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Artist-in-Residence
GRANTS PROGRAM

2010-2013

Artist-In-Residence Grants Program in Western Australia

Executive Summary



Department of Culture and the Arts
Department of Education

artsedge



The Creative Education Partnerships: Artist-In-Residence Initiative (AIR) is managed for the Federal Government by the Australia Council for the Arts and delivered in Western Australia by the Department of Culture and the Arts and the Department of Education under the title 'Artist-In-Residence (AIR) Grants Program'.



This research was undertaken by Professor Dawn Bennett and Ms Vicki Caulfield with assistance from Ms Laura Kittel, Faculty of Humanities, Curtin University, Western Australia. The research was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee in July 2011 under the title 'Artist-In-Residence Grants Program in Western Australia, Final Evaluation Report 2010-2013'; approval number SSAL-06-11.

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The Department of Culture and the Arts and AIR Grants Program partner, the Department of Education would like to acknowledge the many artists, arts and cultural organisations, teachers and school communities, volunteers and community groups who have shared their stories, photographs and knowledge to create an inspiring collection of AIR projects across the four years of the pilot program. Most importantly, the researchers Dawn Bennett and Vicki Caulfield from Curtin University, and 2010 consultant Alison Woodman, must be acknowledged for their thorough evaluation of the AIR Grants Program in Western Australia 2010-2013.

This report is only available electronically in PDF format and can be downloaded from the ArtsEdge website at www.artsedge.dca.wa.gov.au

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Executive Summary

The AIR Grants Program embodies 'education in art and education through art' government policy as outlined in *Creative Connections: An Arts in Education Partnership Framework 2010-2014*. A number of projects in schools with high Indigenous student populations also supported the Federal Government's Closing the Gap strategy to reduce Indigenous disadvantage.

Throughout the course of the pilot AIR Grants Program (2009-2013), the evaluation research has strongly suggested that the presence of a well-structured artist-in-residence program can have a positive impact in a number of different domains. These include enhanced student learning and community engagement, broader understanding of the value of the arts in education, and professional learning for educators, artists and pre-service teachers.

Project participation measurements

During the four-year pilot program a total of 27 AIR residency projects were delivered. These involved 56 schools including primary and secondary schools, one early childhood education centre, district high schools and one school for children with special educational needs. A Primary Extension and Challenge (PEAC) group was also represented. Eight projects were conducted in remote and regional locations and these projects incorporated 21 schools. Students from regional and remote areas were also represented in the Hospital School Services residency (2013).

The pilot program embraced a number of innovative partnerships including a unique collaboration between the Hospital School Services and the Child and Adolescent Health Service. Key partners over the four years included nine arts and culture organisations: Buzz Dance Theatre, Musica Viva Australia, Black Swan State Theatre Company, Southern Edge Arts, Community Arts Network of Western Australia, Barking Gecko Theatre Company, KULCHA Multicultural Arts, FORM, and the Midland Atelier. In addition, community groups, government departments, local councils and industry sponsors were involved in multiple ways. Key statistics are as follows:

- ➔ Almost 8,000 students across all year levels from Kindergarten to Year 12, including:
 - ➔ Almost 1,900 students from regional and remote locations;
 - ➔ 6,207 primary students and 1,622 secondary students (164 unknown/year level not recorded);
 - ➔ 927 Indigenous students (11.6 per cent);
 - ➔ 236 students with disability (three per cent); and
 - ➔ 1,061 students from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds (13.3 per cent).

- ➔ 464 teachers and education assistants and 65 pre-service teachers;
- ➔ 114 artists-in-residence, supporting artists and arts and cultural organisation staff;
- ➔ Over 11,000 contact hours for all artists; and
- ➔ Two projects involving partnerships with university schools of education (Murdoch University and The University of Western Australia).

A detailed breakdown of the data is presented in Chapter 11.

Public outcomes

While it is not an expectation of the AIR Grants Program, a feature of most AIR projects in Western Australia is a showcase event where students' creativity is presented to the wider school community or general public. These showcases have included art exhibitions, unveiling events for sculptures or murals, film screenings, music concerts, and drama and dance performances. Events are generally well attended and serve to raise the profile of the arts within the school whilst enhancing the school's reputation within the local community.

Overall, the four-year pilot of the AIR Grants Program achieved the following public outcomes:

- ➔ 45 public performances;
- ➔ 212 exhibitions;
- ➔ 31,744 attendees; and
- ➔ \$3,712 income from ticket and product sales.

Educational Impact and Outcomes

LEARNING AREAS

Across the 27 AIR projects in the pilot AIR Grants Program, all but one Learning Area in the Western Australian Curriculum was addressed. As well as The Arts, most projects incorporated English outcomes and the majority included Technology and Enterprise and/or Society and Environment outcomes.

The AIR program enhanced delivery of The Arts Learning Area in relation to the four learning outcomes of Arts Skills and Processes, Arts Responses, Arts Ideas, and Arts in Society. Combined, the 27 projects addressed all art forms: namely, Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music and Visual Arts. Several successful AIR projects enabled schools to trial new directions for their art programs. In all cases the results were positive, and in several cases new courses were offered as a result of the trial. These include Senior Secondary courses of study.

CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS AND THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

A number of AIR projects achieved strong cross-curricular links with non-Arts

Learning Areas such as English for narrative writing, poetry or drama, and Society and Environment with regard to historical or cultural themes. On the whole, cross-curricular links were found to be more feasible in primary school settings.

Secondary school residencies were mainly confined to The Arts context, although often with links to the English curriculum. Primary schools were better equipped to achieve whole-school integration and the results of these cross-curricular exercises were extremely positive for both students and teaching staff.

AIR project teams also utilised their residency to trial cross-curricular approaches. Towards the latter part of the pilot program, this included particularly the Geography and History areas of the Australian Curriculum Phase 1¹, and the two cross-curricular themes of Sustainability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures. Sustainable practices and environmental ideas were often explored through the use of recycled materials and found objects. Exploration of Australian Indigenous themes heightened cultural awareness within school communities and encouraged Aboriginal students to share their own cultural knowledge with peer groups.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Evidence from the AIR pilot program in Western Australia strongly indicates that the presence of a well-structured artist-in-residence program has a positive impact on student learning. AIR acquittal templates have gathered a variety of qualitative data in support of this claim (refer to Chapter 11), and in 2013 a revised acquittal template gathered more quantitative evidence of student learning against defined capability statements. The data from 2013 demonstrates improvements in arts learning outcomes, education priorities including literacy, across general capabilities such as critical and creative thinking, personal and social capabilities and intercultural understandings.

Students' art outcomes were reported as being of a high standard overall and, in many instances, were considered to be innovative and original. Student artwork from a number of projects was selected or short-listed for external exhibitions, providing independent validation of quality.

Teachers frequently reported improvement in students' self-confidence, engagement in and motivation for learning; results of the evaluation tool trialled with two AIR schools in 2013 supports teachers' observations. The schools did not generally supply attendance records for the period of their AIR residency, but many schools observed improved attendance during the residency. Schools with a high Aboriginal student population were particularly positive in this regard.

¹ <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>

Professional learning outcomes

FOR TEACHERS

AIR projects across all four years of the pilot were highly rated in terms of professional learning and enrichment of teaching practice. This is a positive sign for the future of AIR and similar arts in education projects. In total, 463 teachers and other participants attended 76 (formal) professional learning workshops delivered by artists-in-residence as part of the AIR program. These sessions were used to discuss curriculum links or for artists to share their creative skills and vision for the project.

Teachers' professional learning was primarily by way of observation and collaboration with artists in the classroom. Teachers appreciated working in a creative partnership and were often refreshed by new ideas for their own arts practice and teaching practice.

Finally, AIR project coordinators consistently reported enhanced skills in project planning and management skills, including time management, team building, delegation, communication, negotiation and administration.

FOR ARTISTS

Artists and arts and cultural organisations rated their overall experience of working in the AIR schools very highly and reported diverse professional learning outcomes.

Early career artists tended to benefit most from exposure to a school environment and were able to profit from the opportunity to develop teaching skills and knowledge. More experienced artists found the AIR residency beneficial in different ways, including the chance to experiment with new art techniques. Some artists, including those with an established practice, found that the planning and project organisation experience elicited skills they went on to apply to their whole arts practice.

The AIR project strengthened artists' professional confidence, including their ability to charge fees appropriate to their skills and experience. Others experienced unexpected challenges that proved to be crucial lessons in planning, time management, contractual obligations and negotiation. A number of artists developed new business ideas as a result of their AIR experiences.

Partnerships

Many AIR projects attracted substantial voluntary support and/or forged strong links with the local community and external sponsors. Schools with an active P&C Committee often benefited from additional funds and parental support.

The two projects in which schools partnered with university Faculties of Education were a big success in terms of reciprocal benefits and enhanced learning. The involvement of pre-service teachers added value to both projects and provided an authentic training experience for the trainee teachers. This model is commended as a strategy for all future projects to consider.

Project planning, management and resources

The AIR pilot program provided invaluable opportunities for school communities to engage with planning and delivering complex, collaborative, arts-based projects, often with multiple partners and ambitious goals. Multiple project teams agreed that their AIR experience had enhanced project coordination skills such that they were now prepared to take on other similar challenges. This is a positive result in the context of autonomy for public schools in Western Australia.

A strong working bond and communication between the project team of artists, teachers and project coordinators is critical to the success of artist-in-residence projects. The need for collaborative and detailed forward planning and regular project team meetings was a key feature of the most successful projects and it was a consistent recommendation from school participants.

Common project management challenges for AIR project teams related to workloads, timetabling, budgeting and acquittals reporting; planning and meetings; general communication; and publicity. Residencies in regional and remote schools faced particular challenges related to travel, and the most successful of these projects chose to embed artist/s in their schools over a lengthy period rather than adopt a fly-in-fly-out approach.

Sustainability of AIR projects

The AIR pilot confirmed the potential to produce longer-term impacts on school programs and student learning. At a number of schools, AIR projects were reported to have developed heightened awareness and a greater appreciation of an arts-enriched education and the arts generally, and to have driven specific curricular reform as described in the report. Although there were many challenges, cross-curricular integration was often achieved and resulted in growing awareness of the variety of ways in which this can occur. While the momentum of a project may not be fully sustained beyond the school year, in most cases other long-term benefits accrued. For example, in schools where AIR projects had durable art outcomes, the physical presence of the artwork continues to engender a sense of pride within the school community and to sustain the legacy of the residency.

In addition, many school principals and teachers who experienced AIR projects have become ardent champions of the artist-in-residence model, although finding the funds to access professional artist incursions is a constant challenge. Other sustained benefits included ongoing industry and community partnerships.

Conclusion

The four-year pilot of the AIR Grants Program demonstrates that the opportunity to work with professional artists in a structured educational context can be highly beneficial to students and teaching staff. The experience of participants has served to support student engagement and to enhance awareness of artists and arts practice. The program has demonstrated that by nurturing students' creativity, school-based artist-in-residence projects also have the potential to expand interest in the arts, and, by developing new audiences, to improve employment opportunities for professional artists. Benefits to teaching programs have included arts curriculum reform, cross-curricular integration of arts practice, and cross-curricular developments in other learning areas.²

Significant professional learning for artists, arts and cultural organisations, and teachers and other school staff have resulted in sustained benefits for student learning and the ability of teachers and artists to deliver quality programs in the Arts. The AIR pilot program has resulted in strong partnerships with parent groups, the wider community, industry, and on one occasion with another government department.³ Finally, the AIR experience has enhanced schools' capacity to conduct school-based projects into the future.

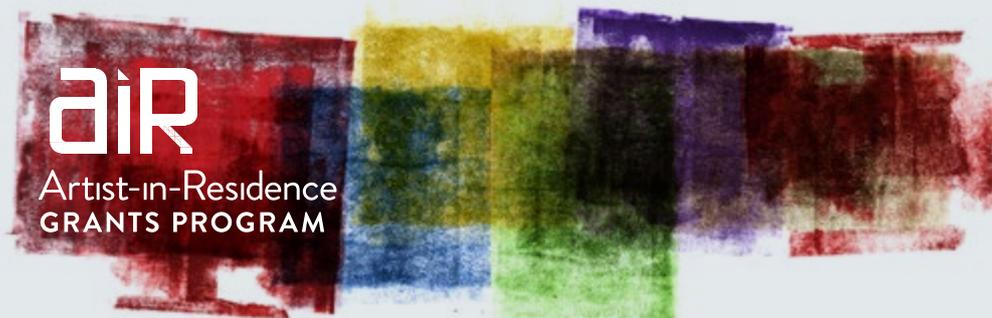
These positive indicators align with the dual goals expressed in the core policy instruments guiding the AIR program: to increase the base of future professional artists (*Australia Council's Education and the Arts Strategy 2009-2012*); and to facilitate arts practice in education (*Creative Connections: An Arts in Education Partnership Framework 2010-2014*) policy that underpins the ArtsEdge program in Western Australia.

The positive results of the AIR pilot program align with participants' positive appraisal of the administration of the AIR Grants Program through ArtsEdge and the AIR Working Party. We conclude with one respondent's strong endorsement of the WA AIR program. This statement encapsulates the support of all stakeholders, from the youngest students through to the most experienced artists and teachers. It also mirrors our sentiment on the future of this program: *"It is great to see extended arts residency projects as a priority on the national and state government agenda and we hope it continues."*

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² We note that at the time of finalising this report, the new Australian Curriculum: The Arts has been released but has not been endorsed by Western Australia. During the four-year AIR pilot program, only Australian Curriculum Phase 1 subjects were developed and implemented.

³ The WA Department of Health in the Hospital School Services project delivered in 2013.



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