



No Boundaries

Audience and Participant Evaluation Report

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Cover photo: *No Boundaries* projection at the event, outside Joan Sutherland Centre, Penrith, 21 and 22 September 2012. Please note that any images in this report are the copyright of Penrith City Council 2012.

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Bailey and Yang Consultants



The Institute for Culture and Society

This evaluation project was designed and managed by the Institute for Cultural Research (ICS) at the University of Western Sydney. Fieldwork and analysis was carried out on behalf of the ICS by Bailey and Yang Consultants. The ICS champions inter-disciplinary, engaged and collaborative scholarship in the Humanities and Social Sciences and carries out research on the transformations in culture and society in the context of contemporary global change.

The Institute builds on the proven track record of the Centre for Cultural Research (CCR) in the conduct of research that addresses the social and cultural challenges of the 21st century. In the 2010 Excellence for Research in Australia (ERA) audit the University of Western Sydney, led by CCR researchers, was awarded a '5' rating in the field of Cultural Studies, meaning 'well above world standard', placing it as one of the leading research nodes in Australia and internationally in this area.

ICS members work in a broad range of fields including cultural studies, sociology, media and communication studies, human geography, anthropology, history, heritage studies, and urban studies. Located on the Parramatta campus of the University of Western Sydney, the work of ICS encompasses national and international projects as well as others with a local and community emphasis. Recent community projects include:

- The Art of Engagement: Culture, Collaboration, Innovation: This focuses on four arts projects hosted by the Museum of Contemporary Art (Sydney), the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, the Penrith Visual and Performing Arts, and the Campbelltown Arts Centre.
- 'Parramatta Stories': Values-based Community Development: The objective of this research was to investigate an alternative approach to strategic planning for community development by local government, using archival material.
- A Strategic Approach to Cultural Information Resources for Local and Community Development in the Blue Mountains Local Government Area: this project investigated how best to bring the diverse community and cultural information sources of the Blue Mountains Council into a common digital framework.

- Universal Design and Cultural Context: Accessibility, Diversity and Recreational Space in Penrith: an investigation into making public spaces physically accessible and culturally inclusive.
- Doing the Knowledge: Youth in Transition in Marrickville: this project analysed how education and training policies affected the lives of three generations of people living in an inner western Sydney suburb.
- Digital Refuge: Urban Narrative Strategies and Sustainable Media in Western Sydney: The project involved refugees and newly arrived migrants living in western Sydney.

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Executive Summary

The *No Boundaries* program had a resoundingly positive impact on participants and audience members.

Participants

Participants emerged from the program feeling confident, acknowledged and proud of their work. Participants increased in skills, capacity, proactivity and social connection. Significantly, several participants, in particular those with a special prior interest in art, experienced a type of “creative flourishing.” Observers and participants alike commented on the significant change in these participants – for example, becoming more proactive and feeling better about themselves. The program went beyond the usual arts activities for disability centres, by treating participants as artists contributing to a large-scale work.

***No Boundaries* filled a gap in the services already provided by disability services.** Whilst many disability services already provide art workshops for their clients, the *No Boundaries* program provided a large-scale, public platform for the exhibition of art works. This is a point acknowledged even by those workers and managers in the disability services who felt that some of the benefits of the workshops were shared by their own services’ art program.

***No Boundaries* empowered people with disability to participate as artistic peers, creating meaningful work.** This was critical to participants’ sense of empowerment and growth as individuals throughout the program. Participants took themselves and their creative process seriously because the *No Boundaries* team took them seriously. The final event, which incorporated participants’ works into a large-scale art event, was crucial to participants’ ultimate sense of pride, confidence and recognition.

Audience

Audience members were inspired, amazed, captivated and impressed.

An estimated 300 people attended the *No Boundaries* event over the two nights of 21 and 22 September 2012.

Audience members had an overwhelmingly positive experience of the No Boundaries event. 98.4% of survey respondents gave the event a score of 4 or 5 out of 5.

No Boundaries audience members left with an increased appreciation of what people with disability can do. 80.3% of respondents said that they had learned something about people with disability, and 95% of respondents now have a greater appreciation of people with disability as a result of the event.

The event inspired pride and appreciation of Western Sydney. 100% of the survey respondents from Western Sydney reported feeling proud that the event was in Western Sydney. 88% of respondents from outside Western Sydney had a greater appreciation of Western Sydney as a result of the event.

Learnings

Interviewees and organisers shared lessons learned for future programs of this nature.

Audience numbers were not as high as hoped. As the first-ever *No Boundaries* event, 300 attendees could be viewed as an impressive achievement. Nevertheless, interviewees expressed some disappointment in audience numbers. It is possible that additional marketing and public relations may help “break through” the event to the general public consciousness. For example, strategies could include high profile media advocates, and a social media campaign – both of which may be easier with the success of the first year to build upon. Planning for additional showcases for the works, such as daytime showings, touring partners and a broadcast partner, may also spread the inherent riskiness of a public, outdoor event.

Even in resoundingly well-received programs like *No Boundaries*, there is always room for improvement. Organisers and participants made suggestions for possible improvements to the event. These include food and drink stalls at the event, and including works from artists without disability.

The nature of the *No Boundaries* event as an evening light projection posed challenges for some participants’ attendance. As suggested above, future *No Boundaries* events may be able to address this by creating a suite of showcases for day and night time, live, online and on television. For example, Penrith City Council is working towards a daytime showing of the *No Boundaries* projection for International Day of Disability, and a DVD and online video of the work.

1. Introduction

This report is an evaluation of the participant experience of the *No Boundaries* project during 2012, and the audience experience of the *No Boundaries* event on the 21 and 22 September 2012 at *The Mondo*, High St, Penrith.

1.1 Background

No Boundaries was a multimedia arts inclusion project. It was developed as a result of a collaborative process between Penrith City Council, Sylvanvale Foundation and Illuminart Productions Ltd. It aimed to provide people with disabilities, supported by local artists, with opportunities to create and present a large-scale digital projection artwork that communicates their unique experience of living in the Penrith region.

From May to September 2012, a series of mini-projects, workshops and other activities were held to prepare for the event. Cindi Drennan, artist, was the Creative Director of the *No Boundaries* project and worked with others to support local artists to create work for the project.

A series of promotions, showcases and previews in the lead-up to the main event included:

- Pop Up in Station St, Penrith: a sample of photos, media and animation made during *No Boundaries* appeared as window projections in the shopfront of Penrith NADO's new office.
- Previews: these happened at *The Mondo* on "youth night," Thursday night, 20 September, and at the Disability Expo on the weekend before the main event.
- Screening: A sculpture, featuring video clips from the *No Boundaries* projection and a time-lapse recording of participant Tim Smith's work, was shown in the Penrith City Council foyer during the month before the main event.
- Online: The progress and creations of the various mini projects were available online at the *No Boundaries* website <http://www.noboundariesproject.info> and

Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/noboundariesproject>. Blog posts on the website also provided regular updates.

The artistic centrepiece of *No Boundaries* was an illuminated show projected onto the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre on 21 and 22 September from 6pm to 10pm. Projections onto the building included artwork made by the community.

Cindi Drennan sought out Penrith artists with disability who would be interested in contributing work to the *No Boundaries* art event. Disability service organizations were also involved, providing a conduit to people with disability. Cindi and other artists / practitioners such as Hazel Collins, David Capra and Trisha Merriman then worked with these artists and groups. Mini-project and workshops included:

- Visual Art Workshop. This was held fortnightly at the Penrith PCYC with *No Boundaries* Creative Director Cindi Drennan. About 5-7 local participants attended regularly, including interviewees for this evaluation: Tim Smith, Jill Huber, Anne Stratton, Valda Pomeroy, Paul Hazell and Kevin Finlayson. Emerging filmmaker Luke Cavalan supported the project.
- Tactile Art Project. This involved two stages, with a first stage working with groups to create artwork and a second stage to create and display media art. Participants included local artists with disability including small groups from the NADO, Afford and Lifestart Cooperative. The workshops were facilitated by David Capra, and follow up construction support was provided by local people including Yvette Sarasola Robinson. Local artist with a disability, Susan Oxenham, created one of the Tactile Art Works.
- Sound and Photography Project. This involved contributions of sound and images from people in Penrith and the region, supported by mentors where needed, and included interviewee for this evaluation, Trisha Merriman.
- Sensory Art Project. This project involved artmaking through a supportive, sensorial, collaborative process. The process was facilitated by Hazel Collins, an interviewee for this evaluation, combining massage therapy and art techniques to work with profoundly disabled artists. It was documented by Michael Ney, filmmaker from Sensory Image. The project included participants from Wilfred House and support from Greystanes Disability Services.

- Penrith Mud Baths / Historic Photos Project. This was an artistic and research project by key artist Daniel Kojta.
- Light Rhythm Plays! This was an extension to the *No Boundaries* project, involving the development of experimental music instruments. It included work by music therapists Anna Chapman and Iani Sujano, and the team at Nordoff Robbins. 10 TAFE students including some with disability were involved in a training program to support and present the work.
- Journey to the River. This curatorial process linked the contributions and mini-projects, and included soundscapes and artwork by artists from the Visual Art Workshop, the Tactile Art Project and the Sensory Art Project.

1.1.1 Values

The values which the *No Boundaries* organisers aimed to embody included:

- Community capacity building
- Creativity
- Reflection
- Social discourse
- Organizational skills
- Local democracy (bottom-up solutions)
- Sustainability (projects which recognize the ongoing interdependence of social, economic and environmental connectedness)

1.1.2 Project Team

The *No Boundaries* project team included:

- Cindi Drennan, Illuminart Pty Ltd, *No Boundaries* Creative Director
- David Cretney, Sylvanvale Foundation

- Karen Harris, Senior Cultural Development Officer Penrith City Council (PCC)
- Joe Ibbitson, Community Programs Coordinator PCC, *No Boundaries* Project Manager
- Robyn Brookes, Disability Services Officer PCC, *No Boundaries* Project Coordinator

1.1.3 Stakeholders

The **internal stakeholders** included the hosts (the creative participants, the project and facility managers) and the guests (audiences, both actual and virtual).

The **external stakeholders** included:

- Penrith Disability Arts and Culture Network
- Penrith City Council
- Funding Bodies
- Sylvanvale Foundation
- Accessible Arts NSW
- Westfields Penrith
- University of Western Sydney
- Vision Australia

No Boundaries was funded by the PCC, Arts NSW and the Australia Council for the Arts.

1.1.4 Evaluation

Under a formal agreement with PCC, the Institute for Culture and Society, UWS, designed and developed the evaluation process. The Participants and Audience Evaluation are the subject of this report, conducted by UWS Institute for Culture and Society and Bailey and Yang Consultants.

Participants Evaluation

This is intended to measure such matters as skills development among the artists and should establish whether:

- participants were appropriately challenged and extended by being involved in the project
- participants developed (personally, talents, skills) by being involved in the process
- participants experienced improvements in factors such as: reduced social isolation; feelings of connection/belonging, improved self esteem
- participants were significantly better resourced to undertake further activities as a result of the way the project was conducted
- the quality of participants skills were recognised by significant members of the artistic community

Audience Evaluation

This is designed to measure whether

- audiences enjoyed the show
- the project was positively received in the community
- the project provided a positive focus for people with disabilities
- people with disabilities gained positive benefits as a result of the project
- community perceptions of people with disabilities were enhanced as a result of the project
- choices and opportunities were widened for people with disabilities as a result of the project

2. Methodology

2.1 Outcomes Sought

The outcomes sought from *No Boundaries* are similar for both hosts and guests and include both intrinsic and extrinsic measures.

Outcomes Sought	Participants	Audience
	Intrinsic	Intrinsic
Strength of Emotional Input/response	Positive expression of emotions (e.g. happiness)	Evoking emotional response
Proactivity	Confidence in carrying out tasks	Confidence to interact creatively
Intellectual Stimulation	Stimulated to express ideas and ask questions	Engagement with ideas and experiences
Captivation	Engagement with group and creative tasks	Captivation with creative expression
Skills Enhancement	Learning – enhancing abilities	Learning –awareness of issues, ideas or viewpoints not previously considered
	Extrinsic	Extrinsic
Sense of Connection	Enabling recognition of the individual's worth to the group and community.	Sense of connection to others in the production and the audience
Capacity Development	New skills and capacities are extended into other aspects of their daily life.	Experience leads to practical social action or advocacy of change.
Insight on Human Potential	The individuals have their artistic efforts seen as important to the community.	Enhanced appreciation of contribution of people with disabilities

2.2 Methodology

We employed a mixed methodology of audience questionnaire, participant focus groups and interviews with participants, facilitators and stakeholders.

2.2.1 Participants Evaluation

We used a qualitative evaluation approach, employing focus groups and interviews with participants and observers. This included:

- Focus groups in August and October with the participants in the Visual Art Workshop
- Interviews with participant/facilitators (those who were both artists contributing to *No Boundaries*, and worked with others to support their creative work)
- Interviews with observers of the participants (carers, workers and service managers)
- Interviews with Cindi Drennan, Creative Director and Robyn Brookes, Penrith City Council project coordinator

In evaluations of projects which involve people with disability, care has to be taken to make sure people with disability speak with their own voice about their own experiences wherever possible. If this is not possible due to profound disability, observers who can speak about the impacts on participants can be interviewed, as long as their opinions are treated as their personal observations and not the views of the people with disability.

Two focus groups were held with participants with disability in the PCYC fortnightly Visual Arts Workshops to hear their experiences in their own words. This group had the greatest involvement in the process of all participants in the program, meeting weekly with the artist Cindi Drennan over a period of several months.

Where participants could not speak on their own behalf, due to profound disability, observers from disability organisations were interviewed. They were selected for interview based on their ability to comment on the impacts they had observed of the project on participants, based on their knowledge of the participants both before and during the project, and their attendance at the *No Boundaries* workshops with the participants.

Interview and focus group discussion guides were developed in consultation with PCC and have been included in the Appendices.

2.2.2 Audience Evaluation

We conducted the Audience Evaluation using iSurvey, an online survey tool.

Survey design

The survey was designed drawing on existing, previously tested surveys of audience intrinsic impacts. It was designed with a participant burden of about 5 minutes, using a simple Yes/No response scale, and language targeted at year seven literacy. Prior to implementation, the survey was tested with stakeholders and 10 disinterested respondents. Survey administrators were drawn from Council employees and were briefed on survey etiquette, including surveying people with disability, prior to implementation.

Survey implementation

The survey was administered on 21 and 22 September 2012, from 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm. There were 5 survey administrators each night. The survey was administered via iSurvey on the iPad. The survey questions can be seen in the Appendices.

61 responses were collected over the two nights. This represents about 20% of the total estimated audience of 300. Because of the small audience size, the confidence interval is 11.2.

3. Participant Evaluation

Key points

The participants and observers report a resoundingly positive experience of the *No Boundaries* project. The *No Boundaries* event gave participants a feeling of recognition, pride and confidence. The *No Boundaries* workshops provided artistic support to participants to develop works for the event, and led to skills development and social engagement. Participants also enjoyed the program, and were absorbed in the process.

All participants experienced impacts in terms of greater proactivity, confidence as artists, and pride in seeing their work at the event. But the cases which stand out are participants who were emerging artists or already had a keen interest in art, such as the artist-facilitators Trisha Merriman, Susan Oxenham, and members of the Visual Arts Workshop Tim Smith and Valda Pomeroy. These participants especially seemed moved by the program, and observers also detected the greatest changes in them.

There were also positive impacts for all participants, including those with profound disability. These artists could not verbally articulate their experience, but nevertheless demonstrated signs of pleasure and pride in the work and seeing it at the event.

Whilst participants were proud to see their work at the event, all interviewees were disappointed at the low audience numbers. This affected how much the participants felt recognition from other members of the artistic community and the general public.

No Boundaries' point of differentiation was its focus on the creative empowerment of individuals. The *No Boundaries* team worked with people as artists or creatives. This had a powerful impact: participants felt they were part of something "real," as artists, making meaningful work which would be seen by the wider community, and contribute to the story and liveliness of their town: Penrith.

3.1 Introduction

This section summarises the views gathered amongst participants, facilitators and stakeholders. The evaluation of participants was designed to examine whether:

- participants were appropriately challenged and extended by being involved in the project
- participants developed (personally, talents, skills) by being involved in the process
- participants experienced improvements in factors such as: reduced social isolation; feelings of connection/belonging, improved self esteem
- participants were significantly better resourced to undertake further activities as a result of the way the project was conducted
- the quality of participants skills was recognised by significant members of the artistic community

There were an estimated 60-80 participants in the *No Boundaries* program across a variety of workshops over a period of about six months from March to September 2012. Interviews were conducted with a limited number of participants and should not be considered representative. Findings should be treated as descriptive, and indicative of some participants and facilitators observations.

Interviews and focus groups were conducted to uncover impacts as follows.

Impacts	Participants
	Intrinsic
Strength of Emotional Input/response	Positive expression of emotions (e.g. happiness)
Proactivity	Confidence in carrying out tasks
Intellectual Stimulation	Stimulated to express ideas and ask questions
Captivation	Engagement with group and creative tasks
Skills Enhancement	Learning – enhancing abilities
	Extrinsic
Sense of Connection	Enabling recognition of the individual’s worth to the group and community.
Capacity Development	New skills and capacities are extended into other aspects of their daily life.
Insight on Human Potential	The individuals have their artistic efforts seen as important to the community.

3.2 Interviewees

Interviews were conducted with participants and those in a position to observe participants’ experiences, and comment on the program more broadly. We have reported

on the views of each of these groups separately, as “participants’ views” and “observers’ views,” so as to distinguish from findings collected directly from participants vs views of carers or workshop facilitators.

Facilitator/Participants were those who both participated in *No Boundaries* as artists in their own right, as well as helped with workshops. They were:

- Susan Oxenham, Artist-Participant and Facilitator
- Trisha Merriman, Artist-Participant and Facilitator

Participants who were interviewed were all members of the Visual Art Workshop:

- Anne Stratton
- Paul Hazell
- Valda Pomeroy
- Tim Smith
- Jill Huber

Observers were “workers”, “facilitators”, “managers” and “carers”. “Workers” are those people who are permanent and paid professional care staff at the facilities that look after the clients on a daily basis. “Carers” are the unpaid people that support participants in their daily life, such as relatives or close friends. “Managers” are defined here as paid professionals who have a management or organizational role within one or more of the care facilities. “Facilitators” were those people who facilitated the workshops for the participants in a teacher/mentor/coordinator role.

Observer interviewees were:

- Robyn Brookes, Penrith City Council Disability Services Officer and *No Boundaries* Project Coordinator
- Cindi Drennan, *No Boundaries* Creative Director
- Sarah Delaney, Coordinator at AFFORD
- Josie Alabisi, Mother and Carer of Valda
- Kevin Finlayson, Friend
- Madhav Nepal, Care Worker, Greystanes
- Liz Mutton, Care Worker, Greystanes
- Caleb Barker, Care Worker, Richmond PRA



Visual Arts Workshop: Evaluation Focus Group with researcher Jackie Bailey, 27 August 2012.

3.3 Strength of Emotional Response

“Strength of emotional response” refers to whether the participants emotionally responded to the process. For example, a participant may have felt happy, interested, inspired. Negative emotions may also constitute an emotional response - for example, doing something for the first time can be challenging and frustrating.

Members of the Visual Arts Workshop all had emotional responses to the *No Boundaries* project. Valda Pomeroy said,

“I felt happy seeing the works. I was excited and proud with myself. The music [at the event] made me feel like [I was] going down to the beach, to the ocean.”

Anne Stratton and Jill Huber both spoke of how amazed they were at the event to see what the rest of the group were capable of, especially Tim Smith. “I am proud of the group and each other,” Anne said.

Observers were unanimous in their view that participants experienced pride in themselves when their work was displayed, and enjoyed the workshops and activities in-

volved in the lead up to the event. “You could feel that positive energy,” noted Susan Oxenham, facilitator.

Hazel Collins conducted sensory tactile workshops with participants who had profound disabilities. She worked with participants one-on-one within the group setting. Hazel described the effect of the *No Boundaries* program on profoundly disabled participants:

“When I first visited them, it’s easy for us to rush to judgment and say ‘They can’t do ...’ but this activity got a different level of response – an engagement. For example, head lifting and so on that you don’t normally get. This is a very big plus.”

For the more profoundly disabled participants, strong emotional engagement was also inferred by professional workers and long-time carers. Madhav Nepal, a care worker at Greystanes, described how he came to these conclusions:

“By their facial expression I could tell they were very happy. Other ways I could tell was through the activities they were doing and the way they were doing them, for example, drawing pictures using colours I know they liked. From all of these sorts of things I came to know their emotional view (which was very happy)”

Liz Mutton, also a worker at Greystanes, observed:

“When we spoke to each person individually and asked a lot of them (their faces) really “lit up”. They were really excited to DO something! Especially something totally different and on show for everyone (the public) to see. Even while doing the project, e.g. the sensory stuff, not one of them had a sad face. They were all happy in every single way I could imagine.”

Other observers were equally effusive:

“Roger who is very autistic – we found he has a really good eye and he was very happy at being at the event. Maureen especially loved the water sequences. Nathan who has autism and learning disabilities was extremely inquisitive when at the exhibition and wanted to know more. Graham loved talking about it – and still does apparently!” – Trisha Merriman, Facilitator

“They were very excited.” – Caleb Barker, Care worker

· Please note that the names of participants mentioned by observers have been changed, with the exception of Valda Pomeroy.

“The participants including myself and my friends felt quite an incredible energy and enthusiasm” – Susan Oxenham, facilitator

“Valda was absolutely overwhelmed... I don’t know if I can describe how she felt. She just loved it when she saw herself and friends were in it. You could just see it in her face.” – Josie Alabisi, carer

Sarah Delaney, coordinator for the AFFORD services, agreed that participants were “very proud of themselves – that they were on display and they could say they did this.”

3.2 Proactivity

“Proactivity” refers to confidence in carrying out tasks. Most of the participants in the Visual Arts Workshop felt that more confident as a result of *No Boundaries*, whilst observers of other participants had mixed impressions of the relationship between *No Boundaries* and increased confidence.

Tim Smith, member of the Visual Art Workshop, seemed to experience an especially strong impact:

“[I am] more confident. I feel encouraged and better at it [art]. You feel proud of yourself and thankful for how we did all that art. I am happier to show other people my art now.

“[Now] I think that people with disability are smart and creative and can do things.”

Valda Pomeroy, also a member of the Visual Art Workshop, felt more confident as a result of the program. “I feel more confident when I do art and about showing people my art. I experiment more with my art.”

Whilst Anne Stratton, member of the Visual Art Workshop, did not feel more confident in herself as an artist, she did admit to feeling more hopeful. “I still don’t think I’m any good at it, but I try. I am hopeful.” Jill Huber, a visually impaired participant, felt that she was more equipped to give art a go: “People wonder, how do you do it? They think I won’t see enough to do it. But I just feel for it. You have a go.”

Kevin Finlayson, who is a friend of many of the participants and observed the impact of the program on the Visual Arts Workshop members, summed it up:

“They were much more confident within themselves. I think people [participants] have amazed themselves. They’ve never done anything like this before. For example, one had a vision impairment and she didn’t think she was capable of art.”

Susan Oxenham described the effect *No Boundaries* had on her own work:

“[It was] probably one of the most adventurous works that I’ve done... The project came at just the right time.”

Sarah Delaney, the coordinator of the AFFORD services in the Penrith area, did not observe a change in participants’ confidence as a result of the program. She felt that *No Boundaries* did not provide much more than other art workshops. However, Caleb Barker, from Richmond PRA, explained:

“Yes, [they] do feel more confident in photographing skills but they were already doing it, so I’m not sure [greater confidence is] attributable to the *No Boundaries* program.”

On the other hand, care workers at the Greystanes facility, Liz Mutton and Madhav Nepal, had no such reservations:

“[There was] Increased proactivity and confidence ... For example, whilst painting, they used sponges and other art utensils, and as a result, more were able to feed themselves and do small tasks like wash up plates.... This is a big achievement for this group.” – Liz Mutton, Greystanes care worker

“They came away with the sense that when they get some help from someone then they can do almost anything.” – Madhav Nepal, Greystanes care worker

Robyn Brookes, project coordinator for Penrith City Council, attended many of the *No Boundaries* workshops. She felt that many participants had increased in confidence and pride as a result of the program and the *No Boundaries* event.

“I heard one participant say [after the *No Boundaries* event, ‘I feel five inches taller.’

“They [some of the participants] want to exhibit their work at International Day for People with Disability. For at least one group it is new to contribute to this day of celebration.”

Robyn had also observed that the participants of the Visual Arts Workshop had increased in proactivity as time passed.

“They asked questions of Cindi about technique, more the longer they were there. They shared ideas with each other more as time passed, and sparked off ideas in each other. So they were eventually doing their own problem solving. The collage for International Day [for People with Disability] is totally their idea - they now have the confidence to choose what will be in it and what media to use.”

3.3 Intellectual Stimulation

“Intellectual stimulation” refers to the level to which participants were stimulated to express ideas and ask questions. Both the members of the Visual Arts Workshop and the observers agreed that they had been stimulated cognitively. The Visual Arts Workshop members talked about the new ideas they now had, and ways of seeing things and how they had learned from Cindi.

“Cindi has wonderful ideas. She has taught us lots of things. We ask questions. She has always got something different - you don't get bored doing something. Like early on, we weren't happy with our painting. So Cindi showed us - we cut it up and wove it together - so you ended up with a different picture out of what you hated! You never waste anything you do.” - Jill Huber and Anne Stratton

During the workshop phase of the project, the Workshop members grew in confidence and empowerment, and began to develop their own ideas for works.

“I look at things differently. I think, ‘Can I draw it or can't I?’” - Tim Smith

“I now know how to make a mess! I have bits of paper at home where I try things. You didn't think of doing it before, until you're tackling it. I now want to do a picture of my husband's home for him, his home where he grew up back in Europe.” - Jill Huber

“I want to do [a piece about] the other end of the freeway.” - Paul Hazell

“I get the train to places. Down in Goulburn, I look at the old houses. This gives me ideas for drawing.” -
Tim Smith

“I look out the window [at home] and look at the trees. I tried to draw the bottlebrushes out the window.” -
Anne Stratton

After the *No Boundaries* event, Anne reflected on how far they had come. “I am interested in experimenting. I would never have done that before. You try something different that you wouldn’t have tried earlier like multimedia.”

Anne and Jill noted the stimulation that has also come from being in a group. “You get ideas from each other in groups like this.”

The observers were unanimous that the NB program intellectually stimulated the participants. Liz Mutton and Madhav Nepal from Greystanes gave examples:

“Whilst painting, they used sponges and other art utensils, and as a result, more were able to feed themselves and do small tasks like wash up plates.... This is a big achievement for this group.” – Liz Mutton, care worker, Greystanes

“Our clients don’t speak too much, and they normally want to do new things anyway, but “yes”, for example, when I drew something, they went to draw something by themselves.” - Madhav Nepal, care worker, Greystanes

From her perspective as a facilitator/artist, Susan Oxenham agreed, “Yes. I think it did give my grey matter some firing up.”

Caleb Barker described the effect of *No Boundaries*, over and above the pre-existing art workshops at his facility:

“I felt that other [art] workshops helped already with regards to most participants’ confidence, but *No Boundaries* over and above this got participants requesting they bring cameras along to all their activities ... [additionally] *No Boundaries* got them exhibited in the community, which they weren’t already doing under their photography program.”

Carer, Josie Alabisi described the *No Boundaries* effect in intellectually stimulating her daughter:

“Valda was very stimulated doing the art. [During the workshop phase of *No Boundaries*] She used to come home and try to describe everything she did that day. She would say it 10 times, but the wording never changed!”

3.4 Captivation

“Captivation” refers to participants’ level of engagement with the tasks and the group.

The *No Boundaries* program clearly captivated the participants according to all interviewed. “The time [for each workshop] was always up before they [the Visual Arts Workshop] knew it,” Kevin Finlayson noted. Robyn Brookes agreed, “They would be talking at the beginning of the workshop, and then they would be totally quiet.”

Where the participants were profoundly disabled, workers and carers were able to infer captivation by time spent by participants on an activity and/or their losing track of time during a particular activity. Hazel Collins gave a comparative example:

“I found 40 minutes would be their maximum concentration levels, whereas normally 10-20 minutes of concentration from the participants for other activities is viewed as ‘Good.’ Examples of the 40 minutes of activity included one participant doing art work whilst swinging from a hammock. The guy who loved water was doing his artwork for 40 minutes at a stretch. Bear in mind, it takes a lot of physical effort for them to achieve these [sorts of time frames.]”

Caleb Barker also provided an example: “Now, people want to use the camera where in the past they felt they didn’t want to use it.” Josie Alabisi, the mother of one of the participants also gave a comparative example: “She [Valda] doesn’t have a sense of time, however, repeating herself 10 times I think suggests she was captivated!”

Susan Oxenham and Trisha Merriman also expressed complete captivation:

“One day, shadow came out and was growing long. I heard my stomach grumbling and I had lunch, but it was already 5:30pm! I’d worked all day.” – Susan Oxenham, Facilitator

“For myself, I was captivated by Cindi’s link to the Illuminart website. I spent four hours looking at all her

links. When I opened up the Internet, I took a four hour journey!" – Trisha Merriman, Facilitator

The Visual Arts Workshop members also expressed captivation during the sessions, and particularly enjoyed the outing to the river to see and be inspired by historic sites. "More days like that," Jill Huber summed up.

Robyn Brookes, the Penrith City Council *No Boundaries* project coordinator, had attended many of the workshops, including some of the tactile and sensory art workshops and the Visual Arts Workshop. She noted that, "People were engrossed - you couldn't interrupt them."



Valda Pomeroy, Visual Arts Workshop, 27 August 2012.

3.5 Skills Enhancement

"Skills enhancement" refers to learning and enhancing abilities. The members of the Visual Arts Workshop all felt that they had learned a lot of new skills and techniques and wanted to continue learning. They are looking for ways to keep the Visual Arts Workshop going, and have continued to convene and attract new members. They are now developing a work for International Day for People with Disability.

Several, including Paul Hazell and Jill Huber, noted that they had not done any art since high school, which for some was more than fifty years ago. Tim Smith, who normally worked in drawing, enjoyed learning new techniques and found the tactile workshop fun and stimulating. Jill Huber, a visually impaired member of the group, noted about the tactile experience that, "People who are blind can feel the art." She observed, "There are different papers, brushes and pencils, watercolours - as a child there were just coloured pencils! But it is still about what you can create yourself."

Skills development can also be frustrating. Jill Huber noted, "In the beginning [of the workshops], it was a little bit frustrating. I didn't know what might be expected." Anne Stratton agreed, "I'm not 'artistic' so what's in my head doesn't come out on the page!" However she noted, "It doesn't matter if you're a brilliant artist or profoundly disabled. You've all had an input." Jill described the satisfaction of then being able to draw the leaves: "I found I could do it."

Valda and Paul talked about what they learned about Penrith. Valda explained what she had discovered.

"I learned new things about Penrith. I saw photos from the 1950s and 1960s. I learned that Penrith had mudbaths. I learned how to use pastels for the water feature. I love drawing. I like the painting on glass too and using pastels on paper.

Valda's mother and carer, Josie, confirmed how much Valda had learned: "She rediscovered drawing from magazines – something she hasn't done since she was 10 years old." (Valda is now 39 years of age).

Robyn Brookes, Penrith City Council project coordinator, agreed that the skills participants learned went beyond art skills. "For example, Valda said something about imitating Cindi's dancing around and being playful [during a session] - about learning a 'way of being' and not just art skills - something outside their normal experience."

Caleb Barker, care worker at Richmond PRA, observed that participants had developed art and life skills.

"They have developed the skill of "enjoying life and appreciating the light ...They developed a lot of art skills e.g. contrast, pixels, digital manipulation of pictures, problem solving and experimenting creatively with something they would never touch in the past. For example, the camera!"

Liz Mutton and Madhav Nepal, Greystanes care workers, also observed that the participants had learned new life skills:

“A) Team ability is the biggest one. B) Concentration C) Confidence” – Madhav Nepal, care worker

“Skills in helping around the house, using sponges in their art developed skills for them to use sponges for cleaning, using art utensils developed their skills and confidence in eating with cutlery.” – Liz Mutton, care worker

The two artist-facilitators who also had impairments described the skills enhancement to their own professional practice. For example, Trisha Merriman (who has some learning disabilities) learned that she needs to write things down. Susan Oxenham (a visually impaired artist) said she learned to incorporate micro cassettes as part of her artwork, and not just as a supplementary tool for her artwork.

Hazel Collins, facilitator of the tactile workshops, felt that participants had also learned more about the potential of art in their lives: “An appreciation and pleasure and social aspect of artistic expression.”

Sarah Delaney, coordinator of the AFFORD facilities was the only person to report no positive effect in terms of skills enhancement by the *No Boundaries* program. She felt that the program had not really imparted anything that, “they didn’t already have,” explaining that the facilities run a weekly art program.

3.6 Capacity Development

“Capacity development” refers to new skills and capacities being extended into other aspects of daily life.

As seen above in “Skills Enhancement” and “Proactivity,” participants learned new life skills and confidence which they are applying to other parts of their life. However, interviewees stressed that the participants were artistic and creative before the program, and there were already art courses before *No Boundaries*. For example, Madhav Nepal said, “‘Yes’, they are now more ready to show their artwork to other people [but] ‘no’, they are not doing more art than they used to.”

Most significantly, *No Boundaries* provided participants with an opportunity to express their existing artistic interests and creativity, and be seen by the wider community at

the *No Boundaries* event. Trisha Merriman, workshop facilitator, gave the following example:

“One guy who has done splatter paint before was so proud because someone had come out to take photos of his work. He’s now done 10 more! This has definitely come about due to *No Boundaries*. The *No Boundaries* project brought out the artist in him. He just keeps going! It’s like he can say, ‘I’m paranoid schizophrenic but I can do this! I have talent.’” – Trisha Merriman, facilitator

Josie Alabisi described the development she had observed in her daughter, Valda.

“She carries around the pamphlet [from *No Boundaries*] and gives the website address to people she meets – she didn’t used to do that before *No Boundaries*!

“...[They learned] that they could create something that other people appreciated ... [That] You can do art with anything, e.g. she started using a bottle top for art and has used other things too now....She’s looking at every day objects in a new way.” – Josie Alabisi, carer and mother of Valda.

Caleb Barker from Richmond PRA observed that participants were applying the new self-knowledge to the rest of their lives: “[They learned that] they have the ability to be creative. Now they’re thinking how they can be more creative.”

Liz Mutton listed the new capabilities and capacities which she had observed develop in the participants from Greystanes:

“Skills, confidence, a sense of community and being involved in it. They’ve come out of their shell. Instead of being quiet and less vocal, now when we ask them a question, we get some sort of response. Before, you might not get anything back. They are now more communicative.”

3.6 Sense of Connection

“Sense of connection” refers to individuals’ sense of connection to the group and the community, and a sense of recognition of the individuals’ worth to the group and

community. The participants and observers interviewed for the evaluation all reported a greater sense of social connection and pride as a result of *No Boundaries*.

Members of the Visual Arts Workshop all agreed that the social dimension to the program was important to them. Jill Huber and Anne Stratton noted, "It's a social thing." Paul Hazell agreed, "I'd rather do it in a group. I don't do it [art] at home." Anne added,

"It's boring just doing it [art] at home. Here we get ideas from each other in groups like this. You try something different..."

"I am proud of the group."

Group members noted that Tim Smith had especially come out of his shell, talking more in class as time went on. The group members already knew each other before *No Boundaries*, but have made friends now with each other in the group.

Caleb Barker, worker for Richmond PRA, reflected on the *No Boundaries* program:

"I'm thinking of two young early 20's men who went to the photography workshops as part of the *No Boundaries* lead-up. They are both now more talkative to the older population of WestClub since the *No Boundaries* event."

Not all participants were more socially engaged as a result of the program. For example, Sarah Delaney, coordinator of the AFFORD facilities, reported no increased sense of social engagement through the *No Boundaries* program. However, she did note that, "From my perspective they've taken away a greater *sense* of community connection." Susan Oxenham felt similarly: "It was through a sense of appreciation by others that I felt more connected. 'Connected' is a good word to describe it."

3.7 Insight on Human Potential

"Insight on human potential" refers to individuals having their artistic efforts seen as important to the community.

The sense of recognition by others in the community was possibly the most significant impact from the *No Boundaries* program. Overwhelmingly, interviewees - both observers and participants - agreed that participants felt proud when they saw their

work at the *No Boundaries* event. Cindi Drennan, Creative Director, noted, “People liked *No Boundaries* because they felt that they were part of something *real*. They were participating as artists, contributing as artists, recognized as artists.”

Tim Smith felt that since the event, some people saw him differently. “Your friends saw another side to you.”

Valda described her friends’ and family’s reaction:

“My cousin came; my friend came. My friends from bowling and my mum and uncle came. They think my art is - they are proud of my art. I felt happy seeing the works, excited and proud with myself.”

Robyn commented on her observations of various participants she saw at the event:

“You could see the change. It was visible that they felt they were more important. They held themselves differently - more upright. Tim came in a suit - his appearance mattered to him.

“I saw this change continue in some of them. For example, Tim called me up because he couldn’t make it to one of the sessions [after the event]. I think he would usually arrange for the carer or someone to make the call for him. But he did it himself.”

Other observers described similar, significant impacts on the night of the event:

“When we went to see all the artwork, and when we did see it, they were very excited to see something bigger than anything they thought they would be in. There was cheering and laughing... They were all so happy that everyone got to see what they were able to do.” – Liz Mutton, care worker, Greystanes

“[They got a sense that] they could create something that other people appreciated” – Josie Alabisi, mother and carer

“They all walked two inches taller.” – Trisha Merriman, facilitator describing how participants felt at the event

Two of the facilitators with impairments expressed their views about their own experience, echoing the view that the event was important for the sense of community recognition it gave participants:

“I felt important and that I’ve been at TAFE for four years, and it counts for something. It made me feel like I’m a member of the community and a good member at that.” – Trisha Merriman, facilitator

“An artist needs acknowledgement by their community that ‘we need your knowledge and experience as an artist.’ To be accredited and acknowledged in this way helps build ones confidence.” – Susan Oxenham, facilitator

It is no surprise, given the importance of the event to stimulating a sense of pride and acknowledgement from the wider community, that interviewees expressed disappointment in the attendance numbers at the event. Despite the Penrith City Council’s efforts to showcase, market and preview *No Boundaries* in the lead-up to the main event (see Background), audience numbers were lower than hoped.

Interviewees wondered if audience numbers may have been improved by greater advertising or marketing. Kevin Finlayson captured this sentiment: “I think it could have been advertised a lot better than it was. The numbers for the opening night were disappointing especially from the community services. I was expecting more that night.”

Cindi Drennan, Creative Director of the *No Boundaries* program, was also very disappointed in the attendance. She noted that the event was a major element of the whole program’s design and impact as a community event celebrating Penrith and Penrith artists. In her view, low attendance undermined the whole program.

“I was very disappointed about the attendance, and inevitably felt bitter about it after all the work involved. I tried to keep focused on all of the many good outcomes for the participants and community, but even so I resented that yet again the shining creative light of so many people was hidden under a bushel. I felt that the creativity and effort of the participants deserved the recognition of a much bigger and wider audience; in fact for me that should have been the final point of inclusion - that all of the community working together could pull off something that was justifiably good enough to be widely enjoyed - not just by friends and family - but by the whole community.”

Sarah Delaney, coordinator of the AFFORD facilities, wondered if advertising to the wider community may have helped. “Greater, wider advertising for the event. I got

lots of advertising material through being a service [in the disabilities sector], but not through anything in the wider community.”

Trisha Merriman suggested that in the future, an event like this could work with artists both with and without disability.

“It would have been much more of a success if more people had got involved...If you had got more people involved, you could have had more people turn up, and it could have been not just about disability. [Then] the show could have been one hour instead of 15 minutes....If it had been more broad, it could have been integrated into one huge show, it could have been amazing!”

An event which includes artists with and without disability would also help artists with disability to feel even more a part of the community, and less “ghettoised.”

“There shouldn’t have been a distinction between disabled and abled because I think we’ve all got issues. I don’t want people to be typecast or “put in their place”. Because, it doesn’t matter if you’re a disabled artist or able artist, if you have spent four years at TAFE, you would love to have your art work projected on the side of a building!

“Why should I be a “schizophrenic photographer”, can’t I just be a photographer? Why should I be segregated into a group? I don’t want to be in a group. I don’t want to be someone with a disability, I want to be someone in the community. That’s my idea for next year.” - Trisha Merriman, facilitator

3.8 Other feedback

3.8.1 **No Boundaries team**

The interviewees gave resounding endorsement to the *No Boundaries* team and the event. It was clear that all interviewees believed that the program should be continued in some form.

“Overall I felt it was very successful and the organisers should be given a big pat on the back – and by that I

mean all the participants, the council, the staff – everybody!” – Kevin Finlayson, friend

“I thought it was fantastic and fun. Everyone seemed to enjoy it. So that makes me happy.” – Liz Mutton, care worker

“In my view it would be great for there to be classes for them to do like *No Boundaries* on an ongoing basis, so they can develop skills and show to the community and society.” – Madhav Nepal, care worker

“I was very pleased with how it all went.” – Hazel Collins, facilitator

“The level of care and detail they had gone through, e.g. the curtains to block out light from the car park helped made the whole event very positive and enjoyable.” – Susan Oxenham, facilitator

Consultation is always critical in community projects, and *No Boundaries* was no exception. Robyn Brookes felt that the early consultation helped the inclusivity of the program.

“Tailoring helped participation. There were different mediums [of art], and consultations about groups’ needs for activities and the event.” - Robyn Brookes, Penrith City Council

3.8.2 Identifying artists with disability

Susan Oxenham, a facilitator, felt she had been “left out” of most of the process and only heard about it belatedly through her occupational therapist. Susan felt disappointed because she feels she is “one of, if not the most, prominent visually impaired artists in the region.”

Cindi Drennan, Creative Director of *No Boundaries*, agreed that there were teething issues with the program, particularly to do with identifying artists with disability in Penrith.

“The first challenge was that the program organisers wanted an inclusive event, but did not really know who in the community were the artists [people with a desire to create art] with disability in Penrith. Normally, I go to a community and ask, ‘Who are the artists?’ And

people say, 'Oh, go see Steve, he does photography, or go see Joe, he is into art making,' or so on.

"I suppose this [the lack of profile of artists with disability] is an interesting effect of people who don't have the capacity or resources to put themselves out there and be known.

"So we had to cast the net really wide - through friends of friends, talking to people in shops, through the disability service organisations. It took a lot longer to find participants and generate trust."

Working within the disability organisations' structure meant that Cindi found herself delivering workshops in group homes and with existing disability groups. She agrees that these workshops led to great results. However, she also felt that *No Boundaries* was ultimately a first step towards identifying people in the community who were emerging artists, who also had disability, and nurturing them as individuals.

"What I learned is that *No Boundaries* should really be a long-term project - eg five or ten years. It takes a series of experiences to generate the leads, community support, and to continue to draw out people who would benefit from this creative process. Doing this a single time has helped people explore the process and feel confident in themselves, and be recognised as artists, and not be seen as doing it as a past-time because they have a disability. Maintaining this over a longer period would lead to a greater level of development, opportunity and inclusion." - Cindi Drennan, Creative Director

Cindi elaborated on this idea of nurturing individuals' creative potential, regardless of whether they have a disability:

"What we [*No Boundaries* facilitators] do is work with individuals. This [*No Boundaries*] was not about 'engaging with people with disability in an arts project.' I find that really condescending. Some people with disability may not be into art. It devalues the creative endeavour to look at it as just a 'past time,' a way to occupy someone.

"It was never about 'having a dabble with some paints.' It was about developing each person's form of creative visual communication to an audience, 'You

have the capacity to create meaningful work; it will be part of the show; we will foster that.'

"For me it is about the one-on-one, about fostering what is unique about an individual. It is not about giving them 'something to do.' It is about people with a passion, creating something.

"This was what was remarkable about the sensory workshops. Hazel [Collins] worked with 8-10 people, one-on-one. She identified their particular potential and explored that." - Cindi Drennan, Creative Director

Cindi explained how she and Hazel worked out a way to work with the profoundly disabled in the sensory workshops that was a meaningful art engagement. "We planned for something that was thematically linked to the project, using massage and art therapy." Cindi talked about the impact on participants.

"I saw it with Ria, one of the profoundly disabled participants in the Greystanes workshop. Seeing how the care workers helped her through [the workshops], showing her the work, and then she saw it at the event. I could hear her laughter - she experienced delight and pleasure...

"Each piece was a cherished piece. It was not just about playing with something and then it is gone."

3.8.3 Program administration

As with any program in its first iteration, there were several teething issues, some caused by lack of familiarity on the part of some of the facilitators with the disabilities sector, and some to do with event logistics.

"The facilitator didn't know she couldn't take portraits without consent. So she needed to get back to the people she'd taken portraits of for their consent. But then found the project only wanted pictures of the river. This [type of confusion] can be extremely difficult for the participants, especially when we have a lot of people with things going on in their life." – Caleb Barker, care worker

"Better communication is the absolute priority – and not to assume that emails are the only way of communicating." – Susan Oxenham, facilitator

“I don’t know how well advertised it was...I wouldn’t have known about it but for an incidental e-mail sent by a colleague in another organisation emailing back about this.” – Hazel Collins, facilitator

Organisers acknowledged from the outset that the nature of the event as an evening light projection would pose challenges for some participants to attend. This was confirmed by the interviewees.

“A lot couldn’t get out to the event. This is because transport to it is quite hard for them. Nine live in a group here, but only four came out because of the size of the vehicle. Also, many had to rush back e.g. due to dinner and bathing and medication routine they had to get back for. Even coolness of the weather – health is a concern for many of them ... And it had to be an evening event because it needed to be dark for the projection, but they’re [participants] in bed by 8pm usually.” - Hazel Collins, Facilitator

“Regarding the concept of the medium used [a projection/light show], I would prefer something that could be done through the day. This is because (through my experience in the disabilities sector), it’s very difficult to engage people, their families and the related services in the evenings. Still, I respect that if they choose this type of medium they probably have to show it at night time.” – Sarah Delaney, Coordinator

Below is a hypothetical capturing some of the key features of interviewee suggestions.

Hypothetical: what might the event look like if the interviewees' suggestions were done?

Hold the event during the day. This too has its cons. For example, it would likely preclude the use of light projection for the artworks and to engage with an open, Penrith space in a new way.

Include work by people without disabilities, but with a prominent and dedicated disabilities section that leads the event as its *raison d'être*. Alternatively, make the event “bigger” by having more artwork. A bigger event may draw in a wider audience and even further increase feelings of self-worth amongst participants.

Leverage the existing art workshops and other programs for the disabled (be they art-related or purely disability focused). For example, artwork from the on-going art workshops held by disability services or for those with disabilities could be included in the final event.

Explore means of repurposing the art content in a fashion that returns a benefit to participants. For example, the art content could also be showcased in further platforms eg finding a broadcast partner for the work, or sourcing other opportunities to stage the projection or show the work. This could further enhance the feelings of self-worth, confidence and sense of appreciation by the broader community that were already felt by the participants through the program. It may also avoid some of the disappointment amongst some participants at not being able to attend the event.

Organize transport and/or allocate additional budget for transporting all workshop participants. This is another way to address the logistical issues facing some participants attending a night-time event.

Increase marketing in non-disability services publications. Whilst marketing was undertaken, additional resources and expertise may assist to increase awareness and attendance of the event to assist this fledgling event “break through” into the public’s consciousness. Additionally, a venue with more foot traffic may also increase incidental bystander attendance (longer shop opening hours on the night of the event may also have this impact. The organizers had discussed this with Westfield but it had not been possible this year).

4. Audience Evaluation

Key points

The audience had an overwhelmingly positive response to the *No Boundaries* event. Audience members were amazed, impressed and inspired. They came away with a greater appreciation of what people with disability can do. Audience members from Western Sydney were proud that the event took place in Western Sydney, whilst attendees from outside Western Sydney had a new appreciation of the region.

Audience members recommended that there be more marketing to improve the event in the future.

4.1 Introduction

This section summarises the results of the *No Boundaries* audience survey. 61 responses were collected over the two nights 21 and 22 September 2012. This represents about 30.5% of the total estimated audience of 300 people, which creates a confidence interval of 11.2. Therefore if results are read as representative for the entire audience, they should be read for with a +/- 11.2% margin. The full survey is included in the Appendices.

The survey was designed to examine whether:

- audiences enjoyed the show
- the project was positively received in the community
- the project provided a positive focus for people with disabilities
- people with disabilities gained positive benefits as a result of the project
- community perceptions of people with disabilities were enhanced as a result of the project
- choices and opportunities were widened for people with disabilities as a result of the project

The survey examined the following impacts.

Impacts	Audience
Intrinsic Impacts	
Strength of Emotional Input/response	Evoking emotional response
Proactivity	Confidence to interact creatively
Intellectual Stimulation	Engagement with ideas and experiences
Captivation	Captivation with creative expression
Skills Enhancement	Learning – awareness of issues, ideas or viewpoints not previously considered
Extrinsic Impacts	
Sense of Connection	Sense of connection to others in the production and the audience
Capacity Development	Experience leads to practical social action or advocacy of change.
Insight on Human Potential	Enhanced appreciation of contribution of people with disabilities

4.1 Strength of Emotional Response

“Inspiring to know what people with disabilities can do.”

“I was so excited I slept in the car. That is how excited I was.”

“Amazing!! Can’t wait to tell people at work about this :)”

- Audience comments

“Strength of emotional response” refers to how audience members responded emotionally to the art works. Respondents felt excited (100%), surprised (95%), touched (95% and inspired (98%) by the event. No respondents were disappointed or bored by the event.

4.2 Proactivity

“Both my daughter and myself loved the interactive part of the event. My daughter particularly loved the light show on the ground like jumping puddles. And the interactive movement on windows.” - Audience comment

Proactivity refers to the audience members' confidence to interact creatively with the art works.

At this event, 49% of respondents interacted with the multimedia activities. Of these, 62% enjoyed the activities.

4.3 Intellectual stimulation

“It is good to know that young people are just as crazy as the old people. This event was great!” - Audience comment

“Intellectual stimulation” refers to whether an audience member felt engaged cognitively by an artwork - for example, whether it got him/her thinking.

The survey shows that *No Boundaries* intellectually stimulated audience members. The event sparked new ideas for 79% of respondents.

4.4 Captivation

“Captivation” refers to whether an audience member felt absorbed or lost in the art work - whether the art work “captivated” him/her.

The art works at *No Boundaries* clearly captivated the audience. 92% of respondents were absorbed and 98% were impressed by the art.

4.5 Skills Enhancement, Capacity Development and Insight on Human Potential

Audience members left the event having learned something about people with disability and with a greater appreciation of people with disability.

- 80.3% said that they had learned something about people with disability
- 68.9% were surprised at what people with disability could do
- 95% of respondents now have a greater appreciation of people with disability as a result of the event
- 9.8% of respondents said they had learned nothing new at the event. This result should be treated with caution due to the confidence interval of +/-10.5.

4.6 Sense of Connection

“Very proud! Do more of these.”

“It was fantastic. Lovely to see an event like this in Western Sydney.”

“Good fun and worth the drive!”

“It has a level of intimacy that is unique to itself. People are chatting and walking around and it’s a great atmosphere.”

- Audience comments

The audience had an overwhelmingly positive sense of connection at the event: 95% said that it had felt good to share the experience with other audience members.

For the respondents who lived in Penrith or Western Sydney, the event provided a special sense of connection: all 44 felt proud that the event was in Western Sydney.

Almost all (88%) of the 17 respondents who lived outside Western Sydney also said that they had a greater appreciation of western Sydney as a result of the event.

4.7 Demographics

“I’ve got schizophrenia and I felt accepted. I am so happy and excited even though I have not seen my photos yet.” - Audience comment

No Boundaries was essentially a disability community event, with most audience members in attendance because they knew someone involved in the event (74% of respondents). 27% of respondents identified as someone with a disability.

Accordingly, most people had heard of the event via word of mouth (62%). Nine respondents had heard of the event via posters or postcards, and seven had heard of it online or via organisations. Only one respondent said that s/he had heard of the event via the newspaper.

4.8 Comments

Comments were all largely positive. Most commonly, respondents talked about how they had “fun,” were “amazed,” “inspired,” and found the event “fantastic.” Some audience members who were also participants talked about how they were “excited” and felt “accepted.”

Many respondents noted that they would like to see the event repeated and were especially keen to see more events like this in Western Sydney.

Suggestions for improvements included:

- more advertising
- food and drink stalls
- more illuminated signage to the event
- more art works, including more interactive activities
- placing the Auslan interpreter in a more visible position
- asking the shops to have extended trading hours to support the event
- run for longer and more nights, and consider including a performance segment

4.8 Overall evaluation

The audience had an overwhelmingly positive experience of the *No Boundaries* event.

- 98.4% of respondents gave the entire event a score of 4 or 5 out of 5 (average score: 4.6)
- 86.7% of respondents gave the installation art on the columns a score of 4 or 5 out of 5 (average score: 4.4)
- 100% of respondents gave the large-scale projection on the Joan Sutherland Centre a score of 4 or 5 out of 5; in fact, 80.3% of respondents gave it a score of 5 out of 5 (average score: 4.8)
- 88.5% of respondents gave the event a score of 4 or 5 out of 5 compared to other art events they had been to (average score: 4.3)

5. Conclusion

No Boundaries had a positive impact on participants and audience members alike. Significantly, its approach to working with people with disability as artists first and foremost, with a creative contribution to make to a community arts event, set the program apart from other arts programs for people with disability.

All interviewees hope that the program continues in some form. Future iterations of the program could look at building on the successes and lessons from the first year, by building on this message of creative empowerment even more strongly. For example, actions could include marketing and inclusivity strategies to involve the general public as well as people with disability and improve final attendance; and earlier identification of individuals with disability who may have the potential to contribute creatively to the final event.

The *No Boundaries* program already changed participants' lives, some to smaller and others to greater degrees. The event left an impression on audience members: as good art does, *No Boundaries* moved people. By empowering and supporting artists with disability, projects like *No Boundaries* have the potential to create long-lasting change in the way people with disability are accepted, viewed and treated in the wider community.

6. Glossary

NADO	Nepean Area Disability Organisation
AFFORD	The Australian Foundation for Disability
Richmond PRA	Formed by combining the Richmond Fellowship NSW and Psychiatric Rehabilitation Australia
Lifestart Cooperative	Provides early childhood intervention and school aged services to children with additional needs
Greystanes	Greystanes Disability Services
PCYC	Police Citizens Youth Club

7. About the Researchers

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In her research and evaluation work, Jackie uses a combination of desk research and literature reviews, qualitative interviews, focus groups, questionnaires and surveys. She has interviewed hundreds of people over the course of numerous evaluations and research projects. She has also worked extensively with statistical reports and designing data collections and evaluative frameworks.