



Summer Sessions Project Report

December 2021 - February 2022



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INNER METRO
Metropolitan
Partnership



Jobs,
Precincts
and Regions

Acknowledgement

Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land. We pay our respect to their Elders, past and present.

We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.

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Executive Summary

This report has been prepared by the City of Port Phillip for the Inner Metropolitan Partnership.

The Summer Sessions project was funded and guided by the Victorian Government's Metropolitan Partnerships Development Fund, which supports the Metropolitan Partnerships to act on local priorities, informs their advice to government and supports Melbourne's social and economic recovery.

The Inner Metropolitan Partnership encompasses the local government areas of City of Port Phillip, City of Yarra, and City of Melbourne. The Partnership identified social and economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic as a key priority for their region.

In response, The City of Port Phillip developed the Summer Sessions project. The project was a series of 33 free entertainment activations hosted at three locations across the city. The activations included small bespoke platforms used by local artists and entertainers with the aim of supporting local creative industries, promoting social connectivity, and attracting customers back to shopping strips to stimulate local business.

The Summer Sessions activities were targeted to a broad audience with a diverse program of activations with support from local retailers, performers as well as the Inner Metropolitan Partnership, which provided funding for the programming.

Community feedback from the events was overwhelmingly positive with 144 of 166 people surveyed noted the events led them to stay longer in the area, while 153 people surveyed supported Port Phillip running more events like Summer Sessions. The events engaged an estimated 3000-5000 people with 50-150 engaged at each event. Most people surveyed (43) noted they were "passing through" the local area, while 28 responded stating they came to the area specifically to see the Summer Sessions programming. Survey participants largely praised the quality of music and the support provided to the creative industry and retailers, while recommendations for improvement included increased shade, more seating, promotion of events and greater provision of food and beverage at the sites.

Retailers noted a small uplift in customers on the days where events occurred despite the activations taking place in the peak of the COVID-19 Omicron wave, where consumer spending was impacted due to lockdown levels and further restrictions were applied on public events.

The flexibility and scale of the events ensured Summer Sessions went ahead with minimal disruption, but further health related precautions should be factored into planning for future events.

The success of Summer Sessions and the important working partnerships maintained between Council, local industries and the Victorian Government led to the creation of a similar program titled Autumn on Carlisle Street.



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Introduction

Summary of Project

Summer Sessions was a series of free pop-up activations that brought entertainment, life, and colour back into some of the activity centres in Port Phillip.

The summer program was developed as part of the City of Port Phillip's social and economic recovery efforts in response to the impacts of COVID-19.

Held over a 12-week period in summer 2021-22, the program was promoted to the local community and local traders under Council's 'Live, Love, Local' brand.

After careful site scoping, three multi-purpose, bespoke platforms were designed and installed by local architecture firm, Openwork to create focus points at each location. Incidental programming in the form of live music, children's play, wellness, indigenous workshops, and fitness was then delivered on a weekly basis. To support nearby traders, print media was positioned on the platforms to promote local businesses.

The program was made possible with the support of the Inner Metropolitan Partnership and funding from the Victorian Government.



“The Summer Sessions program embraces post-lockdown freedoms while supporting a COVID-safe re-opening. All events are outdoors, bringing our community together, supporting the creative industry and driving foot-traffic to outdoor areas while supporting our local traders.”

summer SESSIONS

Locations

Burnett Grey Gardens
Ripponlea (Glen Eira
Road, Ripponlea)



Cleve Gardens
St Kilda (Fitzroy
Street, St Kilda)



Town Hall Reserve
South Melbourne
(off Clarendon Street,
South Melbourne)



Problem/Need for Project

In September 2020, The City of Port Phillip declared the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on local jobs and business activity should be treated as an economic emergency.

The economic shock associated with responding to the health challenge of COVID-19 hit Port Phillip hard, with local spend plunging from \$196 million in April 2019 to \$111 million in April 2020, \$53.1 million of which is due to a reduced visitor spend (Source: SpendMapp).

Gross regional product in Port Phillip was forecast to be 14.8 per cent lower (Victoria forecast 11 per cent lower) and local jobs were forecast to fall 5.2 per cent or more than 5,000 jobs from September 2019 to September 2020.

Retail and Hospitality:

The City's normally thriving retail strips and hospitality and retail sectors, which were forced to close temporarily then re-open under numerous restrictions, were severely affected.

Feedback from these sectors suggested that any activations to help bring customers back to the retail strips was to be encouraged.

This need for place making activities was reflected in the 2022 Partnerships advice, which identified the following priority outcomes:

- Boost short term investments in local amenity to activate local placemaking.
- Activate public spaces in activity centres to promote social connectivity and the local economy and unlock under-utilised public sector property for use by new social enterprises

Creative Industries and Live Music:

Live music has long been at the heart of Port Phillip. Our City has fostered generations of musical creation, performance, education, and celebration. However, the pandemic has caused unique and wide-reaching challenges for our City's live music sector.

It is well documented that the creative industry, particularly live music, was impacted by the lockdown and density limits with many artists losing income and the opportunity to perform.

Project Objectives

The objective of the program was to deliver nine events/public space activations across three different activity centres in the City of Port Phillip.

The aim of the project was to promote creative industries, social connectivity and stimulate the local economic activity.

Specific project objectives included:

- activation of public spaces and beautification of high streets
- supporting local business communities to attract consumers back to shopping strips and activity centres
- trialling a quick implementation/small-scale activation, to test concepts for large scale implementation
- allowing for broader stakeholder engagement in suggesting projects, partnering in project implementation, and experiencing the effects of projects
- creating an image of Council as government that enables citizens to test and inform Council policies.

Target Audience

As part of working group discussions, the following questions were discussed:

- Who are the target audiences do we want to attract?
- What types of activations would be best for the precincts?
- What times would be best for activations?

It was decided that in order to appeal to the wider community we try to schedule a diverse program of activations, that included a mix of live music, community and family activations and exercise programs.

Additionally, the activations were scheduled at various times across the program, to support as many businesses as possible.

Key identified audiences included:

- Residents aged 20+
- Residents who enjoy live music
- Families with children
- People into fitness
- Local traders

The project was designed and promoted to encourage the community and target customers to attend these events across the summer period. The type of activations booked was also designed to support the local creative industry, including local artists, musicians, and events staff.



“There’s something for everyone to enjoy this summer, thanks to Council’s Live Love Local Summer Sessions, a series of entertainment activations to help re-energise Port Phillip. From outdoor yoga and face painting to live music and food pop-ups, three grassy spaces across the City will come alive with free entertainment to help support traders this summer.”



Partners

The project was endorsed by the Inner Metropolitan Partnership, and funded by the Office of Suburban Development, via the Metropolitan Partnership Development Fund.

The project was managed by the City of Port Phillip, with support from a Project Working Group (PWG) comprised of council officers and representatives from the local retail strips. The PWG was responsible for providing input into the planning of the activation schedule, identifying

risks, and providing feedback. The project working group met formally for a planning session for the program, as well as informally several times over the duration of the program.

The project was further supported by local retailers and performers/activations who circulated promotional materials for the program.

Partners	Engagement
Office of Suburban Development	Council regularly engaged with representatives from the OSD on the progress of the project.
Project Working Group The project working group was comprised of council officers and community members representing trader and community interests for the 3 proposed project areas. Community Members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lisa Slaughter (Ripponlea Village) • David Blakely (Fitzroy Street Business Association) • Anne Michaels (Clarendon and Coventry Streets Business Association) 	Discussions were held with community stakeholders regarding the project, including target demographics, types of activations, risks, timelines. Working Group members were contacted throughout the program to provide updates, get feedback, and encourage promotion of the activations.
Businesses: Over 75 businesses were engaged as part of a flyer campaign.	Council officers worked with businesses in proximity to activations to promote upcoming events and display flyers and posters.
Performers/activations: Over 20 performers and activation providers were engaged.	Council engaged 20+ performers and activations companies to run the pop-up events, undertook an active social media and promotion campaign of events, directed at the community. This campaign was shared by performers and businesses.

Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Over the duration of the project, council officers managed several risks including:

Risk	Mitigation Strategy
Contractor Materials shortages: The COVID Delta strain created challenges, including extended lockdowns which impacted planning, and issues sourcing materials and contractors.	Council officers ran a competitive tender process, with the preferred contractors being local, available, and already in possession of materials.
Availability of performers During the COVID Omicron strain, several scheduled performers, were unable to perform, due to isolating.	Officers engaged closely with performers and often had contingency events/performers available in the event scheduled performers cancelled due to isolating.
Social Distancing During the COVID Omicron strain, there was a significant outbreak of COVID within the community. This presented significant health and safety risks for the community.	The pop-up events were designed to be small-scale, socially distanced and in open spaces to reduce the health risks at the time.
Poor Weather Poor weather such as rain or high winds on the activation date/s.	Council officers were flexible with event schedules. Officers scheduled a significant number of events, to ensure that if any events were cancelled due to poor weather (two events on the opening week were cancelled), Council still met the requirements of the Grant Agreement.



Photo credit: Alan Weedon



Project Delivery

Event Schedule

Over the course of the program, the City of Port Phillip, in partnership with the Inner Metropolitan Partnership and Office of Suburban Development delivered 33 activations spread over 16 days (8 weekends).

33 Activations



Launch event

27

Live music events

8

Community activations

2

Fitness/exercise activations

Across 16 days



Burnett Grey Gardens, Ripponlea






Cleve Gardens, St Kilda






Town Hall Reserve, South Melbourne

Event Schedule

	 Cleve Gardens St Kilda	 Town Hall Reserve South Melbourne	 Burnett Grey Gardens Ripponlea
Date	Activation		
Friday 17th Dec 2021	Lauch event ★ Live Music (The Harry Tinney Trio) Neon signs (Carla O'Brien) Welcome to Country (6pm) Mayoral opening		
Saturday 18th Dec 2021		Live Music – Orlando Jazz Combo	Community Activation – St Kilda Football Inflatables Program *Cancelled due to high winds
Sunday 19th Dec 2021		Live Music – Orlando Jazz Combo	Live Music – Mystic Trio *Cancelled due to poor weather

Christmas break

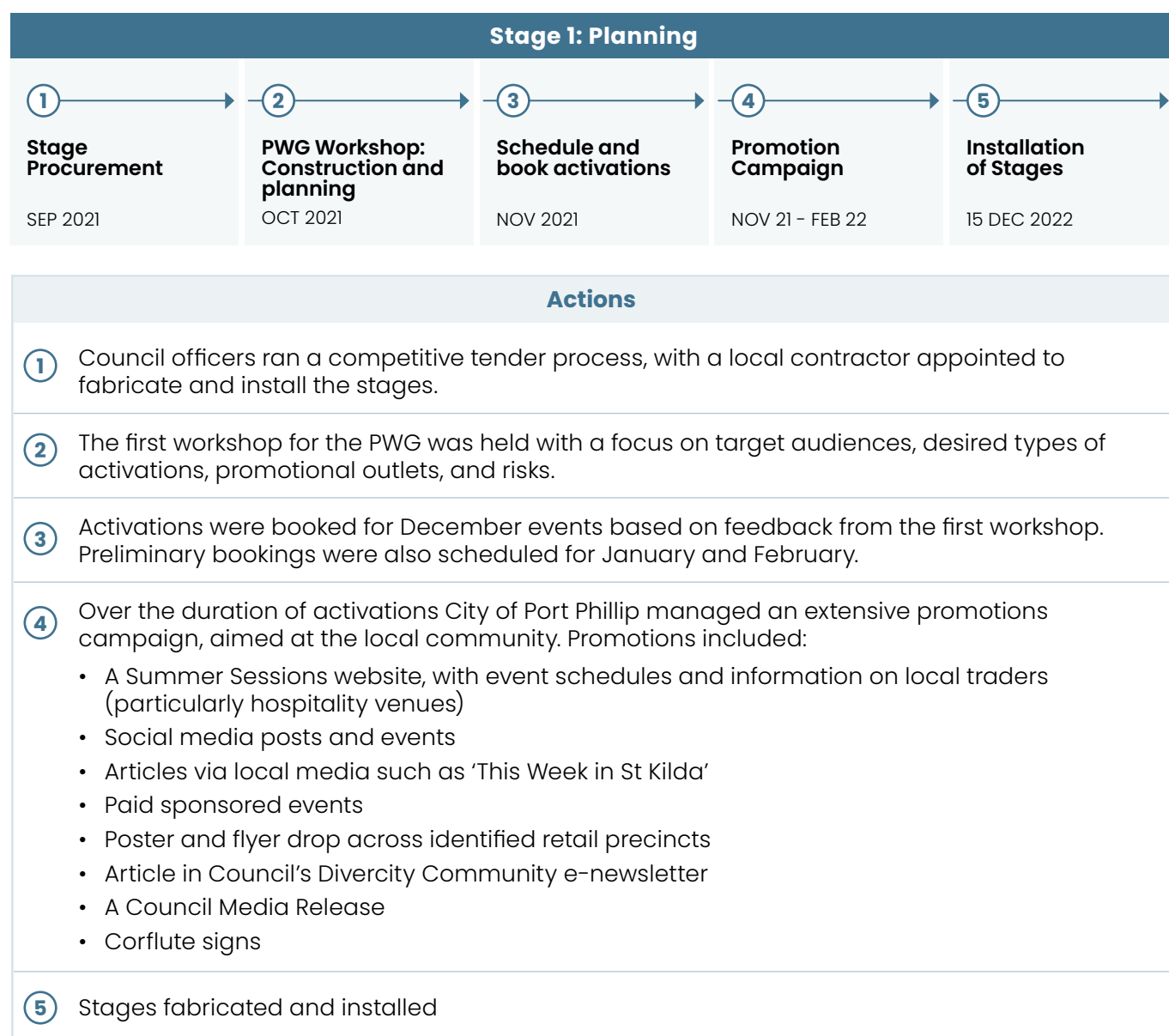
Saturday 15th Jan 2021	Live Music – Sharon Davis (Duo)	Community Activation – Paul Harvey Caricatures	Community Activation – Inflatable Handball Game
		Live Music – Orlando Jazz Combo	Community Activation – Giant Games (Chess, Jenga etc.)
			Live Music – Karin, Queen of Rock Uke
Sunday 16th Jan 2022	Live Music – Helen Katankin (Solo)	Live Music – Megan Kennedy	
Saturday 22nd Jan 2022	Live Music – Romanie (Solo)	Live Music – Helen Katankin (Solo)	Live Music – Margherita (Duo)

	 Cleve Gardens St Kilda	 Town Hall Reserve South Melbourne	 Burnett Grey Gardens Ripponlea
Date	Activation		
Sunday 23rd Jan 2022	Live Music – Tamara Reichman (Duo)	Live Music – Romanie (Solo)	Live Music – Mystic Trio
Friday 28th Jan 2022			Live Music – Sing a Song for Six Pence
Saturday 29th Jan 2022	Live Music – Just Louis	Live Music – Sarah Kabbani (Duo)	
Sunday 30th Jan 2022	Community Activation – YO CiTY Activation	Live Music – Mal Webb & Kylie Morrigan	Live Music – Justine Jones (Duo)
Sunday 6th Feb 2022	Community Activation – YO CiTY Activation		
Saturday 12th Feb 2022	Live Music – Dylan Pinkerton (Trio)		Live Music – Pal Mar (Duo)

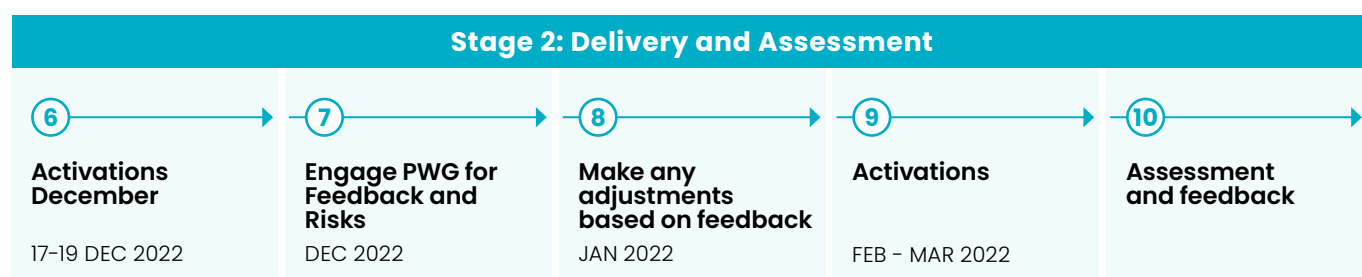
St Kilda Festival

Saturday 19th Feb 2022	Live Music – McDermott & North	Live Music – Duxie Franklin Duo	Live Music – Orlando Jazz Combo
Sunday 20th Feb 2022	Comm. Activation – Amos Roach + Zellenach (Workshop)		Exercise – Studio V Pilates
Saturday 26th Feb 2022	Live Music – Bernadette Novembre (Duo)	Live Music – Synthotronica	Community Activation – St Kilda Football Club Handball Game
			Live Music – Capt’n Justyna
Sunday 27th Feb 2022	Live Music – Synthotronica	Exercise – Yoga Space Melbourne	Live Music – Team Love Band

Key Project Milestones



Key Project Milestones



Actions

- 6** The first round of activations occurred.
 - The Cleve Gardens (St Kilda) launch event was attended by the Mayor and Acting CEO of The City of Port Phillip, Councillors, representatives from DJPR, the President of the Fitzroy Street Business Association, Council officers and members of the local public. The event included a Welcome to Country, opening speech from the Mayor of the City of Port Phillip, and performance by the Harry Tinney Trio. The Orange Cloud social services ran their services in tangent with the event, with several service users also engaging with the event. The event had several invitees unable to attend due to the time (6pm on a Friday in December).
 - The activation for Town Hall Reserve (South Melbourne) was cancelled due to extreme wind. This was communicated to traders' stakeholders and via the website.
 - The activation for Burnett Grey Gardens (Ripponlea) proceeded and was well received by local businesses and community.
- 7** Council officers engaged with workshop stakeholders and traders in the week after the first round of activations to get feedback on first activations, circulate planned events schedule and discuss risks.
- 8** Council officers reviewed the events schedule based on feedback of PWG and finalised schedule for January and February events.
- 9** 35 activations across 13 days were scheduled over January – February.
- 10** **Council officers worked with Voices of South, PWG and artists to get feedback on the event.**



Cleve Gardens,
St Kilda



Burnett Grey Gardens,
Ripponlea



Town Hall Reserve,
South Melbourne

Council locations

Project Delivery in Pictures

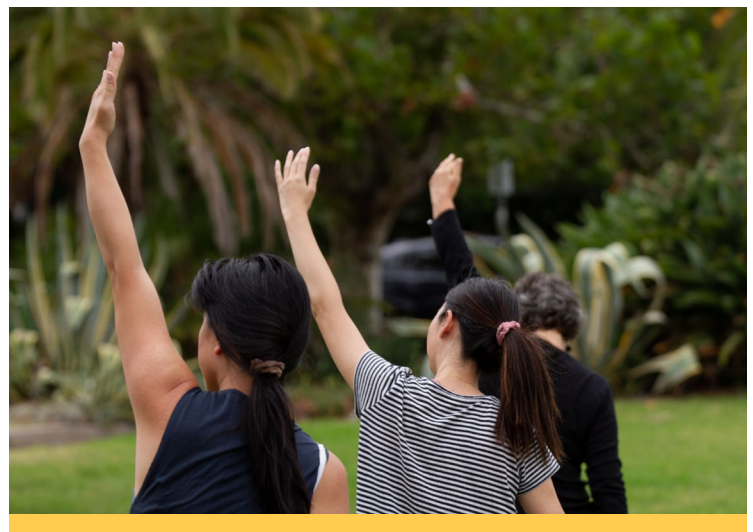
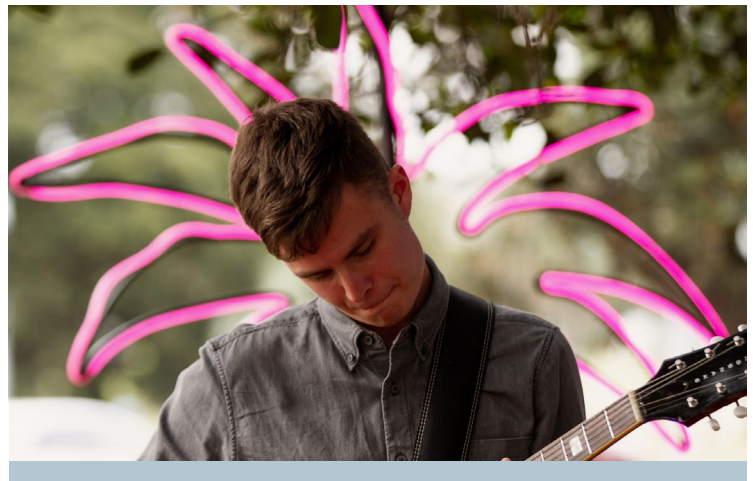
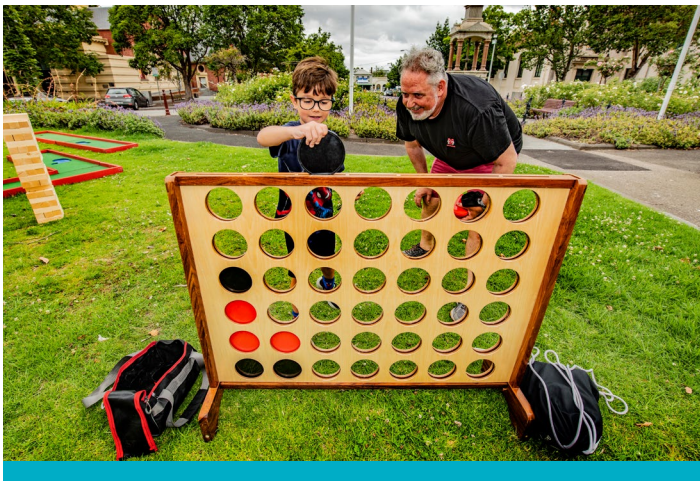
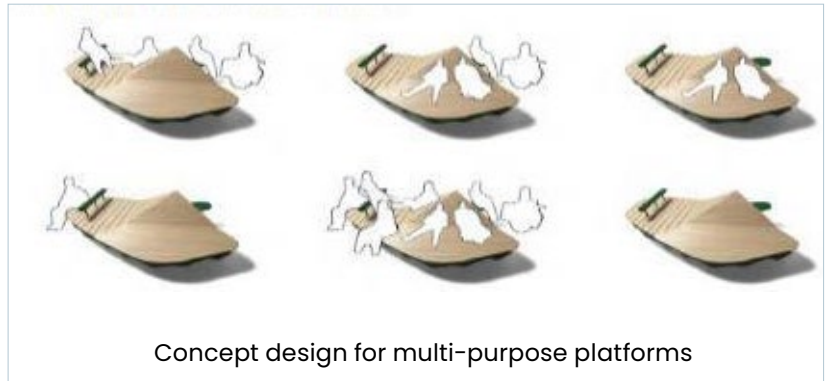




Photo credits: Alan Weedon
Yo City Official
Chris Cassar





City of Port Phillip Role

The City of Port Phillip worked as the delivery partners of the project by:

- provided project management duties such as chairing the project working group meeting and providing regular updates on the progress of the project.
- engaged with key stakeholders including representatives from OSD, IMP, retailers, and performers
- managed procurement processes including expenditure of funds once they were transferred from Office of Suburban Development.
- scheduled the events program, including assisting with set-up and pack-down where required
- managed the promotional campaign for the project, including online publications, social media, and events collateral.
- monitored and evaluated activations, including managing risks and making changes as required.



Photo credit: Alan Weedon



Outcomes

Summary

The desired program outcome was to contribute to on-ground local place-based solutions that respond to the impacts of COVID-19.

The City of Port Phillip scheduled 33 pop-up events (21 more than stated in grant agreement). This approach was taken to maximise the impact of the events as well as reduce crowd numbers for each event in light of the COVID Omicron wave and social distancing requirements.

Community feedback from the events was overwhelmingly positive. Of the 166 people surveyed:

- 144 noted that the events led them to stay longer in the area
- 109 would recommend to a friend (38 were passive and 8 said they wouldn't)
- 119 said they enjoyed the event (37 passive and 8 said they didn't)
- 153 supported Port Phillip running more events like Summer Sessions

Retailer and artist feedback were also positive.

Analysis

- Surveys taken over three sites suggested that the Cleve Gardens and Town Hall Reserve sites were most popular site. Feedback provided by retailers suggested that it changed, depending on the event.
- Across 33 events roughly 3,000–5,000 people were engaged through the events. Voices of the South surveyed roughly 1 in 2 participants at each event, suggesting that each event engaged between 50 and 150 people. This estimation was supported by artist and retailer feedback.
- The input of local retailers via the PWG was valuable in helping plan and schedule the events. Local knowledge helped ensure the events were targeted at the right audience and held at the right time.
- Community feedback recommended greater promotion for some events. However, the events schedule was spread out and promotion limited in light of the COVID Omicron wave, to ensure public safety measures, such as social distancing, were considered.
- Retailers reported a small economic uplift on event days, however COVID Omicron created significant challenges and a city-wide downturn in pending. Retailers were thankful for small events during this period.
- The artists engaged were supportive of the events schedule. The City of Port Phillip engaged over 40 artists, many of whom were local, and had not been able to perform for several years due to lockdowns.



Cleve Gardens,
St Kilda



Burnett Grey Gardens,
Ripponlea



Town Hall Reserve,
South Melbourne

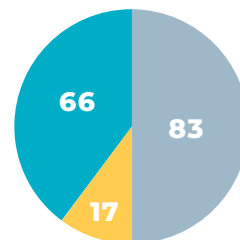
Council locations

Community Feedback - By the Numbers

Council engaged **Voices of the South Side** to conduct surveys on four dates, once at each platform location. **166 community members** were engaged, with the data as follows:

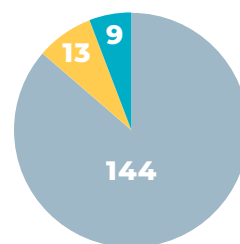
Where are you today?

- Cleve Gardens, St Kilda
- Burnett Grey Gardens, Ripponlea
- Town Hall Reserve, South Melbourne



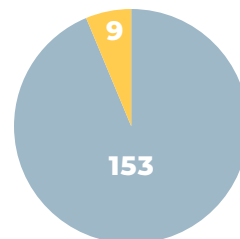
Did/Will the installation encourage you to stay longer in the local area today?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure



Should the City of Port Phillip run more events like these?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure (1)



How much have you enjoyed your time at the event today?

■ Yes - 119
■ No - 8
■ Not sure - 37

68

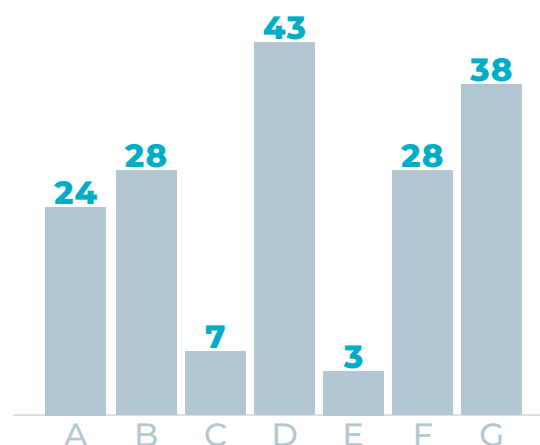
How likely are you to recommend this event to a friend?

■ Yes - 109
■ No - 13
■ Not sure - 38

55

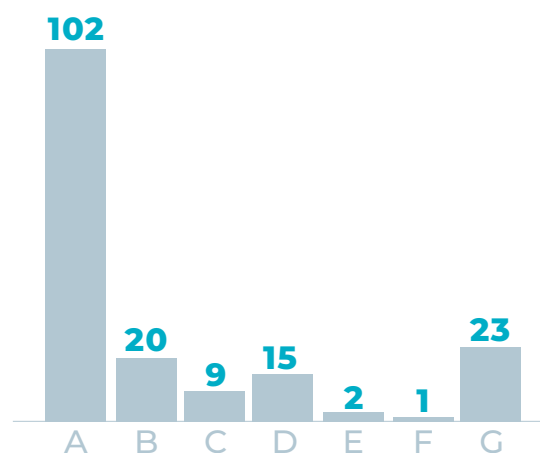
What were you doing in the local area when you saw today's event or activity?

- A. Shopping
- B. Visiting cafe/restaurants
- C. Visiting the gardens
- D. Passing through
- E. Accessing services (bank, doctors)
- F. Came for Summer Session
- G. Other



How did you hear about the Summer Session program?

- A. I was walking past and saw it
- B. My friend told me about it
- C. Council website, emails, social media
- D. Other social media pages
- E. Local newspaper or radio
- F. Street posters
- G. Other



Community Feedback – Comments and Recommendations

As part of the community surveys participants were encouraged to provide any additional commentary on the project. This included positive feedback or areas for improvement.

Feedback:

Community feedback was largely positive for the project. Feedback included praise for:

- The quality of the music
- Type of event
- Support for creative industry and retailers

Examples of community feedback:

"I came with 3 friends today we had a ball & it's a beautiful day."

"Love this area & am happy to be out again enjoying events, music, art."

"We used to live in the area but live in Newport and came back for this event"

"We aren't from the area but find the music delightful!"

"There should be more of this type of event in the area. This band has made my afternoon perfect."

"I really like the spontaneity of this event and this music is inviting"

Community Recommendations/Areas for Improvement:

Community feedback suggested the following improvements, should the project be run again:

- Increased shade
- More seating
- Greater promotion of the events
- Greater provision of food and beverage at the sites

Examples of community recommendations:

"Wish more shaded seating. I might have grabbed a coffee and sat longer."

"More advertising and engaging with community so they know about it."

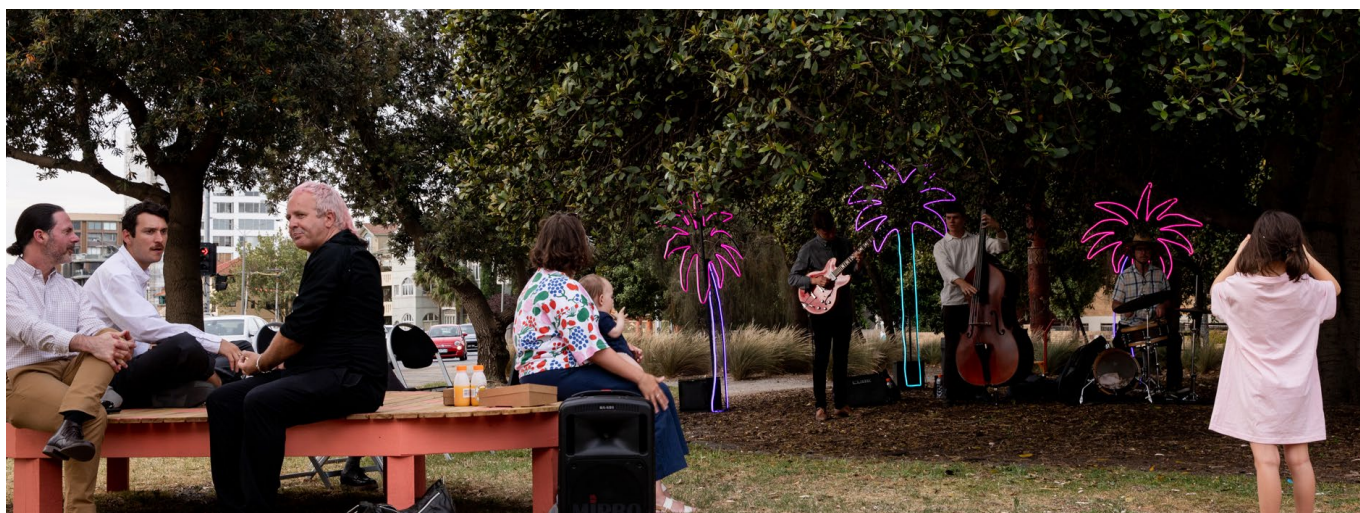
"Wish I knew about events ahead of time. I would have encouraged friends to make a day of it."

"Would be nice to have outdoor tables and chairs, more advertising with flyers or notice board, at train station."

"Coffee/food stand etc would be a good idea."

"A spot with more shade and no noise from local traffic."

"Some chairs for elderly."



Retailer Feedback

Feedback from the PWG and retailers was generally supportive of the concept of the event. Retailers noted a small uplift in customers on the days events occurred. They also noted that the events contributed to a good atmosphere in their areas.

Many traders displayed promotional materials such as flyers and posters in their retail spaces to support the project. However, social media engagement from traders such as promoting posts on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram were not high.

The data suggested the events attracted locals to the area as well as extending the time locals spent on the retail strips.

As the January and February events were occurring during the peak of the COVID-19 Omicron wave, where consumer spending was down due to lockdown levels, the additional activations were appreciated.

Retailers suggested that larger less frequent events would also be welcome and more emphasis on marketing to the local community.



Artist Feedback

Over 20+ musical acts (40+ artists) were booked to perform over the Summer Sessions schedule. Where possible Council officers tried to book local artists, consistent with the objectives of Council's Live Music Action Plan 2021-24.

Artists include:

- Bernadette Novembre (Duo)
- Capt'n Justyna
- Duxie Franklin Duo
- Dylan Pinkerton (Trio)
- Helen Katankin (Solo)
- Just Louis
- Karin, Queen of Rock Uke
- Margherita (Duo)
- McDermott & North
- Megan Kennedy
- Mystic Trio
- Orlando Jazz Combo
- Pal Mar (Duo)
- Romanie (Solo)
- Sarah Kabbani (Duo)
- Sharon Davis (Duo)
- Sing a Song for Six Pence
- Synthotronica
- Tamara Reichman (Duo)
- Team Love Band

Artists from the event provided positive feedback regarding the event concept and pop-up nature. There were some concerns raised regarding the traffic noise.



Ania Reynolds – Synthotronica

“There’s something for everyone to enjoy this I absolutely loved playing in both locations, thoroughly enjoyed it and think it’s a wonderful initiative from the council to bring music, performance, and art in general to public places in the area. I particularly liked that the locations weren’t typical or familiar performance locations, I thought that offering people unexpected encounters with art in unexpected locations is a great way of making the most of public space.

My observation is that the majority of passers-by seemed to be pleasantly surprised by seeing music in those spots and looked to be enjoying it, even if it was only momentarily while they were stopped at traffic lights in their car, or cycling past, or waiting for the train. And I think these brief encounters are just as meaningful and positive as the ones where people settle in and stay to listen for quite a while.

The two spots had very different vibes and passers-by and each worked well in a different way. Burnett Grey Gardens had a lot of people who were waiting for trains who stopped to listen, plus families and people out exercising their dogs, while Cleve Gardens was more cosmopolitan, and ended up having a more festival/party vibe with some great footpath dancing.

I think the council bringing free entertainment to the streets and public places is a great initiative and sends a really positive message to the community about the value of the arts to general wellbeing. If there are any more opportunities to do it again in the future, in either location or in new unexplored places, I’d absolutely love to do it again!

Ania Reynolds - Synthotronica

Learnings and Recommendations

Partnerships deliver the best outcomes:

The project has been a successful partnership between Council, the IMP, and Victorian Government. The project has significantly benefitted from the inputs of state and local government, as well as meaningful contribution from local traders.

Place-based activations work: While the progressive easing of restrictions in late 2021 and in 2022 has facilitated recovery, local economies have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels of activity. Strategies to improve visitor numbers to retail strips are critical for sustainable recovery of the local economy.

Support for Live Music/Creative industries is needed:

Support for the live music and creative industries is critical to their recovery. Any activations that can equally support, promote, and showcase local artists are to be encouraged.

Communications and promotions are important:

The project undertook a range of promotions via Council social media channels and networks. Council's promotions strategy sought to balance the desire to attract locals to the events, whilst also considering public health at the time of the Omicron wave. This resulted in varying levels of attendance at different sites and pop-up events. External promotional opportunities through mainstream media outlets such as Broadsheet and Time Out should be considered for future activations.

Seating and food and beverage offerings need to be prioritised:

Attendees noted that, whilst they enjoyed the pop-up nature of the events, additional seating and food and beverage offerings on site would have prolonged their engagement with the events. The project could have trialled pop-up food and beverage offerings from local traders.

Extreme weather can ruin events: As the programming took place in the peak of the summer period, some events were affected by the extreme heat or rain. Poor weather saw two events cancelled in the opening week. Further considerations could be made to minimise the impacts of the temperature and weather events at planned events to ensure the success of future outdoor activations.

Flexibility/Adaptability of projects required post-COVID:

Noting that we as a community are living with COVID-19, this project has been lucky that the concept was relatively flexible, and able to be updated to respond to changing circumstances regarding health advice. This included being able to reschedule performances based on weather, or artists isolating.

Location matters: The placement of stages in parks adjacent to retail strips received mixed reviews. Careful consideration of location is required for any place-based activations.

COVID planning a must: Consideration of the risks relating to COVID, particularly greater contingency applied to costs and allowing flexibility on scheduled dates. This project was impacted by materials shortages, contractor shortages, and artists isolating. The project had robust contingencies factored to ensure the project was able to be delivered.

Next Steps

City of Port Phillip: Based on the success of the program, the City of Port Phillip have organised to replicate the program in Carlisle Street, in partnerships with the Carlisle Street Traders Association and the Victorian Government's COVID-Safe Outdoor Activation Fund.

The program, called "Autumn on Carlisle Street," will include the installation of a new activity platform, and a scheduled series of musicians, kid's activities, and art.

 portphillip.vic.gov.au



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