

FACES & PLACES Intergenerational Community Art Activation

Evaluation:

Project objectives were evaluated using quantitative and qualitative methods. Given the project was story-based, the evaluation of participant experience was collected mainly through narrative reflections using a range of tools including a survey, interviews, meetings and anecdotal feedback.

Key learning's:

1. **Using story sharing and art between participants to build a sense of community** resulted in feelings of connection to others and pride of their contribution to the local area. The celebration event provided a small opportunity for pen/art pals to meet in person. Future projects should prioritise sustained in-person activities, where possible and within COVID-19 guidelines. Participants told us it was important for them to contribute to their neighbourhood. Coburg Library staff observing the public viewing the mural sensed feelings of pride, with participants and the public stopping by to talk about the mural and point out recognisable pictures by participants.
2. **Counteracting ageism by facilitating unique intergenerational connections** had a positive impact on the understanding of some younger people toward older people. In the post-project survey, numerous younger people said they learnt that *"you can have a lot of things in common with someone older than you"* and that *"no matter what age people can become friends"*.
3. **Increasing a sense of social connection in people experiencing isolation during COVID-19 restrictions** helped participants feel more connected with others while confined in their homes. One participant, a resident from a local nursing home was quarantining alone in a room for 14 days with the pen/art pal workbook the only contact during this time. For some younger participants, the project and connection activities calmed stress and anxiety created by lockdown conditions. *"The project was like a refuge. I was a bit worried about how my family, and grandma and granddad were going [during lockdown]. This project helped me to feel you're helping while you're not there"*.
4. **An effective place activation model in enhancing civic pride and place ownership, increasing social & economic activity and delivering the project using 'joined together action**. Participants told us that *"the best part was that I got to be part of something that the whole community can see and enjoy"*. News of the project, mural and the documentary video was widely shared among the local community with a real sense of pride and ownership

beyond the project participants. Art made *"by Coburg people, for Coburg. People can see themselves and places they know in the mural. A project like this can change someone from just being an anonymous passer-by to someone who has a connection and sense of belonging to the place"*. 9 internal Council teams collaborated to deliver this project through a shared budget, and willingness to 'pitch in' for the communities benefit. Teams each contributed their unique expertise, resulting in better community outcomes and more efficient delivery for Council. The number of Council staff and participants involved created a lot of complexity, and ultimately the committed project manager was more effective in coordinating and delivering the tasks rather than a more dispersed responsibility.

5. **Supporting the local economy through employment of local artists** in the 2020/2021 financial year to deliver the project at a time when lockdown restrictions limited creative income helped financially and created a small amount of job opportunities for the artists. *"One person asked me to paint his shop and two locals asked me to paint their garages"*. The local traders association also employed one of the project artists to transform the mural into bin wraps for the Coburg Activity Centre.