



Big News is the Awards

The big news for this quarter is that the Living Museum won an award from Museum Australia (Victoria) in June for the best exhibition and public programs in a museum with staff from one to six people. Or a small to medium museum. The exhibition was Pobblebonk.

Museum Australia staff said it was the number of programs that connected to the exhibition that stood out. Programs such as the Victoria University curriculum notes development, education programs for newly arrived migrants and the concert funded by VicHealth called, 'Meet the Neighbours'.



Museum Director, Peter Haffenden, and exhibition Designer, Kerrie Poliness, receive the Award at the Museums Awards night at the State Library on June 28th. To the left is Erica Sanders, Director of Museums Australia (Victoria) on the right is Sarah Edwards who was MC for the evening. Sarah works at Museum Victoria and is on the MA (Vic) Branch Committee and is also the Chair of the MA Vic Professional Development & Training Sub-committee.

Photograph by Simon Fox, Knowledge Media Photography, Deakin University.

Next big news is the AGM

In this quarter we also had the Annual General Meeting. This was a lively meeting with good discussion around the introduction of some reforms to the constitution reviewed by the Management Committee. There were some changes in the Committee following the resignation of some members last year with Elizabeth McKinnon shifting from Acting President to Elected President.

We also saw some new faces coming onto the Committee including Assistant Editor for the Maribyrnong Leader, Madeleine Brennan, local tourism worker, John Meilak and Theatre Producer Dario VaCirca.

Another new face was the Speaker for the night, the new MP for the seat of Footscray, Ms. Marsha Thomson, who gave a friendly and candid talk about her own history in politics and what she is currently focussing on in government. Welcome to the western suburbs Marsha.



Madeleine Brennan

Cultural plan meetings with City of Maribyrnong

In this quarter the Museum was involved in the development of a Cultural Plan for the City of Maribyrnong. The City supports many local cultural organizations and events and has done so for years but the need was seen for a clearer policy and context for this support. The policy is now completed and should be available at Council for those interested.



Marsha Thomson, MP, Member for Footscray was guest speaker at the AGM.

Committee Member profile-Madeleine Brennan

Madeleine majored in History and Politics at Melbourne University before taking up a position with the Public Records Office Victoria. During her time there she helped digitise and archive the Ned Kelly and Eureka collections and produced online exhibitions showcasing the two collections. She also developed an online exhibition describing the West Gate Bridge collapse using PROV records. She is currently assistant editor with the Leader newspapers in the West (formerly The Times) and is particularly interested fostering greater community engagement with local media.

Investment Fund

The new Committee is responding to issues raised in the Strategic Review and indeed to long term challenges for a community organisation like ours.

This month a 'Donations Account' was established for the receipt of tax deductible donations, which will be accumulated as an Investment Fund. It will be utilised as determined by the management committee to benefit delivery of MLMW services. Thanks to Brett Hosie for his generous support of \$500 as an opening donation.

The tax deductible status of donations to the Museum has not been promoted as well as it could be and this is an interesting aspect of new ways to work towards sustainability.

Gavin Groups Dandenong RSL, St. Theresa's

Most of the talks and tours continue to be given by Gavin Somerville, our Site Tour Guide. There are booked paid tours, mostly with school groups with occasional booked tours through the RSL and Probus. However Gavin talks to hundreds of people on weekends and during the week on a more direct face to face basis about local history and heritage.



Gavin Somerville talking to a group of students.

Grants

A good deal of the work of the Museum last quarter and this quarter has been that invisible work of planning, discussing, developing projects and programs and going for grants to put these plans into action. A notable feature this year has been the strong input of the sub-committees in developing plans and projects.

The result has been rewarding with several grant applications being successful, the most significant perhaps being a Capital Grant from Arts Victoria for the constant need to upgrade equipment and computer technology in the 21st Century.

Other successful grants include more than \$7,000 from the EPA to develop curriculum notes for primary schools about the animal life of Stony Creek. There are 13 primary schools within walking distance from Stony Creek.

Another was \$4,000 from RETI (Regional ... Touring Initiative) from Museums Australia (Victoria) to develop an exhibition about issues surrounding the conservation of built heritage in a growth economy. Plans are that this is the first step in a large project to produce a travelling exhibition that looks at the difficulties surrounding heritage issues.

There was also a grant from The Victorian Multicultural Commission to support festival activities for Refugee Week. This was originally planned for October but Refugee Week was shifted to June so the grant was re-organised for a couple of different activities.

One of those being cultural workshops planned by the Refugee Week Committee which the Museum has been part of since last year. This is a most active and effective committee. The Workshop Day included bellydancing, Haka dancing, hip hop, African drumming, origami, the Women's Circus, soccer and Macedonian dancing.



Web page design by work experience student Kristy Lim

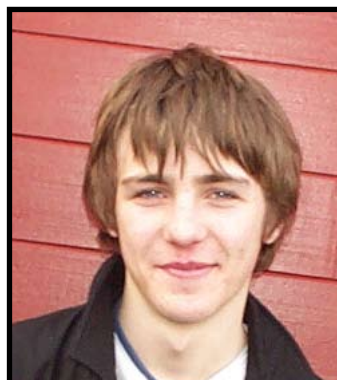


Work Experience students

This was also an opportunity for one of our work two secondary school work experience students, Kristy Lim, who did a web project about the Workshop Day.

The other work experience student in this quarter was Tom Conley who chose to do something about the history of District football.

Both of these projects will be added to the Museum website in the following month.



Tom Conely



Kristy Lim

Support

Perhaps it is a sign of the Museum's maturity, a sign of the times or the encouragement by government for collaboration and partnerships but the Museum is increasingly acting in a support role for individuals and organizations with even less resources. This has always been a satisfying role in the community.

The Museum helped Friends of the Maribyrnong with a submission to Moonee Valley council for a memorial to Nick the Hermit. We helped West Footscray Primary School develop a program around their new indigenous garden. A new Aboriginal Men's group in the region has been based at the Museum. Somali women came to talk about possible projects. Others come to simply talk to us about ideas and get feedback.



View of the Maribyrnong from Nicks corner (below left) and proposed seating/monument location. These images were developed by the Living Museum for the Friends of the Maribyrnong proposal to Moonee Valley Council.



Significant support has also been given to Wellbeing Theatre, a group with a great idea, a great product even an overseas booking but nowhere to prepare their project. The project involved preparing and re-building a large model of a book, higher than some houses, which was to take a few weeks to complete.

Like many others the group had a limited budget and although the idea is to hire out the bluestone building as a commercial arm for the Museum's sustainability the reality was there were no bookings for winter. So we gave Wellbeing Theatre the space for reduced rates to allow this great project to come into being. Right now they are performing in Macau, China.



Rebuilding of the Big Book in the big bluestone building

Aboriginal dancers performing at the Living Museum before the inaugural William Cooper Walk on June 3.



William Cooper

A clear partnership was with the Gathering Place on the inaugural William Cooper Memorial Walk in June as part of the awareness raising for the anniversary of the 1967 Referendum for which Aboriginal rights was a central issue.

More than ten years ago Aboriginal Cultural Officer Larry Walsh researched William Cooper and found that some of the early meetings of the Aboriginal movement took place in Footscray. Subsequently the houses these meetings took place were identified in the Maribyrnong Heritage Study as places of significance.

The Memorial walk started at the Museum, went along the river, over the wooden bridge into Fairbairn Park where there were barbecues and music.



William Cooper Memorial Walk led by the Police Pipe Band.

Maintenance

Events in the park and events in the bluestone building and the venue generally have become a lot smoother with the hidden army of maintenance workers operating through the Work for the Dole Programs based at the park and supervised by Brett Hosie. Brett has been quietly establishing a stable program of maintenance, interspersed with more innovative projects, by keeping these project coming continually through arrangements with Parks Victoria and Western Bulldogs.

Simple examples this quarter have been clearing out of very dusty dirty rooms at the back of the bluestone building and providing a whole new set of display boards with a re-cycling painting program of boards used in previous displays.



The Work for the Dole team re-painting display boards for Museum exhibitions.



Winter Solstice

There were actually two winter solstice events this year. And they were not exactly on the date of the solstice but a week later to take advantage of the full moon as depicted in the flier advertising the events.

The first was a magic event for kindergarten children organised in conjunction with the Little Lorikeets Kindergarten parents. Now most of you might think it was a bit cold to be out that night. And it probably was. Also for the first hour it was raining. But the kids loved it. We had six big fires, 80 Chinese lanterns and hundreds of T-light candles. Just after 6:00 pm the clouds parted and the moon came out. It was magic. No photo can possibly capture the romantic atmosphere.

The kids left about 7:00 pm and then at 8:00 we moved into the Refugee Week Winter solstice event with a celebration of mixed cultural music. Evocative Kurdish songs wafted through the crisp evening. Followed by a duet of Chinese Cello Player Theo and Aboriginal guitarist, Russel Smith. Former Vietnamese refugees and more recent African refugees mixed with Italians, Irish and others of various backgrounds to create a shared experience of seasonal celebration. Season's Greetings in the Southern Hemisphere.



Children playing around the lanterns during the rain at the Winter Solstice.



Kurdish singer, Emre Acar, and his father play Kurdish songs on the 'Baglama' (like a boozuki) to an audience which includes former refugees from Africa, Vietnam and China.



Aboriginal musician, Russell Smith and Chinese Cellist, Theo, play a duet at the Solstice.