



## SeeChange Festival Forum

SATURDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2018 / 2-4PM  
HUSKISSON PUBLIC SCHOOL

### AGENDA

- Welcome
- Acknowledgement of Country
- Presentation: SeeChange 2018 Festival facts and feedback (See Briefing Notes on page 2)
- Round table discussion 1:  
*What is the purpose of the SeeChange Festival for members of Jervis Bay and Basin Arts and the community?*  
(Summary of responses on page 4)
- The current challenges of staging SeeChange and making it sustainable
- Presentation: Where to from here (See Briefing Notes on page 3)  
Proposal for SeeChange to become annual. Next festival Saturday 01- Monday 10 June, 2019
- Round table discussion 2:  
*What can you do to make the vision for SeeChange 2019 Haven a reality?*  
(Summary of responses on page 4)
- Outcomes and actions
- Close

# SeeChange Jervis Bay Arts Festival

26 May - 11 June 2018

## Overview

The 10th SeeChange Jervis Bay Arts Festival successfully delivered 104 paid and free events over 17 days. The festival theme, Shared Pathways, came from Jenny Robertson's ongoing research and interest in the history of The Wool Road from Nerriga to Jervis Bay.

SeeChange 2018 encompassed: See of Light official opening ceremony; visual art exhibitions; environmental sculpture competition and exhibition; artists' talks; a literary lunch; poetry hub; live music; cabaret; comedy; street performance and public art installations; art and music workshops, and SeeFood@SeeChange - a suite of food focused events presented in conjunction with the Huskisson Jervis Bay Food Network (HJBFN).

## Be Bamboozled!

SeeChange 2018 took a big step forward introducing a major strand of performing arts in collaboration with internationally recognised Bamboozled Productions for a four day event that included: The Pocket pop-up theatre seating 100 people; 24 different acts; 30 shows; 15 street performances; 150 shared stories in The Little Wooden Caravan; special shows for primary schools. Despite the rain the main shows in The Pocket achieved average 60% ticket sales with Stiff Gins selling out the last show.

## Visitors and Participants

SeeChange 2018 attracted 10,000 visitors 2000 more than the projected figure of 8000 and up from 6000 at SeeChange 2016. The opening night event attracted The number of interstate and overseas visitors exceeded expectations. In addition there were 535 festival participants including: 180 Artists and Performers and 250 Volunteers who generously contributed time, effort, energy, skills and good will.

## ArtPath

The 25 ArtPath exhibitions recorded 4000+ visitors and generated \$41,000 worth of art sales.

## Marketing

JBBArts won \$20K grant from DNSW Regional Flagship Event Fund to market SeeChange to tourists which funded developing the festival's profile via a new website; social media and promo videos, and some print media.

**Website** From 01 April - 11 June 2018 there were: 19,000 sessions; 104,000 page views; 12,000 users.

**Facebook** followers increased from 1202 to 2132 (to date).

**Instagram** followers increased from 132 to 780 (to date).

**Print media** Coverage in: Canberra Times; Sydney Morning Herald; About magazine; South Coast Register / Nowra News; The Bush Telegraph.

**Radio** Coverage via: ABC Illawarra. Power FM. 2ST. BCCR Community Radio. Triple U Community Radio

**Print collateral** 5,000 postcards, 5,000 maps and 5,000 flyers/posters distributed to cafes, info centres, general stores, clubs and pubs locally and in Berry, Milton etc.

**Street banners** on five poles in Owen Street - sponsored by Huskisson Chamber of Commerce and Tourism.

## Challenges

### Venues

A significant challenge was availability of suitable, affordable venues for 100+ creative arts events. Fifteen weeks before the festival opening it became necessary to find an alternative to the main venue and disseminate a wide range of planned exhibitions, activities and events around the area rather than having a rich mix at one site.

The knock-on effects of this included: not having a creative hub and focal point for the festival with a concentrated celebration of the theme; some site/space specific art installations and performances did not go ahead; the number of paid activities in the program and fundraising opportunities were reduced, negatively impacting revenue.

The Festival Director was able to adapt the planned program and maximise use of venues such as: Sandholme Guest House that generously hosted the main art show and some music recitals; Huskisson Community Hall housed the Bird Multi-media exhibition and activities; Jervis Bay Village Retreat for art workshops; two historic churches where art and textile shows and music recitals were held; Huskisson Public School for the poetry hub.

### Funding

JBBArts relies on grants, sponsorship, donations registration fees and commissions to the cover operational costs of SeeChange.

JBBArts is not eligible for grants provided by Regional Arts NSW (the Shoalhaven is not classified as a region in the RANSW Networks). Grants that are more readily available to support SeeChange are tourism related. SeeChange 2018 received two such grants: \$20K DNSW for tourism related marketing + \$15K from Shoalhaven Tourism for the opening event.

An anticipated federal arts grant to support Be Bamboozled! did not materialise. Extensive efforts were made to replace this funding gap. The Bendigo Bank offered a three year agreement of \$5K p.a. on the basis that all funds were available for use in 2018, providing some but not all of the funds needed to underwrite this major new component.

Based on budget projections at the time JBBArts decided to take the financial risk of going ahead, deeming this an important step for the festival in energising the cultural and commercial life of our local communities.

Some events that relied on third parties and were expected to raise operational funds either underperformed or did not go ahead, negatively impacting revenue, exacerbating the impact of the change of main venue (mentioned above).

JBBArts used its cash reserves in staging SeeChange 2018. Fundraising is now a priority and a number of initiatives are underway.

### Future funding opportunities

Shoalhaven Tourism is excited and impressed by the move forward SeeChange 2018 made with the social media activity it generated and the feedback it received from local businesses about the need to support a festival event like Be Bamboozled!

Shoalhaven Tourism's Events and Investment Specialist was so impressed she encouraged JBBArts to enter SeeChange into the Best Small Event category of the Australian Event Awards. Recognition of this type enhances sponsorship and fund raising potential.

With the steady growth in cultural tourism, the cancellation of the Shoalhaven Winter Wine festival and the affiliation between JBBArts and the HJBFN Shoalhaven Tourism sees SeeChange as event with broad appeal that has the potential to be a cultural beacon in the Shoalhaven.

Based on this, if SeeChange becomes an annual event, Shoalhaven Tourism is willing to make a 3 year sponsorship agreement.

The Be Bamboozled! event also attracted the attention of a number of sizable local businesses (not current sponsors of SeeChange) who have expressed interest in sponsoring this in future festivals.

The 650 Instagram followers gained during SeeChange 2018 are largely local tourism related businesses most of which are not currently donors or sponsors, presenting JBBArts with a sizable pool of potential new supporters.

### Volunteers

SeeChange is entirely run by volunteers **including the Festival Director**.

There were a number of instances where volunteers withdrew or were withdrawn at short notice and could not be replaced. This had significant negative impacts on particular events and the general running of the festival.

JBBArts is now listed with various volunteer registers to increase the pool of general volunteers and those with special skills the festival needs.

JBBArts working hand in hand with the HJBFN (also a volunteer run, community association) was mutually beneficial in sharing volunteers and other resources.

### Feedback received

JBBArts has received extensive feedback sharing appreciation and some issues that are being addressed:

- More detailed printed program information and simplification of online program.
- Refining the sales process for the ArtPath.
- More signs and flags for ArtPath venues + other street banners.
- More extensive local promotion (in addition to that outlined above under Marketing).

## Where to from here

The JBBArts Committee met on 31 July 2018 to review SeeChange 2018 and discuss where to from here to secure the viability and sustainability of this long standing event that contributes so much to the communities in the bay and basin area.

Major considerations include: 1. Funding bodies and sponsors wanting three year agreements; 2. Maintaining momentum in planning, organising, funding (rather than stop-start when the event is every two years); 3. The potential for annual sponsorship in the interest being expressed by 600+ local tourism related businesses.

It was unanimously agreed in principle to stage SeeChange again in 2019 as a shorter event with a more condensed program from 01-10 June, and have this forum to explore this with members and friends of the festival.

### SeeChange 2019 The vision

The beautiful and largely unspoilt environment of the Shoalhaven is well known for its spectacular beaches, national parks, native fauna and flora and wide range of outdoor pursuits. The Shoalhaven is less recognised as a haven of all things creative including the wonderful food of the area.

The proposed theme for SeeChange 2019 is Haven. The vision is to clearly present and position SeeChange as a cultural beacon in the Shoalhaven:

**Opening** For the opening evening to build on the success of combining creative arts and cuisine and further integrate the two through staging some form of spectacle in and around White Sands Park, Voyager Park, Shark Net Beach.

Arts, music, performance and creators' market stalls will thread along Owen Street, woven into the SeeFood@SeeChange feasting and tasting extravaganza that will focus more on exciting street food experiences (than indoor dining).

**Cross cultural sharing** Cultivate opportunities to incorporate more cross cultural sharing that expands knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal cultures.

**Creative hub** Create a rich, dynamic and engaging creative hub and focal point for the festival. This will encompass: the main art show; workshops; music recitals; readings; talks; culinary arts; perhaps artists/performers/writers in residence, and so on - that will appeal to a broad cross section of our local communities, as well as being an exciting attraction for out of area visitors (potentially at Huskisson Community Hall).

**ArtPath** Encourage exhibiting artists on the ArtPath to try new ideas to enrich the experience of people engaging with (and potentially buying) visual art and craft.

Encourage artists to plan ahead and consider their level of involvement each year e.g. not necessarily present a full exhibition but some years support other artists to exhibit.

**Be Bamboozled!** Secure sufficient funding to again stage Be Bamboozled! Use the knowledge gained from SeeChange 2018 and implement some of the exciting ideas Bamboozled has proposed, specifically tailored to SeeChange and our local communities.

## **NOTES: Round table discussions**

### **1. What is the purpose of the SeeChange Festival for members of Jervis Bay and Basin Arts and the community?**

Responses to this question from the 40 attendees demonstrated overwhelming support for the festival and recognition of the important contribution SeeChange makes to enhancing the cultural and commercial life of communities in the local area.

#### **For artists and performers (visual art; music; poetry; drama; theatre; cuisine; etc.) SeeChange provides opportunities:**

- To generate revenue through sales of works and merchandise, performance fees, etc.
- For creative collaboration with other artists/performers
- To share and promote their creative practice with local and out of area visitors
- Give talks about their work, share with the community

#### **For the community and local region SeeChange:**

- Energises the area in winter
- Generates commercial activity for businesses in winter
- Promotes tourism in winter / cultural tourism
- Presents opportunities to: be engaged in the arts; be entertained; be educated about the arts; learn about local artists/performers
- Promotes inclusivity - community participation of all demographics
- Presents another aspect of the area - the arts and culture as well as the natural environment
- Newcomers to the area gain insight into the community and make new connections
- Brings entertainment to our doorstep
- Brings the community out in force - creates connection - especially opening evening combining art / performance / food with SeeFood@SeeChange

### **2. What can you do to make the vision for SeeChange 2019 Haven a reality?**

Responses to this question from the 40 attendees tended to reiterate the issues already being addressed outlined in the Briefing Notes under the heading 'Feedback Received' or affirmed the direction outlined under 'Where to from here' (See previous page).

#### **Specific actions attendees committed to taking included:**

- Organise and oversee an open exhibition specifically for first time exhibitors - encourage budding artists to participate
- Making art studios at Vincentia High School available to the community for pre-festival workshops guided by experienced artists
- Being on festival sub-committees e.g. ArtPath; opening event;
- Acting as cultural liaison to cultivate more cross cultural sharing with Indigenous artists/performers and facilitating greater participation/contribution to all strands of SeeChange e.g. art; music; performance; food; etc.