teas for the CWA.

It's funny, the easy informal partnership with the CWA became an integral part of this. These women from these communities may live in places where they are a long way from anywhere. The CWA is a really strong network out there.

The fourth year, we continued on with the drought funding and Catholic health care, then we brought in more counselling stuff into the workshops, the mental health talks and things that happened opened into the community. People then knew, because we had gone on for so long, that it wasn't just about hats, it wasn't an arts workshop. And they kept attending, bringing their husbands and kids.

That is up to this year. Ironically, it rained once and now we have no drought funding. The Mental Health Minister has supported us all along, and that has allowed us to do our fifth tour, in about nine townships, introducing further in-depth millinery classes, meditation, it's been really successful this year. Onwards and upwards for our partnerships.

It is interesting for us to be working in these areas where there is really no-one to partner with. You have to choose your partners wisely and bringing the extra support.

PETER WOOD:

Thank you.

(Applause)

PETER WOOD:

Our final presentation is from Scott Howie. Scott is from Eastern Riverina Arts, covering areas including Bland, Coolamon, Snowy Valley and Wagga Wagga City. He has been contributing to the landscape of the Riverina as an art educator for many years. He also maintains an arts practice, working in installation. Previously has been a lecturer in theatre design and the artistic director of Riverina Young People's Theatre and his own company, Jibshot.

SCOTT HOWIE:

I'm going to be talking about a small project which has taught me a lot about what partnership is. We did a photographic project, 'BOLD - Selfies by Oldies', with elderly people over 65 in Coolamon. We wanted to show the perceptions of the Shire residents, and subvert the

stereotypes that live in our communities in terms of the old.

The partnership was formed at a grant-writing workshop I was running in Coolamon, but a number of people who were interested in getting tickets as well. One of the top ten tips that I give in a grant writing workshop is don't think of the grant and then make the project, get the project and then find the money.

Then I was looking at a pilot funding program only available to regional arts organisations, the regional creative ageing fund regulated by the New South Wales government. There was a very short turnaround and there were only three grants available. I wanted to get one.

So at that workshop was a council community development officer, the manager of the rural regional counselling service, and I just looked and went, in this room right now are a group of people who could make this project that I had thought up in the car on the way over here.

In a classic 'do as I say, not as I do' moment, I asked them to stay back and told them about the project. We had a cup of tea and we got the idea going.

What would happen would be that council hosts the final exhibition, provided the venue, provide staff to assist, source participants within the Shire, the counselling service would take on the role of setting up an evaluation framework for the project. It was very important that we have this framework, as the intention of the fund was to create a pilot program that could be replicated elsewhere in NSW. We needed to have some vigour around the evaluation, and they had an ongoing relationship with someone who was doing that.

Then the health worker would also be our liaison in community sourcing participants, helping organise workshops, and create links with the aged care facility. And Eastern Riverina Arts would develop the materials for the exhibition and administer the grant funding.

The most important thing that I needed from that partnership, and you will notice in my language that I say 'I needed', that's something I will come to later on, but those partners formed a steering committee alongside community representatives. Whenever we go into a community to work, particularly with people who may not have engaged with arts projects, I have an ethical framework that we have established which basically is a series of checks and balances to make sure that we are not exploiting, essentially, the participants of the project for our own gains.

Whether that is around issues of consent, agency, how people are represented in our projects, whether it is about condensing the permissions we ask of our participants and how we control the IP of the media. We have to make sure that everyone is completely aware of what is being done and how we're going to use any of the material that we generate.

It was wonderful to have those people around, basically, just to be our check and balances as well. It is really important that you have people questioning what you do all the time.

The benefit of the partnership was that Coolamon is about 40 minutes away from our office in Wagga Wagga. It enabled us to go into the community and have the credibility of the partners as well, use their credibility and connections in community to help us get up very fast project that we could not have done ourselves. That was so important in terms of the ethical framework.

When we put a call for expressions of interest to get involved in the project, a young girl who really wanted her grandmother to be involved in the project, and her grandmother had dementia, and she said, "I have a great idea for how I want my grandmother to be photographed."

But that is completely outside of our framework of agency and representation. That was a very complicated thing to explain to a 17-year-old girl about why we didn't feel comfortable doing that. But because of the relationship with the health team and a counselling service, they were able to go in and talk to the woman in question and to actually talk to the staff of the aged care facility to find out whether or not that woman was capable of providing us with agency, and it turned out that she couldn't.

Having someone on the ground to be able to sort that out for you, which is a tricky, challenging community thing, if you are an outsider coming in, and it may sell the project. But that was a wonderful outcome.

The project was a great success. You can see these images are quite stunning. They were blown up to 900 by 700mm, and they just look wonderful in the space. These guys became rock stars in the town. They would walk down the street and everyone will go up to them and tell them that they'd seen them in the exhibition.

The interesting thing from my point of view is, along the way, because so much of the project was being driven by us and in effect we have the most invested in the project, I forgot to mention, we did have one other partner, the National Portrait Gallery, when we took all of the participants up to see the National Portrait Prize. At one point, I think the council were going to provide the bus and the driver for that project. But something happened with the bus and something happened with the driver. And of course, who is the guy hiring the bus driving the bus up to Canberra?

No matter how hard you try to set up structures to look after yourself as well, no matter how hard you try to set up projects so they just do their thing and you are overseeing, whenever something falls down you end up having to pick up the pieces. It was interesting.

What I learnt out of this is that this wasn't really a partnership, in some ways, because it was almost like a service we were delivering for that group of community. I think that is reflected in the way I describe that on there, which is "This was an Eastern Riverina Arts initiative with our partners." And that psychologically affected the project, because the partners saw it as our project with them helping.

I think what I have learned from that is if you're going to enter into a partnership with somebody, it is not just about, "What can you do to support my project?" They have got to have skin in the game in terms of what they want to get out of the project.

And it is the understanding of having a common goal but also having a very distinct separate goal that each organisation is trying to achieve through that partnership, and even the thing of, "That was a fairly small grant, share in the money."

PETER WOOD:

What happens when they are not hitting those goals? How do you break up?

SCOTT HOWIE:

Another thing about working in small communities with small organisations is the person from the Council has got ill and all of a sudden, at a really important phase of the project, the valuation wasn't able to be written by that organisation.

And so in the end I had to say, "Look, you said you were going to put this money in. I will employ someone to make it happen." That worked, yet again, it is just one of those things. The project was successful but it had those little things that just went... You've got to take that time at the start to really lock in, what are those key deliverables that everyone is going to do.

And there is the timing, you have to write (inaudible) in-kind support and "We will provide you with this and this," and by the time the application comes in, everyone has forgotten what they said they were going to do, or that project is no longer a priority. So learning about putting things in structures and taking the time to develop them.

PETER WOOD:

Your ten minutes are up.

SCOTT HOWIE:

Really? But you asked questions!

PETER WOOD:

I thought we would just move into that area, one thing Tracey mentioned in terms of not wanting to take on projects that don't have a partnership approach to them, it made me think that given the funding pathways you need to follow to deliver projects, it is almost possible now not to have a partner involved. It is just the way we work.

And with that and all the examples you guys have given of fantastic projects, there are obviously multiple partners involved and complexities, which raises questions of how you manage those expectations and relationships. How do you ensure there is genuine participation in these projects. Andrew, I wanted to ask you, with the festival project you are doing with the diverse Aboriginal groups, involved in delivering that festival, is there a structured process the government has created?

ANDREW GRAY:

We have established an advisory group or steering committee for it, which includes representatives from those organisations, as well as some of the other key people. We have identified a couple of younger Aboriginal cultural leaders in the community and brought them on board.

PETER WOOD:

Was that from the get-go of the project?

ANDREW GRAY:

Yes, that was from the start. Recognising the need to try and broaden the scope of that and bring in other voices and advisers. We met early on with Roman Roberts, who was fantastic with her assistance and advice, and Chris from Saltwater Freshwater have been great in giving

us guidance. Because I don't know why we're doing this project. We have never run a festival before. We are learning a lot on the go as we do it.

I would love for the festival to be an ongoing thing, but that can't become our job for the next however many years. So part of what we will be doing over the next year is to look for ways and structures we can keep it going, as well as stepping back a bit from the actual hands-on management.

PETER WOOD:

Tracey, you had so many projects sitting under the health banner, what did you put in place in terms of the reporting process?

TRACEY CALLINAN:

The reporting process has actually changed as we have gone on, partly because we had to renegotiate with partners. It was actually surprisingly simple on the outset, because what we had to do at the beginning after the consultation process was deliver a whole plan. And so that's a 100-page document with a fair bit of detail in it.

And after negotiating through various twists and turns from health's perspective, all they are asking of us is when each project is delivered. Actually, we didn't even ask this. It was really about, "How do we get paid?" And I said, "How about we give you a one-page report on each project and Lachlan Health Service signs it off."

Because we are accountable to so many bodies in our funding, while health might not need all the stats and figures, we still need to collect them anyway, because they still go into our accruals to (inaudible) NSW and we get funding for Aboriginal programs. There is a little Venn diagram of not just pots of money, but pots of interest and areas, and we report on it all.

PETER WOOD:

Jamie-Lea, it was you had the multiple partners, and the nature of the project, was there any conflict in conflicting KPIs or reporting the various KPIs?

JAMIE-LEA HODGES:

Not really, as Tracey said, we all have to collect that data anyway. It is easy enough to collect it for ourselves and then give it to the partners. For this project in particular, we documented it on film for a couple of years as well, especially (inaudible) funding partners, the bigger funding partners, they were really happy with the filming to collect that data.

And the participants were so grateful for the project that they wanted to know where the money was coming from so they could write directly to them and tell them how grateful they were for the project. There was a lot of participant feedback on that.

PETER WOOD:

I guess this is one for all of you...

TRACEY CALLINAN:

One more thing – I do have a bit of a problem on reporting on some of the work and I think it would affect all of these projects. We are constantly asked to give quantitative data, numbers.

And the numbers do not tell the stories of these projects. We need qualitative data. We need stories told.

I can put an exhibition into a hospital and because so many people are in and out of the hospital I can say 1000 or 2000 people will see the exhibition. That tells you nothing, it is just good numbers. We need the stories. The stories you have heard here are really meaningful.

(Applause)

PETER WOOD:

One more question around the number of partners to make a partnership. How many do you think you need? If you have a lead partner, is that a partnership approach?

ANDREW GRAY:

It can be just one other main partner... Or a key relationship. But others come on board as you go. It might be one particular part or a particular element. But being open and flexible to other potential partners I think is important as well. I'm going for two.

SCOTT HOWIE:

I was going to say two. We have just put in an application with a disability advocacy service and it is the reserves of the (inaudible) project in that we have been talking about it for two years and then all of a sudden there was the pot of gold.

And it is an application that we both in together and both worked on together and developed, and they put clearly in what their needs were related to ours. If it was successful, that would be a pot of money, a distribution of the resources to our organisation and theirs.

And I think that becomes possibly the more effective partnership, because you are receiving the funding from (inaudible).

ANDREW GRAY:

I wanted to throw in recently that I attended my first ever WOG, which is Whole of Government and the Premier and Cabinet identify things that they think need a whole of government approach and I was pleased to find out there was an Eden Hall of government happening at the moment.

So for the first time ever, I found myself at the table with Premier and Cabinet, all these agencies that I wouldn't get to connect with and I was there as the representative of Create NSW. And it was fantastic, because suddenly I was in a room with people who said, what you are doing in this project meets what we're trying to do.

PETER WOOD:

Great. I did say at the top that these guys could talk underwater the mouthful of marbles. So, can you thank our panel.

(Applause)

ELIZABETH ROGERS:

They are fantastic, these people are the powerhouses that make arts work in regional areas in NSW. And just to let you know, there are only five of them here and there are 14 across the state.

So if you guys can either sit there while I do the final thanks, or just toddle off while I'm doing it. Some final speaker changes for this afternoon. The 2:00 panel, driving creative practice from a remote location will have a replaced speaker.

The panellists for the late panel, Cate McQuillen, Roger Monk and Claudia Pickering and it will be moderated by Nat Randall.

The 2:00 panel 'More Places for the Theatre' is in the conference room at the northern end of (inaudible), and I am sorry but there is stair access only.

'New Spaces for Creativity' is now going to be moderated by Scott Howie.

For those attending this evening's dinner, please arrive early, because we are in the workers club. Remember that Lismore was underwater nine months ago and venues that have been repaired and are usable have been a bit slow getting online. In the workers club, you will need to sign in. Everyone who has lived in regional NSW knows that if you go to a workers club, you have to go through this process of proving you are a real person. And no longer bona fides travellers, I believe.

This is the final plenary session when we will all be together so there are a number of people I need to thank for making Artstate Lismore happen.

The regional Board of Directors, Stephen Champion, Ben Roche, Paul Scott-Williams and Sharni Jones have all given their time to be here and moderate sessions and put out emergency bushfires behind-the-scenes. (Unknown term), David Dwyer, Nick Pickard and Gavin Findlay are my brains trust.

Regional Arts NSW, Katelyn Dunn, communication arts and Artstate social media queen (inaudible) has acted for our official photographer. Lexie Reeves, whose real job is grants and projects, but she has been doing front of house all over the place. Jane Kreis, who is supposed to be doing research and development, has been wrangling international travel and accommodation. And even getting permission from the musicians union so we could have performances here. And we're obviously going to put an Australian musician out of work by bringing an international to Lismore...

And Jesse Yin, our two-days-a-week finance manager, processing emergency payments, that is us.

Thank you to Marisa Snow, who developed our arts program. Rhoda Roberts, what can we say... David Bleach behind the scenes, and he has been everywhere.

The Linda King, who has been brilliant running the conference management. Swell Design Group who have done all our design and printing and Belinda Dyer who has been wrangling the media for us.

All of these people, with the exception of Belinda, live and work in regional NSW.

(Applause)

ELIZABETH ROGERS:

I, of course, live in my car.

And finally, the Arts Northern Rivers team. How amazing have they been? Peter Wood, Natalie Bull, Zoe Robinson-Kennedy, Mark Cora and Phoebe Rose, we could not have done it without this extraordinary partnership here on the ground.

So enjoy the afternoon's sessions and the arts program. On Sunday, if you are hanging around, the visual arts program will continue, if you hadn't had a chance to see it yet. And certainly some really interesting work that local artist been putting together as part of the Creative Lismore program.

The finale concert by the regional youth orchestra starts at 11am and at this stage still in the quad. We are doing a 5am weather check tomorrow morning, I understand.

This is a fantastic partnership we have been able to develop – on the final theme partnerships – between Regional Arts NSW and the 17 regional conservatoriums that make up the Conservatoriums Association.

As well as having 14 regional arts boards doing this rich work you have heard a sample of today, there are 17 conservatoriums of music providing that really important musical education for young people in regional areas. But they have become the major presenters of music as an art form. You saw the jazz orchestra in the opening.

This is an absolute outcome out of Artlands Dubbo, where they put together kids from all the country conservatoriums and put together the first regional and youth orchestra. Instead, these kids have been working with the Australian Youth Orchestra, SSO, and they are coming to do another concert in Lismore to say thank you for having us. It is free and in the quad and if it is pouring, you will hear about it. We would like to see as many people there as we possibly could.

Travel safely, keep the conversation going until next year and thank you all for attending our first Artstate here in Lismore.

(Applause)