

Management report to Council**Agenda item 6.1****Revitalisation of Creative Laneways: Flash Forward****Council****Presenter:** Justine Hyde, Director Creative City**26 April 2022****Purpose and background**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the outcomes of the Creative Laneways Program (Program) and to seek endorsement to pursue funding for a second phase of work. The Program has formed an innovative part of Council's Major Initiative 15: Deliver the Public Art Program and an integral part of the City of Melbourne's reactivation and recovery response to the COVID-19 pandemic and consecutive lockdowns.

Key issues

2. The Program has focused on supporting the creative resurgence of the city – re-connecting people and re-energising laneways through creative executions to attract workers, residents and visitors into the city. It has enabled greater dissemination of the 1.45m annual visitors to Hosier Lane (Hosier Lane Report 2019) across the CBD to explore these 40 new and unique laneway experiences. And, in light of COVID-19, it has allowed the public to enjoy the cultural experience in a safe manner, outdoors and socially distanced.
3. The Program has also served to enhance the cleanliness, public amenity, safety and visual attractiveness of Melbourne's CBD laneways and their surrounding precincts. An unanticipated benefit of the street art has been a reduction in graffiti/tagging by 80-85% in those locations (Working for Victoria Final Report 2021). The work on Evans Lane, for example, an open service laneway used for deliveries and waste management, has been transformed into a bright and inviting space that people now visit; while the lighting component of the artwork on Drewery Lane deters anti-social activity enhancing the perception of safety for nearby residents.
4. As a jobs-creation scheme, jointly funded by the Victorian Government and the Council, the Program has been a tremendous boost for one of the sectors hardest hit by job losses over the last two years. 168 local creatives were employed in both art and technical delivery roles. Employment supported those on short-term contracts, not in work at the time, or who had commissions and gigs cancelled due to the pandemic restrictions and border closures. 14 Aboriginal Victorians and 4 creatives with a disability were engaged on the Program, and the majority of workers live in metropolitan Melbourne.
5. Creative practitioners and the production team responsible for delivering the Program all experienced significantly improved economic, mental and physical well-being as a result of their involvement as evidenced via surveys and their direct feedback. The groups also reported developing new skills and strengthening existing capabilities, and that their future employability was enhanced due to participation in the Program. This demonstrates the ongoing reach and success of this project for Melbourne's creative industries.
6. The Program also directly supported local businesses by obtaining all creatives' materials from small local suppliers and site crews frequenting cafes and bakeries surrounding the laneways.
7. The Program delivered the following creative outcomes:
 - 7.1. 40 major artworks commissioned over 18 months. These commissioned works are temporary and will remain in situ for a minimum of 2 to 5 years. They respond to the physical locations in scale and type but also the concept of looking forward to a post pandemic Melbourne.
 - 7.2. Of the major artworks, 15 works are integrated or stand-alone lighting installations. These creative lighting installations add a dynamic element to the program and support night-time engagement.
 - 7.3. 40 new music albums have also been produced as part of this Program. This new work showcases musicians who would otherwise not seek out or be eligible for many of the funding opportunities available and has significantly elevated the profile and future opportunities for many.

8. In addition, the Program provided a pop-up store to sell artist merchandise as well as the albums direct to the public on Little Collins Street. The Store supported 83 artists with total sales of over forty thousand dollars. For four months over Christmas and summer the store had a daily average of six sales and 15 people visiting, many seeking information and a map to explore the works on foot across the CBD. The Town Hall visitor centre also held the map and more than 500 maps have been given away extending the engagement with the public.
9. According to the SGS Economics and Planning Report (March 2021), the Program investment of \$8.9m into the creative economy of Melbourne over the last 18 months will return a potential \$8.9m in value-added spend to the city's economy.
10. The Program has achieved significant and positive local, national and international media coverage, including The Age, The Saturday Paper, the Herald Sun, Broadsheet, Channel 7 and 9, ABC, Arts Review, NME and Rolling Stone, and continues with recent enquiries from New York Times Style Magazine. Overwhelmingly the response has been entirely positive across mainstream and independent, media as well as social media, for example The Saturday Paper noted it 'As one of the simplest COVID-era music funding models, Flash Forward has produced some of the year's best work'.
11. In partnership with the Victorian Government, the Program has been marketed and promoted as a tourism destination via our combined media channels.
12. Management is exploring ways to further maximise activation and promotional opportunities. This includes partnerships with festivals to use the laneways for temporary artwork and events, and seeking funding to partner with filmmakers for a chance to showcase the Program via IMAX.
13. Creative Laneways has been an international success. The resounding results of this Program warrant further funding to continue developing this Program to re-connect people, energise our laneways, and revitalise the city and its economy.
14. With additional funding, a second phase of the Program will involve executing more laneway and music commissions across the municipality by using the same Program commissioning model, applying lessons from this Program and building on already established stakeholder relationships.

Recommendation from management

15. That Council:
 - 15.1. Notes the outcomes to-date of the Creative Laneways Program
 - 15.2. Requests that management pursues funding opportunities to implement a second phase of the Creative Laneways Program in the municipality.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Part 4 of 11)
2. Creative Laneways – Flash Forward ppt (Part 4 of 11)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. There are no direct legal issues arising from the recommendation from management.

Finance

2. There are no perceived financial implications arising from this report as the budget for the first phase of the Program was secured from the State Government of Victoria's Working for Victoria Fund.

Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Health and Safety

4. Each of the laneways commission had a detailed risk register and COVID Safe Plan that identified risks and mitigations.
5. Risk registers with mitigations were developed for all projects to minimise and/or eliminate hazards and workplace injuries. This includes strategies to improve the physical and psychological workplace environments and maximise employee engagement in OHS activities including COVID Safe Plans and protocols.

Stakeholder consultation

6. Along with a myriad of local building owners and occupiers, the Program had extensive consultation with from major stakeholders and peak bodies including the State Government, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, and the Chinese Museum of Australia.

Relation to Council policy

7. Major Initiative 15: Deliver the Public Art Program.

Environmental sustainability

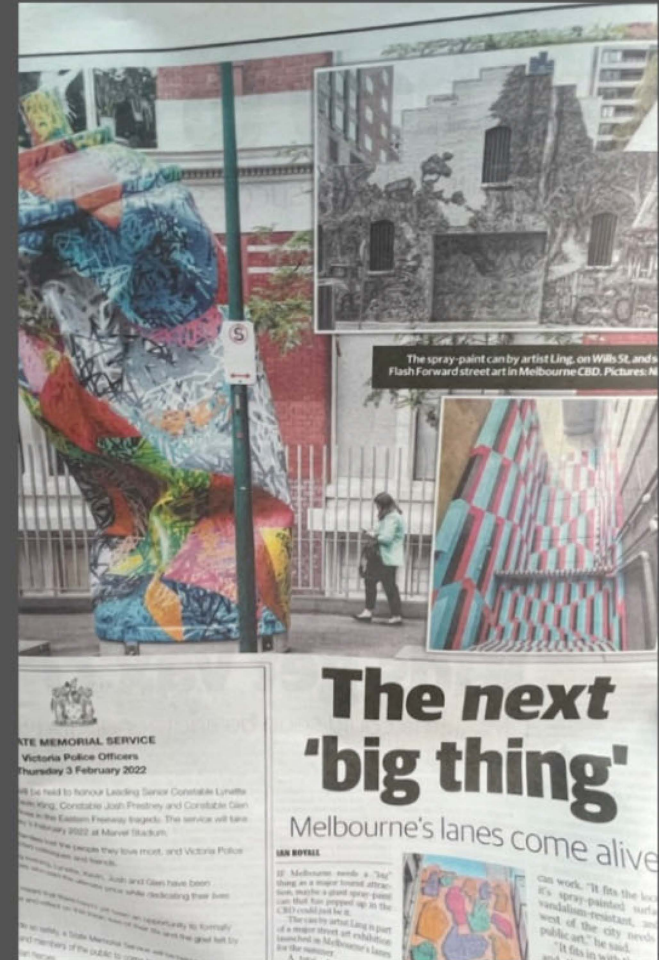
8. With each laneway commission, environmental sustainability and ecology were considered.

VISUAL ARTS



"If Melbourne needs a 'big' thing as a major tourist attraction, maybe a giant spray-paint can that has popped up in the CBD could just be it."

— Herald Sun



The spray-paint can by artist Ling, on Wills St, and a Flash Forward street art in Melbourne CBD. Pictures: N



STATE MEMORIAL SERVICE
Victoria Police Officers
Thursday 3 February 2022

Will be held to honour Leading Senior Constable Lynette...
...in the Eastern Freeway Bridge. The service will take...
...to February 2022 at Marvel Stadium.

...have lost the people they love most, and Victoria Police...
...and families will be there.

...and families will be there.

...and families will be there.

The next 'big thing'
Melbourne's lanes come alive

SAN ROYAL

If Melbourne needs a "big" thing as a major tourist attraction, maybe a giant spray-paint can that has popped up in the CBD could just be it.

The creative artist Ling is part of a major street art exhibition in Melbourne's lanes.

...can work. "It fits the local...
...vandalism-resistant, and...
...west of the city needs...
...public art," he said.
...It fits in with...

VISUAL ARTS

"I wish to emphasise the value I got from being paid fairly as an artist. For me, this has been rare and the self-respect it gives a creative person is immense."

– Survey response, artist

"I am in discussion with an architect about developing a larger variation of the work and have received interest in exhibiting the work from two local curators. I am currently completing poster works for sale through the Flash Forward pop up store. received interest in exhibiting the work from two local curators."

– Survey response, artist

MUSIC

"Our music has far more reach due to this project. The album will be released on vinyl in Europe, CD in Mexico, and cassette in Indonesia."

– Survey response, artist

"I was able to experience how making and releasing music works from start to finish on so many levels. Knowledge of technical processes like mixing and mastering, art and design, printing, pressing, admin, PR and promotion as well as filming, storyboarding, editing and producing video has expanded tenfold. All these processes will be massively important in my career. Off the back of this project I have already put this new knowledge into practice."

– Survey response, artist

WIDER BENEFITS



Puzzle — Evans Lane

"It's an amazing piece of art. It's brightened that whole place up and it's made it a feature point for people to go and visit that area, because it's so big, and it's so bright, people will definitely visit."

WIDER BENEFITS



"Spontaneous in feel, sounding like an intuitive group of collaborators reacting to each other in real time while experimenting at every step."

— NME



Emma Donovan & The Putbacks — Under These Streets (nominated for the Australian Music Prize)

"To record and release the music albums local studios and local sound engineers were hired. Spaces for rehearsal prior to recording; graphic artists for the album covers; a record pressing plant; PR companies; photographers; videographers; equipment hire companies; catering; commercial printers; web designers; journalists; merch printers were local to Victoria."

— Survey response

STRENGTHENING CAPABILITY



"Prior to working on Flash Forward, I was working two days in the arts and three days in an advertising agency. Though I had steady income, the agency did not know how to take care of their staff's mental health during the pandemic. Working on this project, with solid funding and good support has shown me that it's possible to take better care of arts workers' wellbeing. This is a big challenge for the sector and something that I'll be taking into the future as a leader."

— Survey response, delivery staff



FLASH FORWARD STORE



November 21, 2021 – March 13, 2022
261 Little Collins St, CBD

Supported 83 artists who received
100% of the profits from the sales of
their art, records and merchandise.

MEDIA

The Flash Forward program has achieved significant local, national and international media coverage from publications including The Age, The Saturday Paper, Broadsheet, Herald Sun, Arts Review, NME and Rolling Stone, plus on television stations such as ABC, Channel 9, Channel 7 and Channel 10. Overwhelmingly the response has been extremely positive.

"As one of the simplest Covid-era music funding models, Flash Forward has produced some of the year's best work."

– The Saturday Paper

