



FORM BEST PRACTICES CONTEST

Municipality Alexandrina Council (Goolwa) Country Australia

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Name project

'Just Add Water' arts and culture program (commenced in 2012)

Category Certification Criteria: mark the category of your project

- Energy and environmental policies (politiche energetiche e ambientali);
- Infrastructure policies (politiche infrastrutturali);
- Quality of urban life policies (politiche per la qualita' urbana);
- Agricultural, touristic and artisan policies (politiche agricole, turistiche, artigianali);
- Policies for hospitality, awareness and training (politiche per l'ospitalita, la consapevolezza e la formazione);
- Social cohesion (coesione sociale).

Summary project

Situated in the Alexandrina Council district in regional South Australia, the 'Just Add Water' arts and culture program is an innovative, place based approach to boosting arts and cultural practice and experiences. It includes both access to high quality arts performances as well as stimulating community-based artistic practice. Supported in part by funding from the Australian and South Australian governments, it has enabled our local government funding to be leveraged for the best possible outcomes.

Goal project



Alexandrina Council's Community Strategic Plan includes the aspiration of 'Activate our Spaces', the outcome of 'Memorable Experiences' and the strategy of 'Inspire arts, culture and creative activities that encourage investment and participation'. Program objectives included:

1. To increase arts and cultural opportunities for community members, artists and visitors
2. To increase the extent to which the community values arts and culture
3. To strengthen local commitment to arts and cultural planning and development
4. To increase local capacity to plan, deliver and evaluate arts and cultural activities and events.

Result project



A draft program evaluation has been conducted and found that there has been a significant increase in arts and cultural opportunities as a result of Just Add Water, characterised by a diverse range of artforms and types of activity, in a multitude of locations and settings. Community feedback indicates that these were genuine opportunities which afforded people from different backgrounds and interests to experience high quality arts and cultural activities.

There were no directly comparable statistics kept prior to 2012, however as the first program of its type in the region the sheer number of experiences offered over the course of Just Add Water undoubtedly represents a significant increase. A total of 1333 separate activities, projects or events were provided in the following categories:

Goolwa

**2012 Alexandrina 2013 Alexandrina 2014 Grand Total
3 years**

Total number of activities/events/projects	545	372	416	1333
No. of Indoor exhibitions (visual arts)	27	14	23	64
No. of Gallery public events	27	19	24	70
No. of Outdoor Visual Events	8	0	8	16
No. of new works created locally through JAW	23	28	21	72
No of hands-on sessions (days)	350	240	230	820
No of community conversation sessions	8	2	2	12
No of film/projection events	12	27	44	83
No of major public events	3	2	4	9
No of performance-based events	87	40	60	187

A very high bar was set in 2012 with the initial injection of state government funding and community interest peaking in the lead up to the Kumuwuki Regional Arts Australia Conference. Nevertheless the 2014 figures suggest that the momentum was substantially maintained.

Similarly, total attendances and participation rates show a high level of engagement by the community indicating that the projects, events, performances, exhibitions and workshops were regarded as worthwhile and genuine opportunities:

Goolwa	2012 Alexandrina	2013 Alexandrina	2014	Grand Total 3 years
53,711	29,929	44,714	128,354	

Finance (costs and benefits)



To place the actual opportunities offered as part of the program in context, the total investment over the three years was budgeted at \$1.6 million but in the event exceeded this amount, with contributions of \$600,000 from the Australia Council for the Arts, \$1.6 million from the South Australian government through Country Arts SA, and \$1.5 million from Alexandrina Council. In addition, a total of \$2.7 million was invested in capital development of facilities (\$800,000 from state government and \$1.9 million from Council) without which many of the program events would not have been possible.

Staff (staff involved and use of time)

Country Arts SA's contribution to program staffing for the duration comprised:
2011: 0.6 FTE (Executive Producer 0.5, Project Officer 0.1)
2011/12: 1.75 FTE (Executive Producer 1.0, Project Officer 0.5, Marketing Coordinator 0.25)
2012/13: 1.9 FTE (Executive Producer 1.0, Project Officer 0.4, Marketing Coordinator 0.5)
2013/14: 1.25 FTE (Executive Producer 1.0, Project Officer 0.25)
2014/15: 1.0 FTE (Executive Producer 0.75, Project Officer 0.25)

Alexandrina Council has employed 1.0 FTE for visual arts and 0.5 FTE plus casual labour for Centenary Hall performance space.

Additional information (if necessarily)



Community perceptions of extent and quality of opportunities

Community feedback reinforced this positive assessment, highlighting criteria based on the program characteristics they considered important:

- Diversity – types of activity, multiple artforms, ways to interact

'The Just Add Water team are to be congratulated for a program mix that had something for everyone. (Rain curtain installation)'

- Accessibility – to the whole community

'Being able to participate in our local area...it can be expensive to go to Adelaide...hard to justify when you are on a budget. (General community)'

- Program spread – across different parts of the region

'...sessions outside of Goolwa to share load of travelling and Goolwa people support other parts of the region so there is not so much of a divide. (General community)'

- Program reach – awareness of the opportunities in the community and beyond

'We have noticed that as the printed program gains in popularity there is an increased number of locals visiting us to pick up programs, find out more information and make bookings. (Council staff)

We live in central Victoria but one of the BIGGEST attractions to visit SA again is to further connect with this program... (General community)'

- Publicity and promotion – the ongoing challenge

'...try to think of additional ways to advertise as people still say they don't know about things. (General community)'

- Artistic development – extending and growing through practical experience

'Established artists were challenged to take a step or two up with their work (me, for example), emerging artists were identified and supported to develop... (Artist)'

Concluding comments

The nature of working in communities and the open, fluid processes involved in arts and cultural development mean that achievement cannot be measured in absolutes. The four main objectives of the Just Add Water initiative are framed in terms of progress towards increased opportunities, greater community valuing, stronger local commitment and local capacity.

On balance, the evaluation finds that Just Add Water has addressed each of these objectives to a very great extent, has delivered the program in a very effective way and can demonstrate solid progress towards each of these goals. There will continue to be hurdles and setbacks, especially in a time of fiscal restraint at every level of government, but feedback suggests that the local community and decision makers are aware of this and better prepared than ever before to develop strategies to overcome them.

The most compelling finding radiating from the data was a strong motivation to continue the progress made since 2012, evident in the abundance of positive suggestions to Council about future development and also in expressions of personal resolve to contribute. Final comments from community members demonstrated this determination.

'Just Add Water has been a fantastic blessing for this Council. We should make the most of it, build on it, and create a sustainable model by attracting or creating more unique, top quality programs that will bring people from far and wide and establish Goolwa as, amongst its many attractions, the Regional Arts Hub of the state. (General community)'

Link website <http://www.alexandrina.sa.gov.au/JAW>

(if available)

**Once filled in this form please send it to: info@cittaslow.net
- Participation Deadline 15 May 2015 -**

