

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND JUSTICE
STANDING COMMITTEE**

**INQUIRY INTO BUILDING RESILIENCE AND ENGAGEMENT
FOR AT-RISK YOUTH THROUGH SPORT AND CULTURE**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
WEDNESDAY, 29 JUNE 2016**

SESSION TWO

Members

**Ms M.M. Quirk (Chair)
Dr A.D. Buti (Deputy Chair)
Mr C.D. Hatton
Ms L. Mettam
Mr M.P. Murray**

Hearing commenced at 10.36 am**Ms JUNE MOORHOUSE****General Manager, Community Arts Network, examined:****Ms MONICA KANE****General Manager, Community Arts Network, examined:**

The CHAIR: On behalf of the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee, I would like to thank you for your interest and your appearance before us today. The purpose of this hearing is to assist the committee in gathering evidence for our inquiry into building resilience and engagement for at-risk youth through sport and culture. I would like to begin by introducing myself and the other members of the committee present today. I am Margaret Quirk, the member for Girrawheen. On my left is Mick Murray, the member for Collie–Preston, and on his left is Mr Chris Hatton, the member for Balcatta. We are a committee of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia. This hearing is a formal procedure of the Parliament and therefore commands the same respect given to proceedings in the house itself. Even though we are not asking you to provide evidence on oath or affirmation, it is important that you understand that any deliberate misleading of the committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. This is a public hearing and Hansard will be making a transcript of the proceedings for the public record. If you refer to any documents during your evidence, it would assist Hansard if you could provide the full title for the record.

Before we proceed, would you please respond verbally to the following? Have you completed the “Details of Witness” form?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: Do you understand the notes at the bottom of the form about giving evidence to a parliamentary committee?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: Did you receive and read the information for witnesses sheet?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: Do you have any questions in relation to being a witness at today’s hearing?

The Witnesses: No.

The CHAIR: We have questions to ask you today, but, before we do that, would either of you like to make an opening statement?

Ms Moorhouse: I think perhaps the logical place for us to start is just with a quick definition of what we are talking about when we talk about community arts and cultural development, which is the work that our organisation, which we call CAN, undertakes. Essentially, it involves artists working collaboratively with communities for the purpose of social change. I know that you have had testimony from others who have talked about this kind of work. It uses all art forms. It is about expression of self and identity and developing cultural knowledge and artistic skills. I can give you a quick background to CAN’s work.

[10.40 am]

The CHAIR: Please.

Ms Moorhouse: It was established 30 years ago and works to promote and support community arts and cultural development with WA communities. One aspect of our work is undertaking projects with communities, including young people, and that, presumably, will be the work we will focus on with you here today. For the last 10 years, that work has centred on working with Noongar communities in the eastern and southern wheatbelt, and now we work right across Noongar country. That work has involved sharing and the telling of stories and using those stories as a starting point for art, and, again, that art can take many different forms, including painting, dance, music, textiles, doll-making, video clips. That creates opportunities for people to be heard and for the broader community to connect with and appreciate their Noongar communities and the culture of that shared place. We have also undertaken work with CALD communities, and that is an area that we are looking to expand our work in in coming years. That might be enough at this stage. We have worked right across the demographic of those communities, but, certainly, quite a lot of that work has been with young people.

The CHAIR: In relation to the Catalyst program, we have just got some questions we would like to ask you about that. There used to be four categories, but now the “explore” is no longer offered and I just wondered what the reason for that was.

Ms Kane: I think Catalyst has been going in CAN and obviously it is funded by the Department of Culture and the Arts and we devolve funds on their behalf. The three categories have been going for probably at least 10 years. The fourth category, the “explore” category, was a partnership that we had with the Mental Health Commission where we decided to specifically focus on mental health, although there was a range of mental health and arts in the projects and the applications we were getting. It was really about bringing the people who wanted to do projects that focused specifically on mental health and giving them an option to just go for that category. It was very successful. It took a little while to get moving and then it was very successful. It was \$50 000 a year. Last year was the last year; in 2015 it wound up, and that was purely because the Mental Health Commission stopped the funding. So, it was a structural issue within the Mental Health Commission, as opposed to the program itself. In fact, the Mental Health Commission, during that time—they only funded us for maybe three years at the most in that category—also added funding to another project because of the success of the programs. But then there were structural changes within the department that meant that it did not really fit for them.

The CHAIR: Last year you funded 27 out of 56 applications; that is just under half. Is that typical of the success rate or do you do a bit of triaging along the way?

Ms Kane: Yes. Over the last couple of years, the Catalyst program has increased in applicants and become much, much more competitive. There are a couple of implications of that. One of them is obviously that people miss out. We looked at why that was—why the increase in applicants—and there was a range of reasons, and some external factors, that funding was getting tighter across local, state and federal landscapes. It meant that the community arts fund was accessible for people. Also, with the way that we administer the program, we have got the capacity to provide support along the way. It meant that particularly CALD and Aboriginal organisations, where it is much harder if language, literacy and numeracy is an issue or they do not have the capacity to go for the bigger funds or the larger grants, could come to Catalyst and be supported in the application. That increased the need. The implication of having so many unfunded meant that we started to get larger organisations and local government auspicing coming to the grants, and when you laid that out, their applications were stronger. We fed this back to the Department of Culture and the Arts that it meant that probably the people in need the most were then missing out again. It became a bit of an issue because the fund was so successful in many ways, not solely because of the fund, but because of external issues as well.

The CHAIR: It would be true to say you have got increasing numbers of people seeking funding each year, because of fewer other avenues.

Ms Kane: That is what we found. I think this year we have had one round, and there is another round in September, and this year it has levelled off a bit.

Ms Moorhouse: I think the first round was quieter, and I think that was because it came right at the time that the Department for Culture and the Arts announced their new grants program, so they have restructured their grants program, and introduced a community grants area, so I think there was a bit of confusion and all the people thought there was an opportunity, so that probably reflects that the timing was very close to when our first round came out.

Ms Kane: It will be interesting to see how the September round works for us.

The CHAIR: Can you just tell us what criteria the assessment panel uses, or are you able to provide us with a copy?

Ms Moorhouse: We would certainly do that, but it is probably worth pointing out that we came assuming that we would be talking more about the project work that we do, where we work with communities.

The CHAIR: We will get onto that as soon as we can, all right?

Ms Moorhouse: No, that is fine, Margaret; it is just to explain why we are perhaps not as prepared around the details.

The CHAIR: No, that is fine. What sort of feedback have you got as to how straightforward the application acquittal processes are?

Ms Kane: The application process has really good feedback, and I think that is largely due to the way that we administer and also the person who administers it, to be fair. She has been doing it a very long time. We work very closely with the applicants and give a lot of feedback.

Ms Moorhouse: We run workshops on how to prepare your application, how to work up an idea, so there is a lot of support for people to actually develop their grant writing skills. And we do see it as a bit of a gradation, that if people can become comfortable with our processes, which are that much more accessible, they will perhaps not be quite so intimidated by some of the government funding that they can access.

The CHAIR: We will get on to talk about the program shortly. About what percentage of your work would be targeted at at-risk young people?

Ms Kane: From the Catalyst program or overall?

The CHAIR: Catalyst.

Ms Kane: I am just seeing in our annual report, if we have got that figure. No, we do not.

Ms Moorhouse: Otherwise, that is something we could take on notice and give back to you.

The CHAIR: And what are the most successful projects for young people that have been funded through Catalyst?

Ms Kane: I think the projects—we have got a copy of the annual report here, so I will hand it around, where it showcases a couple of the projects, but generally the most successful projects from Catalyst tend to be intergenerational, so full community-based. I think of the Mandjar Dreaming project, where we have the young kids creating art that may be based on the stories of their older generations, or of the history in the community, and then we get young people involved. That tends to be how most of the projects work. You do get projects that just target young people or at-risk young people. As June said, we are not completely across all the projects with Catalyst, but the ones that come to mind, that stand out, are certainly the ones that are intergenerational.

The CHAIR: More generally can you just outline some of the successful programs that CAN generally has run for at-risk youth?

[10.50 am]

Ms Kane: We have got many, but the one that probably is best to highlight is one called Noongar Pop Culture. This is a project that we ran in Narrogin. We have an office in Narrogin. A short background to that office is that it was opened in 2010. We were invited in by the government at the time. It was the ICC, so I think it was the federal government; it is now the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. There was a lot of feuding between families, and a high risk of suicide. It was in the news and it was a very traumatised and fractured community. We went into the community and sat down with both sides of the family and explained to them what it is we do, and asked for their support in opening an office, with the condition that both sides of the family are employed in the office. It was a verbal agreement and everyone was on board, and we continued to build relationships between the community and with the community and with stakeholders.

A few years on, after many projects that included young people and elders and parents, we did a project called Noongar Pop Culture, and I will hand this around. The aim of this project—the artistic outcome—was to take popular songs, work with the students at Narrogin Senior High School, and to translate those songs into the Noongar language, film them, so that the kids both performed in the film and learnt filmmaking. Some did film; we did language obviously; we did hip-hop because that was something that the kids related to; and we did dance and drama as well. One of the outcomes, other than the fantastic publication and the energy of the young people, was that the school indicated to us that the retention rate of students, during the project and in fact during the three years that we worked with the high school in a range of other intergenerational programs, had increased significantly.

Last year we completed a social return on investment report, and I might just hand this around, where we had a researcher conduct an analysis over the five years that we had been in the town, but specifically focusing on primarily the students and the Noongar Pop Culture, and that showed a return on investment of \$18 for every dollar spent. We did not understand the significance of that, because we work with stories and we work with art and we see the change anecdotally and that does not for us take away what we see, but having it in a number that we can share and explain has been really critical for us. We put that in the annual report, and I do have the summary report that gives a bit more detail of how that number came about. Sorry —

Mr C.D. HATTON: Sorry, keep going. I just want to ask a question about this.

Ms Kane: Sure, okay, I will just round it off to say that what the analysis showed is that we put in about \$600 000, and that is obviously through funding to us, that we then invested into the town at the time, and there was a social return of \$11 million. That considers things like recidivism, so potentially if the kids did not go to school then they got into trouble and where would their life end up? It takes into account the potential prevention of suicide, mental health, and it also takes into account things that may have cost the community. So it takes off, it does the same calculations forward as it takes back, if you are not familiar with social return on investment.

Mr C.D. HATTON: That social return looks good, and I am just reading it as you were talking about Narrogin and what you did. The social return is significant. Where do you go to from there with evidence basing and closing the gap? Do you follow up on these programs? The schools mainstream status quo teachers work hard, and then you are doing this outside the school in order to integrate back as a social return. But—closing the gap, employment, evidence-based—where do you go, what do you do next?

Ms Moorhouse: I think it is fair to say that we would identify for you that one of the challenges we have is being funded project by project, and I am sure you have heard this many times. So, we seek out more funding. We are running a program again in Narrogin at the moment, with funding from the federal Ministry for the Arts, so we are continuing our work down there at present. We have actually been able to sustain our work in a community like Narrogin or in the eastern wheatbelt over long periods, but only through securing successive funding. I think, in terms of talking about gaps, we are now finding that some of that funding has wound up and we are having to exit those

communities. So, for example, we have had to close our office in the eastern wheatbelt at Kellerberrin. We are anticipating that we will need to close our office in Narrogin at the end of this year. That does not mean that we will not do projects with those communities going forward, but clearly that sort of really substantial investment in that community can become quite unsustainable. We sustained it for a long time, but really staying there is difficult, and that brings with it some other challenges. But just to pick up on the employment, we have clearly employed Noongar workers in both of those offices; in Keller and in Narrogin, they have all been staffed by Noongar staff from those communities. So for the years that they have been operating, that has been a level of employment that we have offered. We have had numerous people who have moved through those positions, some of whom have been able to go on to other employment. We have the example of a young woman, Marleena McIntosh, who was employed by us. She came through our projects as a participant as a young teenager, and then we were able to employ her as a project officer on projects. Then she moved into one of our officer positions in the office. Subsequently, she has gone on and is now a business administration trainee at Woodside. There have been those kinds of pathways to employment. Marleena is one example. We have a number of people who we have literally employed through these programs who have gone on to other sources of employment. Another young woman, Connie Yarran, has come through our projects. She is a fabulous little dancer with a great personality, and she then took up a position of wanting to develop up a dance crew in Keller. She set up a little group called Static Crew, which she teaches. She has groomed them and those kids have performed at the Beaufort Street Festival, conferences —

Ms Kane: In front of thousands, yes.

Ms Moorhouse: Connie and Marleena attended the constitutional summit representing Kellerberrin; I think it was held in Sydney some years ago. Connie has just won a young achiever's award. There are a number of examples that we could offer about people who have come through in that way. But widespread employment is very challenging to point to.

Ms Kane: Yes.

Ms Moorhouse: I guess I would get back to some of those structural challenges we face in trying to really leverage systemic change in those communities where we work as a result of being funded project by project.

The CHAIR: One of the things that has come through in all our hearings is the need for sustained relationships with young people, not just going in and doing 10 weeks or four weeks or what have you. That is something that you would both agree with, by the looks of it.

Ms Moorhouse: Absolutely; and not just with young people. With so much of our work, even if it is targeting young people, we do not get anywhere unless we also can sort of engage the parents and the elders in those communities.

Ms Kane: And the agencies as well.

Ms Moorhouse: And the agencies. So we are maintaining the relationships all the way through, and if we do not have the trust with the elders, in particular, we really are on a hiding to nothing with the work, I think it is fair to say. So building that trust has been particularly important in CAN's work.

[11.00 am]

The CHAIR: We have a briefing note of the various funding sources that you have. I notice that in the philanthropic section are the usual suspects—the Myer Foundation, the Telstra Foundation, the Ian Potter Foundation, Rio Tinto and Alcoa. This is just by the by, but some correspondence I got last week included the Packer foundation. I had a look at that and saw that there was not much in Western Australia, so you might want to have a look at that.

Ms Moorhouse: We have just put an application in to them to work in Gosnells with the City of Gosnells and with their CALD communities. So that is exactly what we have just done. Can I just ask —

The CHAIR: This is Dr Tony Buti, who is our Deputy Chair and the member for Armadale.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Right next to Gosnells!

Ms Moorhouse: Yes, exactly! We are hoping to be in your corridor, compliments of the casino.

Could I just ask about the briefing note that you referred to, because Monica and I were looking at each other?

Ms Kane: We do not get money from any of those people.

Ms Moorhouse: We do not get funding from any of those people.

The CHAIR: Oh, really?

Ms Kane: I did not know if it was just a general statement.

The CHAIR: That was on the website—funding sources for arts community projects on the website.

Ms Kane: I think we provide that as information—that makes sense now—for people to think about in that these are the sorts of organisations that people can access for funding.

The CHAIR: Right; okay. I am sorry. I just realised that I have got it incorrectly. We had a late-night sitting last night!

Ms Moorhouse: Just in the interests of accuracy.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Can I ask a question just while you are collecting your thoughts on that?

The CHAIR: Yes; sure.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Talking about Closing the Gap, you answered significantly about the employment, and systemically it is different to your micro-employment and so forth?

Ms Moorhouse: Yes.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Closing the Gap: do you fund for things like NAIDOC Week or anything like that?

Ms Kane: We do not fund for NAIDOC Week, but we do programs. The funding is just a specific part of our organisation, which is Catalyst. So if someone wants to apply through Catalyst to do something in NAIDOC Week, then —

Ms Moorhouse: An arts project that culminated in NAIDOC Week —

Ms Kane: — that gets assessed accordingly by a panel. We do things in NAIDOC Week; in fact, we have an exhibition opening next week—next Tuesday—in Midland that celebrates a project that we have been funded by the Ministry for the Arts for, I think, six years. It is just winding up after six years, and it is called Bush Babies. That is another intergenerational project done throughout Noongar country. That is a culmination of that. In terms of Closing the Gap, we do not specifically look at Closing the Gap and say, “That’s in our strategic plan”, for example; “That’s what we’re going to focus on or that’s what we’re going to focus on.” We do, in funding applications, relate back to funding the gap where it is applicable. But I guess what our projects do in terms of some of the key areas around our projects—whether it be governance or community governance or whether it be economic development or whether we are talking about things like education and employment for the people we work with, using the arts as the methodology—is around building skills, whether they be artistic or whether they be life skills. It is about empowering. It is about a shared identity, and that might be for a culture, for a community, for a family or collectively. It is around self-esteem and self-worth and a sense of belonging. Those terms get thrown around easily in

conversation, but what you see in some of the publications, and I think what comes out in this report, are really specific things. I will quote one of these young people. I have a tag here. When I was reading it this morning, I went, “This is the realness that links to Closing the Gap.” One of the young people said, “A lot of the kids have too much energy. They don’t like being confined to the classroom for so long. They are different when they do the pop culture. They are doing dance, they are doing something active, they are constructive, they are better behaved, they get there on time and they don’t skip it.” That is a reflection of the young people saying, “Look, this is what’s happening while this class is going on.” So we do not focus it on a certain pedagogy or the structures that they might get in their classroom; we flip it and we say, “Let’s forget that for a moment and let’s talk about you, and let’s talk about your culture and your identity, and your family, and let’s have fun.” All of sudden, they are engaged and they want to be there.

Ms Moorhouse: And your struggles—a chance to talk about some of those struggles and some of the challenges they are facing but to do it in a positive environment.

Mr C.D. HATTON: I was interested in the strategic plan. I am glad you brought that up. That is what I was going to ask next. Thanks for that.

Ms Kane: As I said, we do not use a direct link. We could also say we do not have a RAP plan because our whole strategic plan is a RAP plan.

The CHAIR: For the purposes of Hansard, that is reconciliation action plan.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Do you think local councils could be more supportive by providing facilities and getting on with things? You mentioned the City of Stirling program, different ones—regional and councils. What is the story on that?

Ms Moorhouse: When we talk about that long-term systemic change, it has proven challenging and it varies from community to community and local government to local government, quite clearly. If we are in an area like the southern wheatbelt and we are doing our work with the Noongar communities and we are interweaving with the broader community in various ways, we get great responses there. Clearly, what we are trying to do is work in a sustainable way, which means, ultimately, we have to get ourselves out of there; we cannot just stay there forever. I just want to lay out this conundrum in this work. We need a length of time to build the relationships and the trust and get fantastic work coming with those communities but we have to not stay there so long that everybody just relies on us and becomes dependent on us. I would say—this would be an observation that we would make after watching this work over a long time—the communities come on the journey with us and our funding focuses on those projects and working with those communities. It is much harder for us to take the different levels of government that we need to engage with to sustain it once we go. It is much harder for us to do that work, both because they like to rely on us because we are there building those relationships and we can make things easy and our projects can deliver nice things that happen in NAIDOC Week, so they come to rely on us, to know all the elders, and they will come and say, “Can we get some elders for this or that?” We are not really sufficiently resourced to put in the strategic work into getting them to own that and embed those relationships. There are two challenges there. One is a level of resistance or difficulty in engaging those levels of government and the other is the amount of time it takes to do that when, in fact, we are funded more to do this project work but because we cannot do that so well, we are not getting the best outcome, ultimately. Is that clear?

Ms Kane: It does vary on local governments.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Yes. It appears what you are saying is that the mainstream status quo way of operating is a platform and you need to somehow interweave to get the best outcome in the future. Whether you have a dedicated centre for multiculturalism which then marginalises away from mainstream with Closing the Gap and all that sort of stuff.

Ms Moorhouse: There is always the challenge that if your funding focuses you on working with this target audience, you can do that in a way that separates off. We work absolutely hard not to do

that, but it is about trying to work across. But of course the sort of work that you actually need to do to go in and engage a local government authority and, without wishing to sound patronising, but to skill them up, to get some of that cross-cultural understanding happening, and to stay on their case, frankly, project funding will not do that; that actually needs support for advocacy and strategic work and capacity building. It is much harder for organisations like ours to attract that funding because essentially you are not producing pretty art products at the other end. It is a more hidden work that requires resourcing the capacity within our organisation. If we were to lay out our budget for you and the percentage of our core funds compared with the percentage of our project funds, it is sort of out of whack, but that real strategic work is really only going to come out of that support for core funds. It is a challenge that we work with.

[11.10 am]

Ms Kane: I just want to add to that. We try to do that work wherever we can. Last year we completed research with the Chamber of Arts and Culture, funded by DCA. It was a mapping of local government and the arts. Some of the outcomes, particularly around how local government conduct their planning for arts, there is a lot of arts projects and culture and arts activities going on.

Ms Moorhouse: And spending by local government in the arts.

Ms Kane: Absolutely, but we found that a lot of that was ad hoc so it is not in their community and strategic planning, which is quite telling. We know that that is a lot of people on the ground, a lot of officers on the ground, who are doing the fight with the communities and getting the outcomes and certainly getting the money but the middle-term and long-term planning at the higher end or the corporate end of local government is not there; it is just not in their strategic community plans. We know that with the new framework being implemented, we are hoping we will see some real change in that.

Ms Moorhouse: The IPR framework.

Ms Kane: Yes, the IPRF. One of the other outcomes that was really telling in that was out of the 41 local governments, eight have RAP plans.

Ms Moorhouse: So six per cent of Western Australian LGAs had RAP plans.

Ms Kane: That was hugely disappointing but not surprising. June, you can correct me if I am wrong but regional local government certainly stand out as having some systemic issues around their ability to create the long-term relationships with Aboriginal people. I do not think that that is news. I think that is very, very real on the ground. That plays out.

Ms Moorhouse: I would have to say that from my years of working with local government and watching that in action, and of course you cannot generalise. The other thing, as many of you would be aware of with local government, it will wax and wane so you will get periods where you get passionate advocates on the council or amongst the staff.

Mr C.D. HATTON: Or the change of CEO—comes in for two years and moves on.

Ms Moorhouse: Precisely. We find that in partnership with local government; there are moments in time when you can do some really good work with the local government and then it will all go to hell in a handbasket, frankly.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much. A transcript of this hearing will be forwarded to you for correction of minor errors. Any such corrections must be made and the transcript returned within 10 days from the date of the letter attached to the transcript. If the transcript is not returned within this period, it will be deemed to be correct. New material cannot be added via these corrections and the sense of your evidence cannot be altered. Should you wish to provide additional information or elaborate on particular points, please include a supplementary submission for the committee's consideration when you return your corrected transcript of evidence. Thank you very much and good luck with that application.

Hearing concluded at 11.14 am
