

### Contents

Key learnings from Arts grant recipients .....	2
Introduction .....	2
Creative content .....	2
Collections and archives.....	2
Emerging artist programs .....	2
Mentor/mentee relationship.....	3
Creating final works .....	3
Dance programs.....	3
Touring programs.....	4
International touring.....	4
Regional touring.....	4
Regional audiences .....	4
Events.....	4
Exhibitions.....	5
Community events.....	5
Location/venue .....	5
On-site survey tips .....	5
Education programs .....	6
Teaching content .....	6
Working with students.....	6
Regional programs .....	6
Workshops/lectures.....	7

## Arts Key Learnings

### Key learnings from Arts grant recipients

#### Introduction

This document is intended for future applicants and grantees in the Arts program area. It contains the summarised learnings of all Arts grantees over the past five years.

The information documented here has been taken from the final reports of Arts grantees, which were submitted to The Ian Potter Foundation following the completion of their projects. As such, the views expressed here do not necessarily represent the views of The Ian Potter Foundation.

The learnings are grouped roughly by project type. A majority of Arts programs supported by The Ian Potter Foundation over the last five years fall under one or more of the following categories: emerging artist programs; touring programs; 'one-off' events, such as festivals or exhibitions; and education programs. The section titled 'Creative content' refers broadly to the choices surrounding creating, presenting or performing creative works, and as such is applicable to all project types.

#### Creative content

Select creative content mindfully. One grantee noted that the challenging and unfamiliar nature of his material led to problems retaining the interest of participants. This was counteracted by extensive utilisation of peer leadership and resulted in the majority of participants committing to the production.

Productions with content most relevant to teenagers' lives engage students most.

Embedding yourself in the communities that a work seeks to represent is imperative. An original pitch for a story can change dramatically based on genuine community consultation. One secular organisation had to alter the content of their workshop to suit the community's interest in gospel music.

People with lived experiences do not want everything portrayed negatively, nor tainted with rose-coloured glasses. Just present life as it is.

Choose titles wisely. One grantee's choice of title was considered difficult to understand for the general public and may have not gained as much recognition as a major work title, e.g. Mozart's Requiem.

Funders and stakeholders may have expectations around works that are being created. Consider engaging a third party to mediate expectations so the original artistic vision is not interfered with.

#### Collections and archives

Digitising archives can take longer than expected. One grantee's schedule was greatly extended due to the caution they had to take when 'baking' fragile, old music tapes.

Anticipate that you may require the expertise of professional curators or conservation staff when dealing with fragile or valuable collections.

#### Emerging artist programs

*These programs can include mentorships, fellowships, internships, and artist-in-residence programs. For information regarding workshops or masterclasses, please see the 'Workshop' section under 'Education programs'.*

## Arts Key Learnings

- A portable tablet rather than a fixed station makes it easier to solicit participation.
- Seating for parents and carers is likely to increase participation rates.
- For maximum impact, a staff member should be available to encourage participation and guide users.
- The survey should take no longer than 4 minutes to complete.
- An incentive similar to a Prize Draw increases participation rates.
- [Culture Counts](#) has developed a standardised set of metrics that cultural organisations can use to measure the quality of their work and benchmark outcomes.

## Education programs

### *Teaching content*

Complete front-end evaluation when preparing teaching content. One grantee attributed the success of their project to extensive liaison with teachers in pilot schools to tailor content to the level and learning area of each student group.

Be prepared for varied student abilities. For instance, one grantee found it challenging to determine the most effective activities for students with low literacy levels.

Education programs need not replicate the teaching practice of the school. One grantee reported that their program's success was based upon the fact that it provided students with an experience that could not be replicated in the classroom.

Be sure to deliver content to teachers with sufficient lead time.

When developing digital education resources, consider integrating online content with face-to-face learning (if possible). Generally, an e-resource as opposed to a hard copy resource is easier to update if and when changes occur in the curriculum.

### *Working with students*

Young people respond well when they are granted autonomy and respect. Engaging young people in the decision-making process makes for successful programs. Likewise, one grantee reported that hosting a series of workshops in a theatre instead of school contributed greatly to their success, owing to the maturity students felt due to how they were treated and the neutrality of the venue.

Students generally benefit from engaging with a program on more than one occasion.

Long lead times are required to train and up-skill young people in order to build their confidence in advance of a big public event, especially if they have little to no experience in the area of performance.

Be realistic about maintaining student engagement post-program. One grantee found it difficult to engage students online as they had to prioritise studying for VCE exams.

### *Regional programs*

Rigorously select teachers. One grantee reported that some teachers had preconceptions that students in remote schools would not be able to move beyond the limitations of their community environment and that this was displayed in authoritarian ways to students.