

# *Fun Run* Evaluation Report

20 June 2017

Arts Centre Melbourne Betty Amsden Participation Program 2017

In memory of the late Miss Betty Amsden AO, DSJ

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# 1. Executive Summary

This is a report on the impact of *Fun Run*, the fourth and final project in the Betty Amsden Participation Program.

## 1.1 The project

*Fun Run* was a large-scale, free community performance spectacle held on 12 March 2017 on Arts Centre Melbourne's forecourt, St Kilda Rd, Melbourne. In the months preceding the event, artistic partners All the Queens Men (ATQM) and Circus Oz led workshops and worked with members of the public and community and school groups which culminated in their performance as part of the event.

## 1.2 Our theory of change

Arts Centre Melbourne and BYP Group theorised that people who encountered *Fun Run* would have an artistically vibrant experience leading to connection with each other, public space, the community and Arts Centre Melbourne.

Participants who were content to watch the spectacle ('receptive participants') would have a life affirming experience, feel a sense of community connection, and leave *Fun Run* with a curiosity and willingness to participate in future similar activities.

Participants who joined in with the flash mobs and were in community groups and who were also part of the performance ('active participants') could have an even greater experience of affirmation, a sense of ownership, pride, achievement, and desire or plans to do similar activities in the future.

## 1.3 The project's impact

***Fun Run* embodied the values of the Betty Amsden Participation Program of cultural democracy, artistic excellence, community connectedness and playfulness and whimsy.**

### Artistic Vibrancy

***Fun Run* was an artistically vibrant experience for the thousands of people who participated in or were content to watch the event.** People described feeling excited, happy and energized. They almost universally felt as though they had shared something special and unique with each other at the event. They had a chance to be spontaneous, and agreed that *Fun Run* was a life-affirming experience.

The intrinsic rewards were stronger for active participants, who consistently reported a stronger sense of spontaneity, life-affirmation and a sense of sharing something special and unique with others.

### Personal Growth and Development

**Active participants at *Fun Run* developed their self-efficacy as a result of the event.**

They had an opportunity to try something new and developed their confidence to participate in arts activities. Active participants felt a strong sense of being part of the event and were very proud of their participation. They felt as though their contribution had been valued by others.

*Fun Run* lived up to its name, making physical activity more fun than normal physical activity for participants. This was particularly the case for *Fun Run* participants who normally exercise on fewer than four days per week. This group also felt significantly inspired to engage in more physical activity as a result of *Fun Run*.

This supports the theory that some arts events can make physical activity more engaging for people who typically exercise on fewer than four days per week.

For flash mob participants, arts events like *Fun Run* make it easier to engage in more physical activity. This group could be a target for future arts-related physical activity.

### Community Connectedness

***Fun Run* inspired a sense of community and belonging across participants and audience members.** This sense was shared almost unanimously across the people at the event, but was felt more strongly by active participants.

Community group members felt the strongest sense of belonging to the wider Melbourne community. Although the community group sample was small for the evaluation, when we reflect that many of these respondents were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, this is a particularly poignant result.

### Access to ACM and the Arts

***Fun Run* made the arts feel more open to everyone and made people almost unanimously more positive about their city.**

Approximately 48,000 people engaged with *Fun Run* online and in person. This included:

- more than 1,000 community and school group attendances in workshops with ATQM and Circus Oz in the lead up to the event
- more than 1,500 attendances of the general public at free, flash mob workshops prior to the event
- almost 5,000 people who performed, spontaneously joined in or enjoyed the spectacle at the *Fun Run* event
- over 40,000 people who interacted with *Fun Run* online including the live streaming of the first and last half hours of the event

As a result of *Fun Run*, people felt almost unanimously positive about the city and an appreciation for the arts in their city. They agreed that the event humanised the city and made it feel more vibrant and creative.

Active participants almost unanimously felt positive about their experience of participating. They felt that they had been treated as equals, supported and respected.

As a result of *Fun Run*, active participants felt more strongly that Arts Centre Melbourne is a place for them and is open to people from all walks of life.

### Overall Evaluation

**People enjoyed and appreciated *Fun Run*, giving it an average rating of 8.6 out of 10.** If anything, people called for even more audience interaction, such as more invitations to participate during the day, less repetition of performances, or using the screens more and the addition of timers to enhance the audience experience.

### Leadership in community participation projects

**As in previous years, ACM created an intrinsically vibrant and rewarding experience for both receptive and active participants.** ACM's partnerships with community groups made sure that a diverse mix of people came to *Fun Run* who would not normally come to ACM or participate regularly in the arts. Crucially, the ACM team members who facilitated community engagement again created an experience for participants in which they felt respected, acknowledged and in which could own the event themselves.

## 2. Introduction

This is a report on the impact of Arts Centre Melbourne's (ACM) presentation of *Fun Run*, the fourth and final of the original four-year Betty Amsden Participation Program. The report is structured around the key goals of the program and assesses the extent to which ACM delivered the outcomes it was seeking to for participants.

We conducted the evaluation from January 2017 to April 2017.

The Betty Amsden Participation Program explores and encourages cultural democracy in the community, participation in the arts and at ACM, and our inherent creativity as human beings.

### 2.1 Background

*Fun Run* was a large-scale, free community performance spectacle held on 12 March 2017 on Arts Centre Melbourne's forecourt, St Kilda Rd, Melbourne. Artistic partners All the Queens Men (ATQM) and Circus Oz led workshops and worked with members of the public and community and school groups which culminated in their performance as part of the event.

*Fun Run* was an homage to the Greek messenger Pheidippides who was sent to Athens to announce the Persians' defeat in the Battle of Marathon, running the entire distance without stopping. Artist Tristan Meecham of Melbourne-based performance company *All the Queens Men* ran a marathon on a treadmill on the ACM forecourt, rallied and encouraged by performances from community groups, school groups and members of the general public.

In the months preceding the event, ACM undertook the following activities:

- 24 workshops with 19 community groups who then performed at the event (in partnership with ATQM and Circus Oz)
- 23 workshops with members of the general public and school students who then participated in the flash mobs at the event (in partnership with ATQM and Circus Oz)
- Weekly workshops during February and March 2017 with an estimated 90 students from Thornbury Primary School, Bannockburn Primary School and Sacred Heart School who then performed at the event (in partnership with Circus Oz)

## 2.2 Betty Amsden Participation Program Evaluation Framework

### 2.2.1 Key Assumptions

The Betty Amsden Participation Program (BAPP) is based on the following key assumptions:

- We are born creative. Yet as adults, we often suppress or lose opportunities to express our creativity and sense of wonder.
- Rekindling or kindling this creative spark in adults/ children is possible.
- Creative interventions can achieve this. They can provide opportunities for creative sharing, expression and experience.
- They can also have social impact. Creative interventions can change our experience of, and attitudes to public spaces, suburbs, cities, ourselves and other people, and contribute to a healthier and stronger society.
- Arts Centre Melbourne is capable of supporting these interventions and wants to work in partnership with community organisations and networks to do this.
- This will only work if the interventions are presented as much as possible as gifts, with no expectation of financial return to Arts Centre Melbourne.

### 2.2.2 Values

The values that underpin the Betty Amsden Participation Program that have guided each project are as follows:

- Cultural democracy: culture, public space and Arts Centre Melbourne belong to everyone. Everyone has the right to be creative and participate in the arts and their arts centre.
- Working together: ACM can't and should not do it alone. This means that community members must be partners throughout the process.
- Artistic excellence: community and arts programs can and should be delivered at a high standard of excellence.
- Playfulness and whimsy: positivity can inspire learning, growth and connection.

### 2.2.3 Fun Run Theory of Change

We can summarise ACM and BYP’s *Fun Run* theory of change as follows:

**People who encounter *Fun Run*** will experience a connection with each other, public space, the community and Arts Centre Melbourne.

**General public spectators** will have a life affirming experience, feel a sense of community connection, and leave *Fun Run* with a curiosity and willingness to participate in future similar activities.

**Flash mob participants** may have an even greater experience of affirmation and desire to participate in future activities.

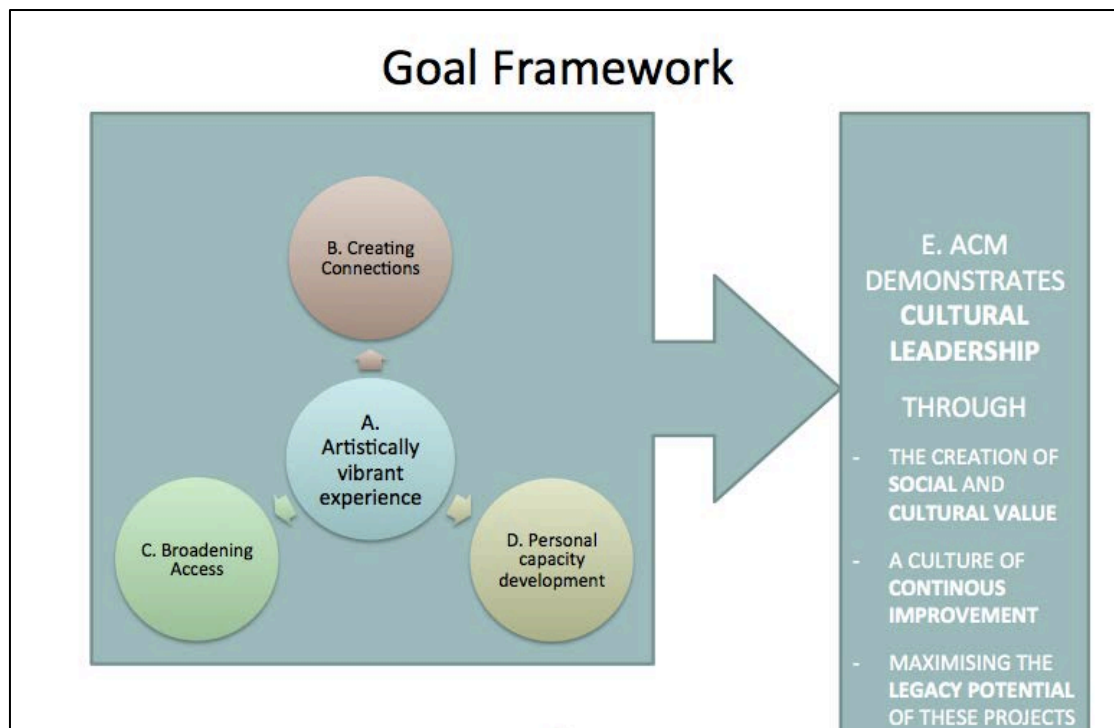
**Community and school groups** will show the greatest degree of change, with a stronger sense of ownership, pride, achievement, and desire or even plans to do similar activities in the future.

### 2.2.4 Key Evaluation Question

Arts Centre Melbourne commissioned the evaluation to answer the question:

*How well did Fun Run deliver on the intended goals and outcomes of the Betty Amsden Participation Program for participants?*

Figure 1: BAPP Evaluation Framework Diagram





### 2.2.5 Intended Outcomes

Against each goal, ACM expects to see evidence of the following outcomes if the Betty Amsden Participation Program is successful:

#### 1. Artistic Vibrancy

- Intrinsic reward for participants (a sense of fun and enjoyment, emotional response, shared experience etc.)

#### 2. Community Connectedness

- Connections between people
- Building participants' connection to their city
- A sense of community

#### 3. Broadening Access to ACM and the Arts

- Broad reach and high levels of participation
- Diversifying attendance: greater community representation at ACM
- Accessible and inclusive arts experiences

#### 4. Personal Growth Development

- An increased sense of self-efficacy among active participants

#### 5. Leadership in Public Programming

- Results: delivering value for participants
- A culture of continuous improvement
- Legacy: maximising the legacy potential of the Betty Amsden Participation Program.

This last category of impact was not a focus of the *Fun Run* evaluation, as we covered this topic in depth in the 2016 review of stakeholder views about the Betty Amsden Participation Program's legacy and ACM leadership.

### 2.2.6 Spectrum of Engagement

*Fun Run* allowed for different levels of participation which we are calling "active engagement" vs "receptive engagement."

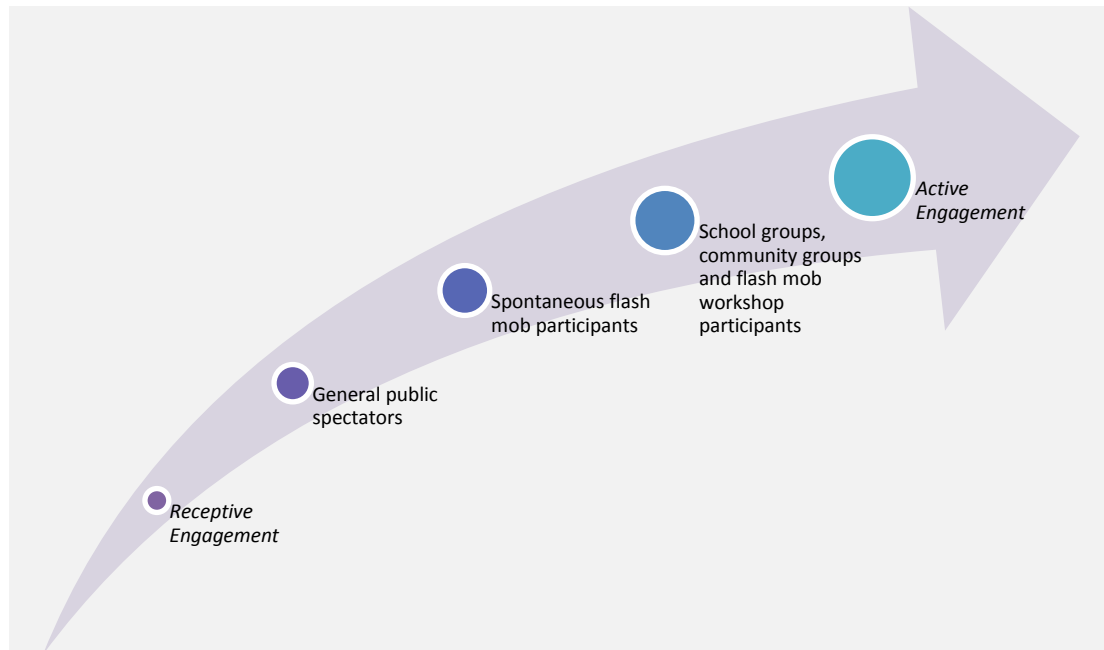
People who "actively" engaged in *Fun Run* are those who got involved before or during the event. They include:

- participants in school and community group workshops
- participants in flash mob workshops
- people who joined in the flash mobs and performances at the event

Those who “receptively” engaged in *Fun Run* are people in the audience at the event and those who viewed the online *Fun Run* materials, such as the YouTube flash mob videos or the *Fun Run* social media and live streaming of the first and final half hours of the event on FaceBook.

We theorise that the level of engagement will affect the level of impact a participant experiences.

Figure 2: *Fun Run* Spectrum of Engagement



At the active engagement end of the spectrum, ATQM and Circus Oz ran workshops with school students and community groups over a number of weeks in the lead up to *Fun Run*, and flash mob workshops for members of the general public.

For these participants, we would expect to see a greater investment in the project, which might manifest in the survey and interview responses as a sense of ownership, pride, achievement and a desire or even concrete plans to do similar activities in the future.

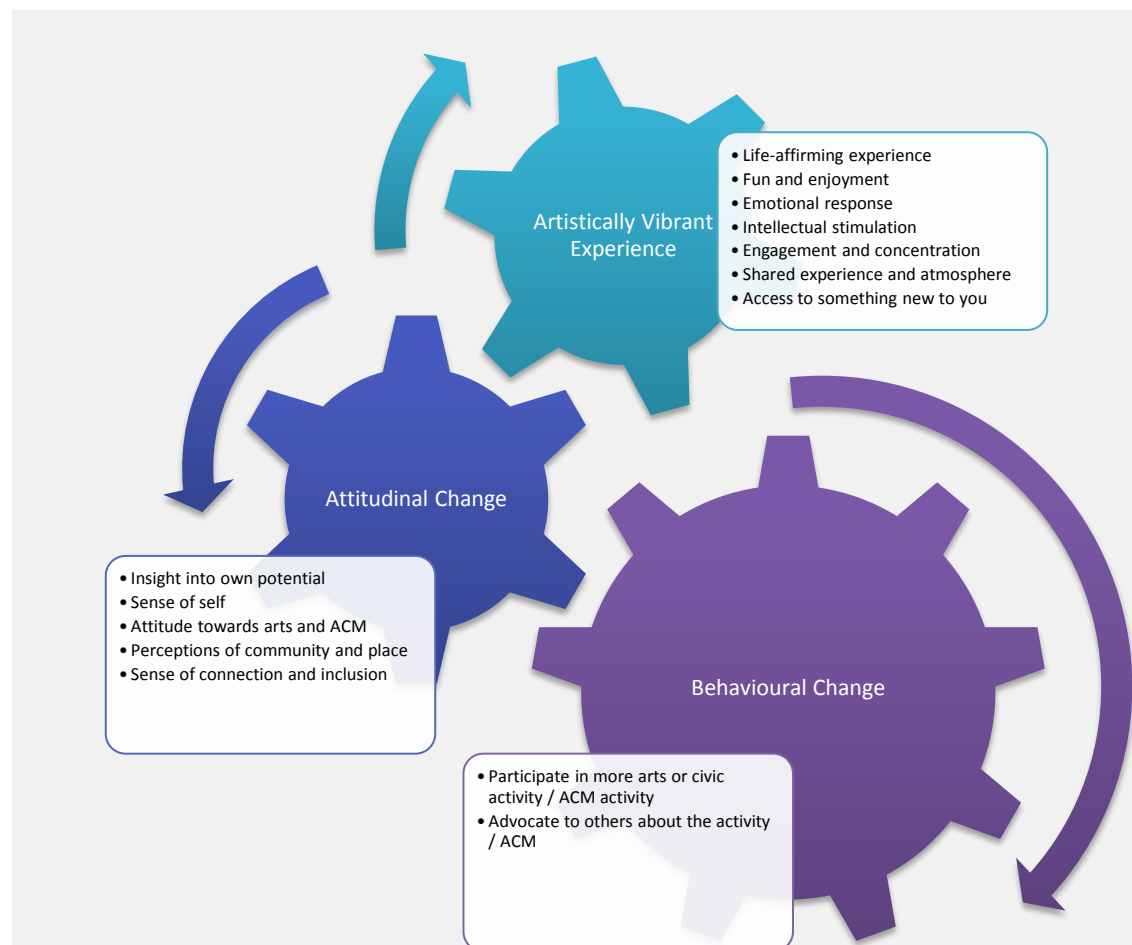
In the middle of the spectrum are audience members who decided to participate in a flash mob on the day of the event. For these participants we would expect to see an emphasis on emotions such as enjoyment, surprise, excitement and amusement, and curiosity about similar events in the future.

At the other end of the spectrum are participants who have come to see the event, or stopped by to see what was going on. For these participants, we would expect to see reports of fun, enjoyment and curiosity, but most likely these responses won't be as strong as for active participants.

Naturally there are always exceptions to a rule. One of the unique aspects of arts experiences is that for some people, “receptive” engagement can create lasting change. Research indicates that this is because arts experiences can create an emotional state which allows for “hot” or “sticky” cognition: in other words, change that lasts.

This is why we talk about a spectrum of *impact* as well as a spectrum of *engagement*: anyone could potentially experience attitudinal change or even behavioural change from an arts experience. That said, our past research shows that this is more likely if the experience is active, sustained over time, repeated or reinforced.

Figure 3: Fun Run Spectrum of Impact



## 2.2.7 Evaluation Methodology

Our observations and findings about participant outcomes are based on:

- 128 responses to the general public survey, including flash mob workshop participants, community group participants, those who joined in on the day and those who did not join in on the day
- 30 responses to the school student survey
- Interviews with five community group leaders and four flash mob workshop participants who also attended on the *Fun Run* event day

**Table 1: Fun Run: Survey responses and margin of error**

Survey Respondents	Description	Count of Responses	Est. Total participants	Survey Margin of Error
Audience – did not join in Audience - joined in	Audience members at <i>Fun Run</i> aged 15 and over who did not join in	58	2,450 <sup>1</sup>	+/-13%
	Audience members at <i>Fun Run</i> aged 15 and over who joined in on the day	26	353	+/-19%
Flash mob workshop participant and joined in	Audience members at <i>Fun Run</i> aged 15 or over who joined in on the day and also participated in a flash mob workshop with Arts Centre Melbourne in the lead-up to <i>Fun Run</i>	39	52 <sup>2</sup>	+/-8%
School groups	Students of all ages from Thornbury Primary School, Sacred Heart and Bannockburn Primary School who participated in workshops with ATQM and Circus Oz in the lead-up to <i>Fun Run</i> and performed on the day	30	90 <sup>3</sup>	+/-15%
Community groups	Community group members aged 15 and over who participated in workshops with ATQM in the lead-up to <i>Fun Run</i> and performed on the day	16	115 <sup>4</sup>	+/-23%
Total active participants	Audience members and flash mob workshop participants over the age of 15 who joined in, community and school group members.	111	610	+/-8%
Total Respondents	All of the above	169	4,110	+/-7%

<sup>1</sup> An additional 1,050 audience members were under 15 and were therefore excluded from the survey as permission for their evaluation participation could not be guaranteed.

<sup>2</sup> An additional 20 participants were under 15 and were therefore excluded from the survey as permission for their evaluation participation could not be guaranteed.

<sup>3</sup> Parental and Department of Education permission was gained for these students to participate in surveys.

<sup>4</sup> An additional 110 community group participants were under 15 years of age were therefore excluded from the survey as permission for their evaluation participation could not be obtained.

## 3. Intended Outcomes

In this section we offer more explanation about each of the outcome areas, including the theories that have informed them and why they are important to the Betty Amsden Participation Program projects.

### 3.1 Artistic Vibrancy

**‘Artistic vibrancy’ refers to the intrinsic reward derived from participating in a high quality arts experience.** It encapsulates the dimensions of an arts experience that influences the level of subjective personal reward an individual experiences. This might include the extent to which it impacts on a person emotionally or intellectually, whether they have fun, are captivated or have a shared experience. As a concept, it is informed by research related to arts impact measurement and creativity research.

In the field of arts impact measurement, researchers have developed ways to describe the direct and indirect impact of arts experiences<sup>5</sup>. Researchers typically differentiate between instrumental and intrinsic rewards from arts experiences, but recognise that instrumental outcomes are maximised when an arts experience is intrinsically rewarding. This echoes research in educational motivation and attainment, which identifies self-efficacy and related mental states as determinants of academic and non-academic outcomes.<sup>6</sup>

Creativity researchers have identified the importance of intrinsic motivations for creativity and innovation and the state of ‘flow’ that can arise in the context of deep engagement with an activity.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, research into adult ‘play’ in work settings identifies that the mental state achieved via semi-structured, ‘serious play’ allows

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<sup>5</sup> Among the pioneers of this approach include Patcher, M. and Landry C. (2001) *Culture at the Crossroads – culture and cultural institutions at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Comedia, London; McCarthy et al. (2004) *Gifts of the Muse – reframing the debate about the benefits of the arts*, The RAND Corporation, New York City, Holden J; (2004) *Capturing Cultural Value*, Demos, London; Brown, A, Novak J. (2007) *Assessing the intrinsic impact of live performance*, WolfBrown, San Francisco; Bailey. J (2009) *Artistic Vibrancy Resources* produced for The Australia Council for the Arts, Sydney and New Economics Foundation (2009) *Capturing the Audience Experience: a handbook for theatres*. Independent Theatre Council, the Society of London Theatre and the Theatrical Management Association, London.

<sup>6</sup> Martin A. et al, (2013) ‘The Role of Arts Participation in Students’ Academic and Non-Academic Outcomes: A Longitudinal Study of School, Home and Community Factors,’ *Journal of Educational Psychology* 2013 105(3): 709-727.

<sup>7</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow : the psychology of optimal experience* (1st ed.). New York: Harper & Row. Hennessy, Beth and Amabile, Teresa (2010). ‘Creativity.’ *Annual Review of Psychology* 61: 569-98.

participants to feel a level of creative agency which has ripple effects in the workplace.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.1.1 Why it matters

Policy makers and writers have urged arts organisations to translate this kind of research into ‘evaluative thinking.’ For example, think tanks such as RAND, Demos and Comedia argued that rather than simply assert their intrinsic value, or conversely justify their activity in purely non-artistic terms as instruments of social or economic policy, arts organisations need to find ways to recognise the different types of value of their activities<sup>9</sup> More recently findings from the *Cultural Value Project*, a three year UK academic study, stressed the need for evaluation to focus more attention on the way people experience their engagement with arts and culture, instead of solely on the accountability needs of funders (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016).

ACM’s evaluative approach for the Betty Amsden Participation Program is informed by the work of a number of agencies that built intrinsic reward into evaluative frameworks.<sup>10</sup> The evaluation framework attempts to help account for the human experience of each project in recognition that the value derived from arts and cultural activity arises primarily at the individual level, and can be a catalyst for wider benefits (Crossick and Kaszynska 2016). Specifically, for *Fun Run* the ACM team anticipated that participation in the project might involve the following intrinsic reward for those involved:

- An emotional response
- A sense of fun and enjoyment
- An experience of spontaneity, life affirmation and relaxation
- A sense of shared experience

## 3.2 Personal Growth and Development

In the context of *Fun Run*, **personal growth refers to the extent to which the experience provides an opportunity for participants to develop their sense of personal self-efficacy and their efficacy in the community** (their belief in their ability to succeed on their own or in their community).

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<sup>8</sup> Chalfour, I. et al. (2003). ‘Learning to Play Again.’ *Beyond the Journal: Young Children on the Web*. May 2003: 1-9. Cohen, Lynn and Waite-Stupiansky, Sandra (eds). (2012). *Play: A Polyphony of Research, Theories and Issues*. Play and Culture Studies Series Vol 12. University Press of America: Maryland.

<sup>9</sup> see especially McCarthy et al (2004), Holden (2004) and Landry and Patcher (2001).

<sup>10</sup> See especially the work of the New Economics Foundation (2009), Brown et al (2007), Bailey (2009) and McCarthy et al (2004).

The concept of personal self-efficacy is based on research into the determinants of educational attainment, social capital, health and wellbeing. Individuals develop a sense of personal agency and competence derived from feeling able to participate in a creative activity. From this they can also develop improved confidence, self-esteem, pride, a sense of achievement and validation (Raingruber 2014). The concept of “self-efficacy in the community” is based on the social capital theory used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in their framework for measuring social capital. Based on the work of Falk 2001, individuals with a strong sense of efficacy are able to actively participate in the groups and communities to which they belong (Edwards 2004:33-34).

### 3.2.1 Why it matters

The Betty Amsden Participation Program’s theory of change articulates the potential ripple effect of an intrinsically rewarding arts experience on some of the determinants of social capital. For example, *Fun Run* may empower participants to have a different experience of, and attitudes to themselves, other people, their cities and public spaces and contribute to a healthier and stronger society.

As a public arts project, *Fun Run* did not take place in a controlled environment in which we could identify causality and measure the significance of the change attributable to the project. We have adopted a determinants approach, examining the extent to which the project contributed to some of the determinants of personal wellbeing as they relate to the experience of *Fun Run*.<sup>11</sup>

Informed by the research, ACM has defined the dimensions of the *Fun Run* experience that is likely to contribute to a participant’s sense of **personal self-efficacy**. It is an experience that creates a sense of:

- ownership and agency
- challenge and achievement
- acknowledgement and confidence
- reducing barriers to physical activity

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<sup>11</sup> In this approach, researchers gather evidence about the effectiveness of an health promotion program or intervention in its real world setting, effecting impact on a behavioural determinant of health outcomes (Nutbeam, 1998). It can be understood as a program logic evaluation, or impact evaluation, where the desired impacts of the program are also determinants of positive health outcomes (Thorogood and Coombes, 2010: 12). This approach allows researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of programs happening in the real world, rather than focusing on expensive, experimental situations such as random-controlled trials. Change occurs on a continuum. If links are already well-established, then you do not have to prove causal relationships again. Instead, you can focus on proximal indicators which are known to be related to distal outcomes (Green and Tones: 1999).

### 3.3 Community Connectedness

As a goal of the Betty Amsden Participation Program, community connectedness is based on the theory that the arts can act as a catalyst to foster a sense of connection to place and others. Some social capital theorists for example have described the potential for arts experiences to create connections between people, which can contribute to the determinants of healthy individual behaviours and the creation of “bonding” and “bridging” social capital.<sup>12</sup> ‘Bonding’ brings people who are similar closer together and ‘bridging’ capital helps bridge the divide between people who are different (Putnam 2003, Edwards 2004).

#### 3.3.1 Why it matters

Research into the role of the arts in place-making, community pride and identity notes that the activation of spaces through arts can contribute to a sense of place, cultural identity and pride in one’s city (Miles, 1997). There is also some evidence that suggests arts projects can enliven cities and can contribute to a sense of cultural vitality, pride in place and identity<sup>13</sup>.

Informed by these theories, the ACM Betty Amsden Participation Program framework looks at the contribution of the *Fun Run* experience to creating:

- interpersonal connections between people
- a sense of community
- a sense of connection to their city

### 3.4 Access to the Arts and ACM

‘Access,’ as it relates to the Program, has three key dimensions:

- **Inclusivity:** the perceived and actual accessibility of the arts experience for participants.
- **Program reach:** the extent to which the projects attract participants who wouldn’t normally come to ACM and/or from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in arts or ACM audiences.
- **Perceptions of Arts Centre Melbourne:** the extent to which participants perceive it to be a place for everyone and feel welcome.

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<sup>12</sup> For example see Putnam, R. (2003). *Better Together*. Saguaro Seminar on Civic Engagement in America. John F Kennedy School of Government: Cambridge.

<sup>13</sup> For case studies of arts and cultural vitality, please see Castanet. (2014). *The Arts Ripple Effect: Valuing the Arts in Communities*, Castanet with support from Arts Victoria and the Australia Council for the Arts: Sydney.



### 3.4.1 Inclusivity

With regards to the first dimension, the Betty Amsden Participation Program team defines an accessible experience as one that is highly inclusive and participatory. Such an experience:

- Requires no specialist skills to participate
- Treats people with respect and as equals
- Gives participants the support they need to participate
- Makes the arts feel more open to people
- Acknowledges and values the contribution of participants (also a dimension of self-efficacy)

It is grounded in the notion that participatory arts experiences can deliver these outcomes for participants and plays an important role in what some cultural commentators are referring to as the democratisation of culture<sup>14</sup>.

### 3.4.2 Program reach

Through providing an inclusive participatory experience, the Betty Amsden Participation Program has allowed ACM to produce more projects which engage participants from Victoria's richly diverse communities.

The Program team interprets diversity in its broadest possible sense, to include age and cultural diversity as well as socio-economic diversity and people living with disability. In defining what success would look like they wanted participants' socio-demographic backgrounds to more accurately reflect the very DNA of the city, giving people from all walks of life new pathways and opportunity to experience "their Arts Centre."

### 3.4.3 Perceptions of ACM

ACM also defines an accessible experience as one which results in participants feeling a greater sense of belonging at ACM and positively influences their perceptions about ACM more generally as being a place open to everyone.

It references the idea of 'institutional trust' as defined in the ABS social capital framework which describes institutional trust as:

*"the levels of trust that individuals may have towards societal institutions... (which is) important because (without it) services may be underutilised, to the detriment of members of the community, if trust of institutions is deficient.  
(Edwards 2004; 27)*

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<sup>14</sup> See especially Holden, J. (2008). *Democratic Culture – Opening Up the Arts to Everyone*. Demos: London.

Building institutional trust is obviously a far more complex outcome than ACM is trying to effect through a single program. Nonetheless it is a useful concept and point of reference for developing the outcome indicators for the program.

### 3.4.4 Why it matters

ACM is a civic space that belongs to the people of Victoria. Reaching people who do not normally access Arts Centre Melbourne or the arts more generally is an important outcome for the Betty Amsden Participation Program.

In Australia, we know that many groups continue to experience lower levels of arts participation at art events compared to the broader population, especially people living with disabilities, Indigenous people and people who mainly speak a language other than English at home (Australia Council 2014).

According to international research, inclusive active arts programs could be part of the solution. A 2011 study commissioned by The James Irvine Foundation<sup>15</sup>, one of the largest private funders of participatory arts activity in the United States, found that active arts engagement provides an effective entry point for younger and more diverse populations because it taps into their patterns of cultural consumption and demand for these kinds of experiences (Brown, Novak-Leonard and Gilbride 2011).

There is also a growing demand for active types of arts experiences in the wider population. Australia Council research shows that Australians have significantly increased their creative participation in the arts since 2009. Nearly half the population (48%) reported creative participation activities in 2013, an increase of seven percentage points since 2009 (Australia Council 2014: 12).

Through providing inclusive participatory experiences, the Betty Amsden Participation Program helps ACM respond to this growing demand and opens up the arts to a diverse range of participants that better reflects the state's cultural and social fabric.

## 3.5 Leadership

Four years ago, ACM and the late Betty Amsden AO, DSJ's stated aims for the Betty Amsden Participation Program were to explore and encourage cultural democracy (in the community and at Arts Centre Melbourne), and our inherent creativity as human beings. The Program was designed to contribute in real and measurable ways to ACM's stated purpose, which is to "create, connect and enrich the lives of Victorians."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Brown, A. Novak-Leonard, J. and Gilbride. (2011). *Getting in on the act*. The James Irvine Foundation: Los Angeles.

<sup>16</sup> Pre-2015 the core purpose was defined as "enriching the lives of Victorian's socially, educationally, culturally and economically through the performing arts..." The Betty Amsden Evaluation Framework has been adapted to incorporate this change but remains substantively the same.

To do this, ACM took as its starting point the artistic experience, in the belief that only the highest quality artistically vibrant experiences will attract people, engage them, make them feel more connected to each other and the city and more welcome at Arts Centre Melbourne.

### 3.5.1 Why it matters

As noted above, ACM is a civic space that belongs to the people of Victoria. ACM strives to be a leader across all dimensions of its activity, including civic participation and public engagement.

After four years of the Betty Amsden Participation Program, ACM anticipated it could occupy a position of leadership in community participation projects if it succeeded in:

- delivering value to participants by demonstrably achieving the articulated Program goals
- fostering a culture of continuous improvement through evaluation
- maximising the legacy of the program

As noted earlier in this report, we did a forensic review of leadership in 2016. We comment on leadership in this year's report in broad terms.

# 3. Goal 1: Artistically Vibrant Experiences

***Was Fun Run an intrinsically rewarding experience for participants? Did the depth of engagement (active vs receptive) matter to a participant's experience?***

*Fun Run* made people feel happy, excited and energised. It was a spontaneous and life-affirming experience for active and receptive participants. The event had a positive atmosphere – people felt that they shared something special at the event.

For those who joined in, the experience of life-affirmation and spontaneity was much stronger, supporting our theory that active engagement leads to stronger impacts.

## 3.1. Introduction

In this section we look at:

- Participants' emotional response
- Experience of spontaneity and life affirmation
- Participants' sense of shared experience

### 3.2. Emotional Response

Almost all survey respondents described the experience as fun and said that *Fun Run* made them feel happy and excited.

*“Fun Run was the most amazing live event that I have ever experienced. It was authentic, entertaining, encouraging and totally empowering! I couldn’t believe so many emotions could come out in just a few hours. I am in awe of what an amazing piece of work has been created and how community minded it was. 10/10.” – Spontaneous flash mob participant*

Figure 4: Fun Run: What are the top three words you would use to describe how participating in Fun Run made you feel? (n=132)<sup>17</sup>



<sup>17</sup> “n” refers to the number of responses received for this question.

### 3.3. Experience of spontaneity and life affirmation

The majority of all survey respondents<sup>18</sup> felt that *Fun Run* gave them a chance to be spontaneous (79%). *Fun Run* was a life-affirming experience for the majority of all survey respondents (78%).

As our theory of change predicted, active participants reported a much stronger experience of spontaneity:

- 92% of active participants agreed or strongly agreed that they had a chance to be spontaneous, compared to 62% of receptive participants

*"[Fun Run] was a great community event with lots of cultural diversity, humour, inclusivity & skill...loved the irreverence, graphics, music & staging & that a guy ran a marathon on a treadmill - very funny." – Flash mob workshop participant*

### 3.4. Shared experience

The majority of survey respondents felt that they shared something special (88%) and unique (86%) with others at *Fun Run*.

*"I had no intention of staying for the whole event but on the day I got swept up in the excitement and stayed well after the fireworks. Thanks for all the hard work behind the scene to make these events happen." – Flash mob workshop participant*

Active participants had a more widely shared and stronger sense of shared experience than receptive participants:

- 93% of audience members who joined in on the day felt a sense of shared experience, compared to 77% of receptive participants
- Active participants had a stronger sense of shared experience than receptive participants, with 51% strongly agreeing compared to 34%

The sense of having a unique experience was also more pronounced amongst active participants, 51% of whom strongly agreed compared to 34% of receptive participants.

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<sup>18</sup> This refers to the combined results for both active and receptive participants, i.e. all survey respondents.

# 4. Personal Growth and Development

***Did Fun Run develop people's sense of personal efficacy and efficacy in the community?***

Active participants in *Fun Run* felt a sense of ownership of the event and pride in taking part. They felt a strong sense that they were part of the event and that their contribution was valued and acknowledged by others.

*Fun Run* introduced many people to something new and developed people's confidence to participate in arts activities and, to a lesser extent, physical activity.

For flash mob participants, *Fun Run* also helped to reduce barriers to physical activity. This group may be a target for arts-related programs which make it easier to do physical activity.

## 4.1. Introduction

In this section we look at:

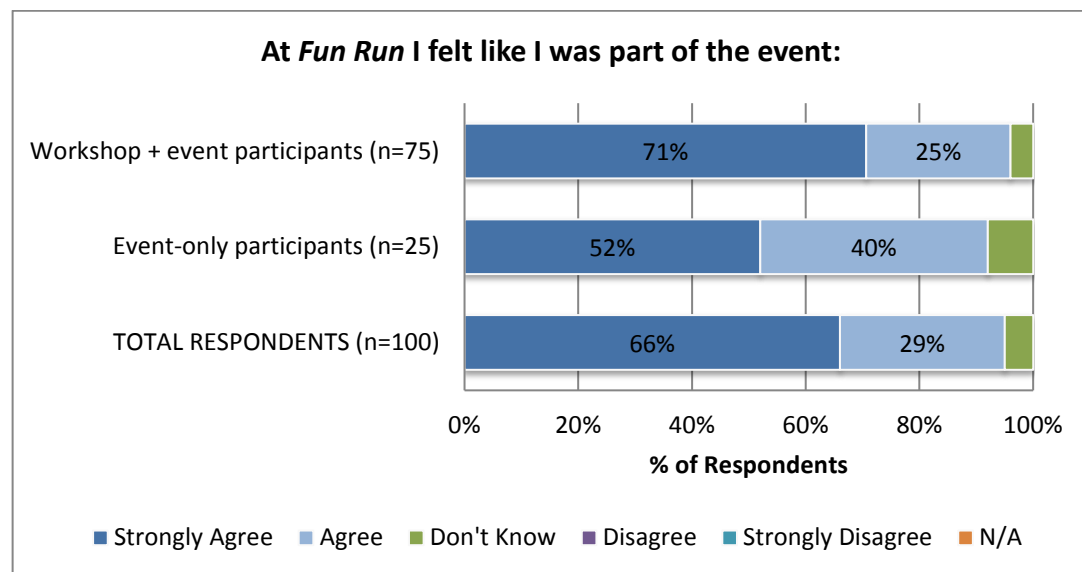
- Sense of ownership of the event
- Sense of challenge and achievement
- Sense of acknowledgement and confidence
- Reducing barriers to physical activity through the arts

## 4.2. Ownership

**Active participants almost unanimously felt like they were part of the event (96%), and 72% also felt a sense of ownership of the event.**

Participants who engaged with the process prior to the event tended to feel more strongly that they were a part of *Fun Run*: 71% of workshop participants<sup>19</sup> strongly agreed that they felt part of the event, compared to 52% of those who joined in on the day.

Figure 5: *Fun Run*: Sense of being part of the event, workshop + event participants vs event-only participants

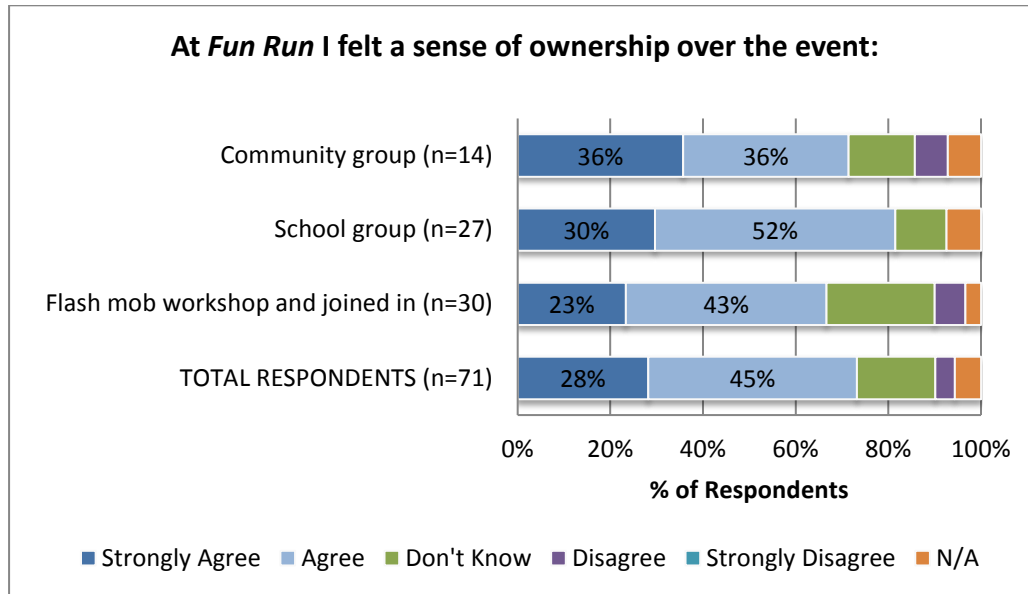


<sup>19</sup> This includes school, community and flash mob workshop participants.



The sense of ownership of the event was more pronounced for community and school group members. This may be because they typically had a longer period of and deeper engagement with the process than the flash mob workshop participants.

Figure 6: *Fun Run*: Sense of ownership, active participants<sup>20</sup>



<sup>20</sup> In the school survey this was phrased as, "It felt like I was an important part of the event." We have included results in this report for community groups for your information. The sample was too small to speak representatively of this group.

### 4.2.1. Challenge and achievement

**Fun Run gave 80% of survey respondents a chance to try something new. The event inspired a unanimous and strong sense of pride amongst active participants (97%).**

As our theory of change predicted, active participants had a stronger sense of trying something new.

*“So cool - totally weird, stealth performance art dressed up as a strange sport event! Loved how random it was. Totally captivating to watch - so much more than a dude on a treadmill! Was there for 2 hours and was intrigued the whole time.” – Audience member who joined in on the day*

### 4.2.2. Confidence and acknowledgement

**As a result of Fun Run, 80% of all survey respondents felt more confident about engaging in arts activity. Two in three survey respondents agreed that participating in Fun Run improved their confidence to do physical activity.**

**In addition, 84% of active participants felt that their contribution was valued by others.**

*“Fun Run was a magnificent time and I was feeling spontaneous. Built my confidence up and I can definitely see myself doing something like this again in the future.” – Flash mob workshop participant*

As predicted, active participants had a stronger experience of increased confidence: 45% strongly agreed compared to 19% of receptive participants.

*“It broke the stigma of live art completely - I can't believe the energy and sense of community created. I LOVED IT.” – Audience member who joined in on the day*

## 4.3. Reducing barriers to physical activity through the arts

For Fun Run, Arts Centre Melbourne partnered with VicHealth and explored the potential for arts-related activities to motivate an increase in physical activity.

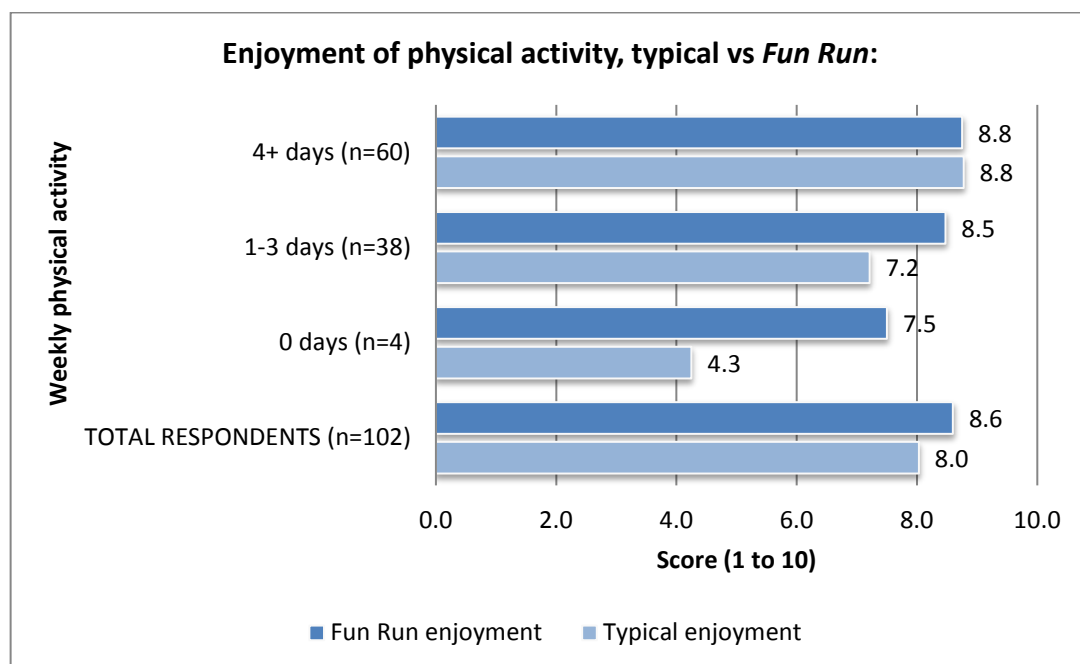
### 4.3.1. Enjoyment of physical activity

***Fun Run* lived up to its name, making physical activity more fun than normal physical activity for participants.**

This was particularly the case for *Fun Run* participants who normally exercise on fewer than four days per week. These respondents gave physical activity an average score of 7.2 out of 10 compared to 8.5 out of 10 for *Fun Run*.<sup>21</sup>

This supports the theory that the arts can make physical activity more engaging for people who exercise on fewer than four days per week.

**Figure 7: *Fun Run*: enjoyment of physical activity, average score, by participants' rate of weekly physical activity**



<sup>21</sup> We only received 4 responses from participants who never did physical activity for 30 minutes to raise their breathing rate. We have included their data in this report, but this should not be read as statistically representative.

### 4.3.2. Reducing barriers to physical activity

***Fun Run*** made it easier for respondents to engage in physical activity and inspired them to get more active in their everyday lives. For example:

- Two in three survey respondents (65%) agreed that arts events like ***Fun Run*** made it easier to do more physical activity. This was particularly the case amongst flash mob workshop participants (83%). This group could be a target for future arts-related physical activity.
- 74% of survey respondents felt inspired to do more physical activity like they did at ***Fun Run***.
- 71% of survey respondents felt inspired to do more physical activity in general as a result of ***Fun Run***.

*“It was great fun and really great to see kids and adults have a go and enjoying themselves rather than being perfect at something.” – Audience member*

***Fun Run*** inspired survey respondents who normally only do physical activity on fewer than four days per week. For example:

84% of these survey respondents felt inspired to do more physical activity like they did at ***Fun Run***

81% of survey respondents felt inspired to do more physical activity in general as a result of ***Fun Run***

### 4.3.3. Confidence to engage in physical activity

**Flash mob workshop participants are more confident to engage in physical activity as a result of *Fun Run* (83%).** These participants may represent a segment of the population which is particularly responsive to arts-related motivations to exercise.

# 5. Goal 3: Community Connectedness

## 5.1. Introduction

***Did Fun Run develop people's interpersonal connections, sense of community and sense of connection to the city?***

*Fun Run* was an opportunity for active participants to interact with people they would not normally meet, bond with their family and friends, and make new friends. The experience created a sense of community and belonging for participants, particularly community group participants.

Whilst we had a small sample of community group respondents, when we reflect that about half of community group survey respondents came from non-English speaking backgrounds, this is a particularly significant and poignant result.

In this section we look at:

- Interpersonal connections between people
- A sense of community
- A sense of connection to the city

## 5.2. Interpersonal connections between people

***Fun Run* was an opportunity for people to interact with their family, friends and acquaintances (88%) as well as people they did not know (76%). Active participants made new friends (71%) as well as growing closer to their existing networks e.g. family, friends and acquaintances (81%).**

*"I wanted to try a new experience and this was beyond my expectations. I'm shy at times and when I got to Circus Oz for the workshop everyone was so welcoming, friendly and supportive. I travelled using 2 trams from [X] to get there and it was so worth the effort. I met lovely people, even a 70 year old who was hesitant at first like me, but we both ended up having soooo much fun! Yes, please do more of these activities! Thank you soooo much for this truly wonderful experience!" – Flash mob workshop participant*

As our theory of change predicted, a higher proportion of active participants developed their interpersonal connections with strangers and people they would not normally meet in their everyday life. For example:

- 81% of active participants interacted with strangers compared to 65% of receptive participants
- 78% of active participants interacted with people whom they would not normally meet otherwise, compared to 48% of receptive participants
- 71% of active participants made new friends as a result of *Fun Run*

We also asked active participants about whether the event brought them closer to their existing networks e.g. family, friends and acquaintances. 81% agreed or strongly agreed that *Fun Run* provided them with this opportunity.

### 5.3. A sense of community

**Survey respondents almost unanimously agreed that *Fun Run* gave them a sense of community (93%).**

*“Awesome experience I felt proud and privileged to live in such a culturally diverse city! I love Melbourne!” – Community group participant*

This included 92% of receptive participants and 93% of active participants.

*“Loved all communities got together and share what they love doing with respect and care.” – Community group participant*

*“It was wonderful to be surrounded by different members of the Victorian community. It was a fantastic experience, and would happily participate again.” – Community group participant*

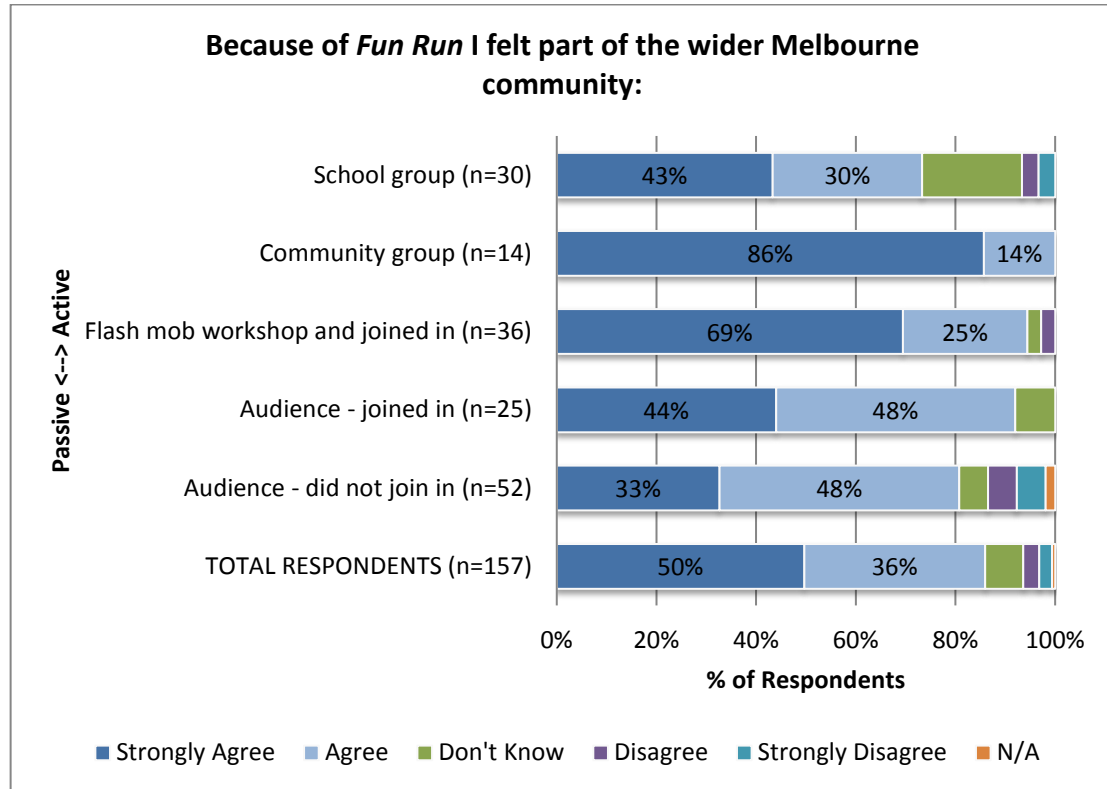
### 5.4. A sense of belonging and connection to the city

**The majority of all survey respondents felt a sense of being part of the wider Melbourne community (86%).**

*“(In cities) everyone is just go-go-go and blinkers on and work-work-work. And it's not the same (in Melbourne), you get breaks and you get rests and there is a little bit more creativity in Melbourne, so it's nice to being able to see things and just watch and go, “Okay, there's more to life than just working” kind of thing.” – Community group participant*

Community group members felt a strong sense of belonging, with 86% strongly agreeing with the statement, “Because of *Fun Run* I felt part of the wider Melbourne community.” This was based on a small sample but when we reflect that about half of the community group respondents came from non-English speaking backgrounds, this is a particularly significant and poignant result.

Figure 8: *Fun Run*: Sense of belonging to the wider community, % of participants



# 6. Access to ACM and the Arts

## 6.1. Introduction

### ***Did the experience make people feel welcome and included in their city, the arts and public events?***

*Fun Run* made the arts feel more open to everyone and made people almost unanimously more positive about their city. Approximately 48,000 people engaged with *Fun Run* online and in person. This included:

- more than 1,000 community and school group attendances in workshops with ATQM and Circus Oz in the lead up to the event
- more than 1,500 attendances of the general public at free, flash mob workshops prior to the event
- almost 5,000 people who performed, spontaneously joined in or enjoyed the spectacle at the *Fun Run* event
- over 40,000 people who interacted with *Fun Run* online including the live streaming of the first and last half hours of the event

As a result of *Fun Run*, people felt almost unanimously positive about the city and an appreciation for the arts in their city. They agreed that the event humanised the city and made it feel more vibrant and creative.

Active participants almost unanimously felt positive about their experience of participating. They felt that they had been treated as equals, supported and respected.

In this section we look at:

- Inclusivity: the perceived and actual accessibility of the arts experience for participants.
- Program reach: the extent to which the project attracts participants who wouldn't normally come to ACM and/or from backgrounds traditionally underrepresented in arts audiences.
- Perceptions of Arts Centre Melbourne: the extent to which participants perceive it to be a place for everyone and feel welcome.



## 6.2. Inclusivity

*“Our dance group is for people with disabilities of all ages and they love to perform ... we don't often get offered things that are in the mainstream community. We do a lot of performances on disability days, for other providers, but it's nice to be able to take part in 'real life', in general society.” – Community group participant*

*“It's important because, as a parent of somebody with a disability, I realise the value of inclusion. I don't want my son to feel like he is in a segregated community. I think it is important for the community at large to see that, "Hey, there are people with disabilities and they can actually participate in mainstream things and have fun and hold it with the best of them.” – Community group participant*

### 6.2.1. Perceptions of the arts and Melbourne

**Fun Run made people feel more positive about the arts.** For example:

- 91% of all survey respondents (i.e. active and receptive participants) agreed or strongly agreed that *Fun Run* made the arts feel more open to everyone
- 92% felt an appreciation of the arts in their city

**Survey respondents also overwhelmingly felt positive about the city as a result of *Fun Run*.** For example:

- 83% felt proud of Melbourne
- 91% felt positive about the city

**Survey respondents also felt that *Fun Run* energised and humanised the city.** For example:

- 87% felt that *Fun Run* made the city feel more creative
- 89% felt that *Fun Run* made the city feel more human
- 88% felt that the event made the city feel more vibrant

### 6.2.2. Inclusive participation experience

**Active participants almost unanimously felt positive about the people who ran the *Fun Run* activities which they participated in.**

For example:

- 91% felt that they had received the support they needed to participate
- 92% felt treated as equals
- 94% felt treated with respect

The high levels of perceived respect and equality also indicates that active participants had an experience of creative agency.

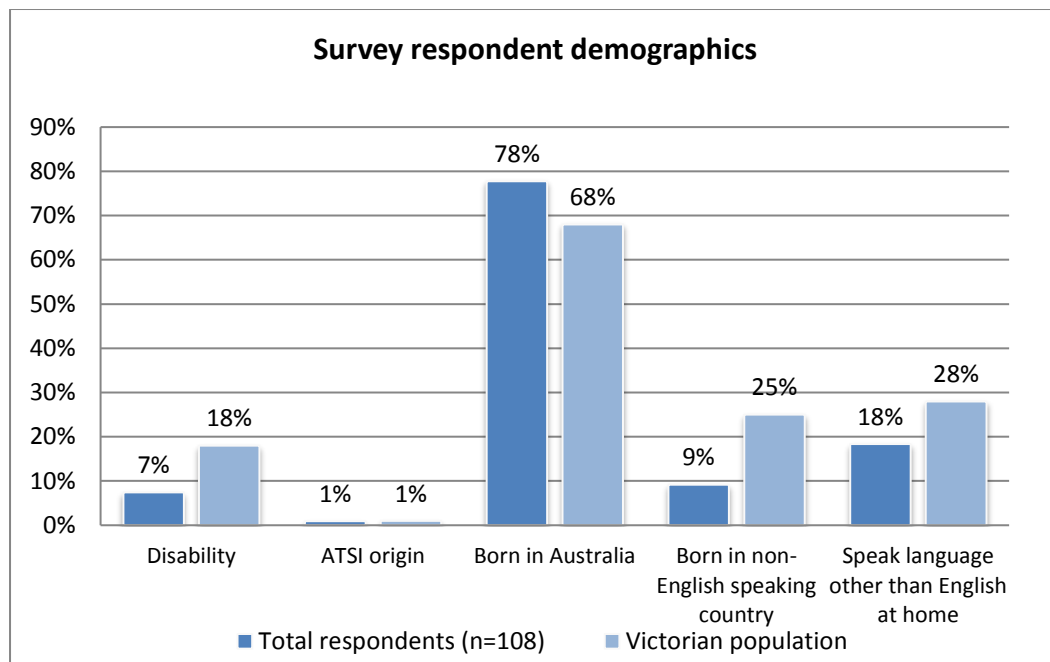
### 6.3. Program reach

Approximately 48,000 people engaged with *Fun Run* online and in person. This included:

- more than 1,000 community and school group attendances in workshops with ATQM and Circus Oz in the lead up to the event
- more than 1,500 attendances of the general public at free, flash mob workshops prior to the event
- almost 5,000 people who performed, spontaneously joined in or enjoyed the spectacle at the *Fun Run* event
- over 40,000 people who interacted with *Fun Run* online including the live streaming of the first and last half hours of the event

Based on our event observations, it appeared that *Fun Run* attracted a diverse mix of people who would not normally attend the ACM.

Survey respondents' profile did not reflect this wider diversity of the audience at the event. For example, survey respondents tended to be people born in Australia whose first language is English.

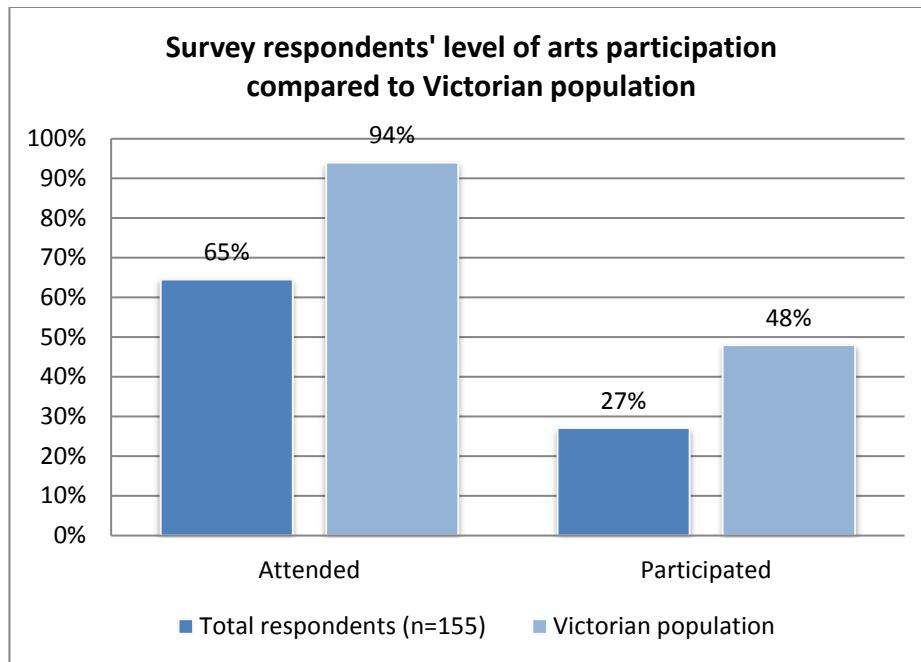
Figure 9: *Fun Run*: Survey respondent demographics<sup>22</sup>

The lack of diversity represented in survey responses may reflect the audience make-up and/or the low response rate amongst community group participants whom ACM recruited to the project specifically to reach people who would not normally come to ACM.

We conducted interviews with community group members and have incorporated our qualitative findings throughout the report. Appendix 1 provides a full list of community groups and is indicative of the characteristics of diversity present in the community group make-up.

Survey respondents attended and participated in the arts at a lower rate than the general Victorian population.

<sup>22</sup> This does not include school student survey respondents. Victorians aged 15 and over. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2012). "Basic community profile: Victoria." *2011 Census of Population and Housing. Cat. No. 2001.0*. Disability statistics were drawn from <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/community-involvement/people-with-a-disability-in-the-community/disability-in-victoria>

Figure 10: *Fun Run*: Survey respondent level of arts participation<sup>23</sup>

For 69% of survey respondents, *Fun Run* was the first time they had participated in a Betty Amsden Participation Program activity.

For a quarter of respondents, *Fun Run* was the first time they had attended anything at ACM.

<sup>23</sup> This does not include school student survey respondents. The data for the Victorian population aged 15 and over is drawn from the Australia Council for the Arts. (2014). *Arts in Daily Life: Victorian Participation in the Arts*. In this report, 'attended' is referred to as 'receptive' participation and 'participated' is referred to as 'creative' participation.

## 6.4. Perceptions of Arts Centre Melbourne

86% of active participants agreed that ACM felt like a place for them and seems open to people from all walks of life after their experience of *Fun Run*, compared to 76% prior to *Fun Run*.<sup>24</sup>

Figure 11: *Fun Run*: Perceptions of ACM, before and after *Fun Run* – place for me, % of active survey respondents

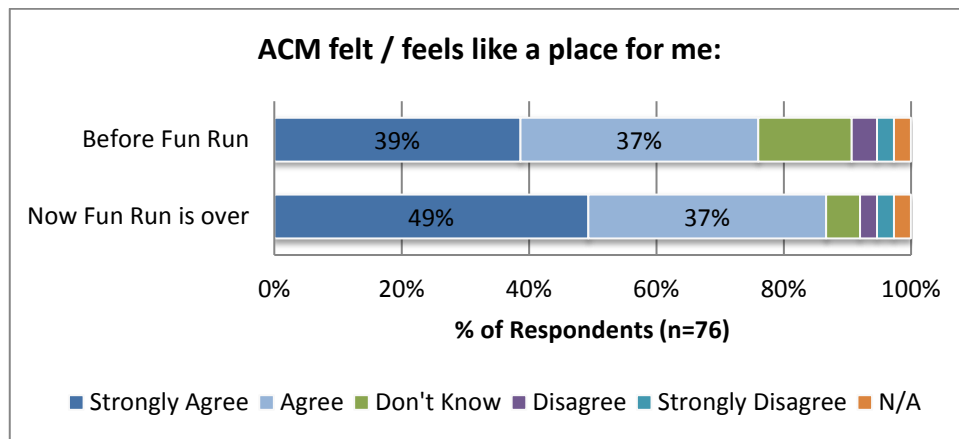
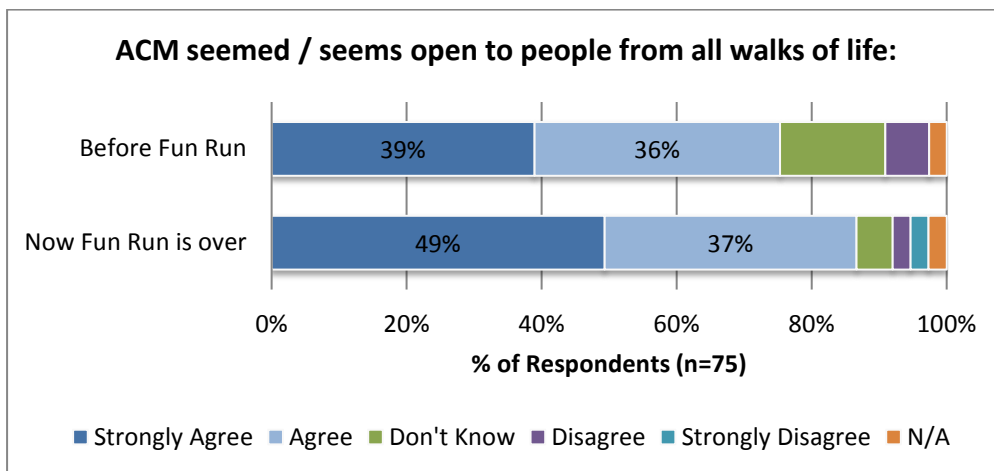


Figure 12: *Fun Run*: Perceptions of ACM, before and after *Fun Run* – openness to people from all walks of life, % of active survey respondents



<sup>24</sup> This includes school survey respondents.

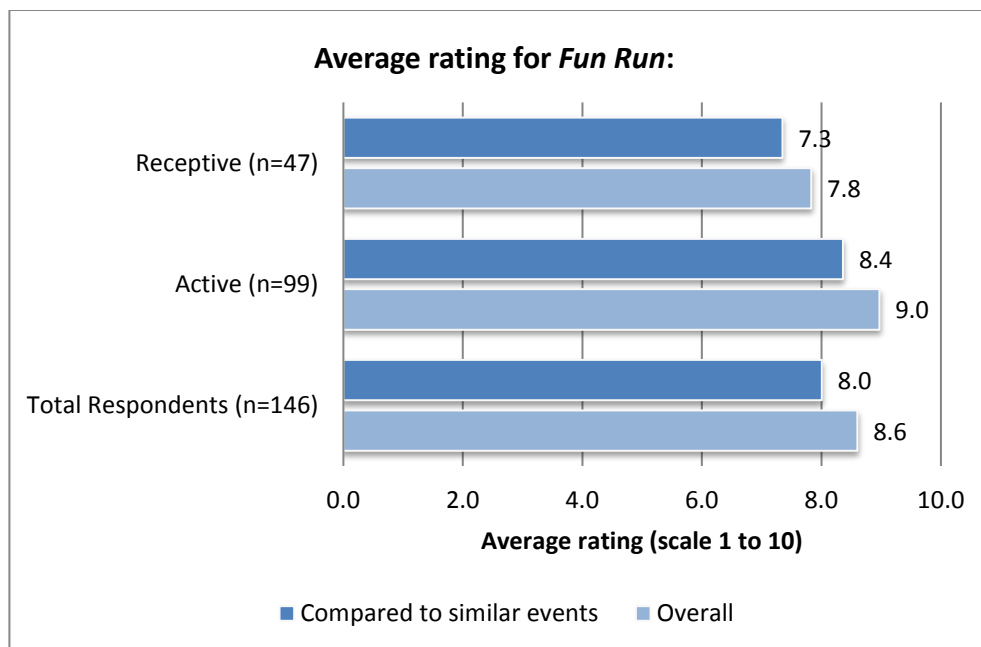
# 7. Overall Evaluation

We asked survey respondents to give an overall score for *Fun Run*, as well as a score when compared to similar events they had attended. Overall, survey respondents rated *Fun Run* at 8.6 out of 10.

Those who joined in tended to give the event a higher score (9.0 out of 10 compared to 7.8 out of 10 for receptive participants).

*Fun Run* rated well when compared to similar events: 8 out of 10.

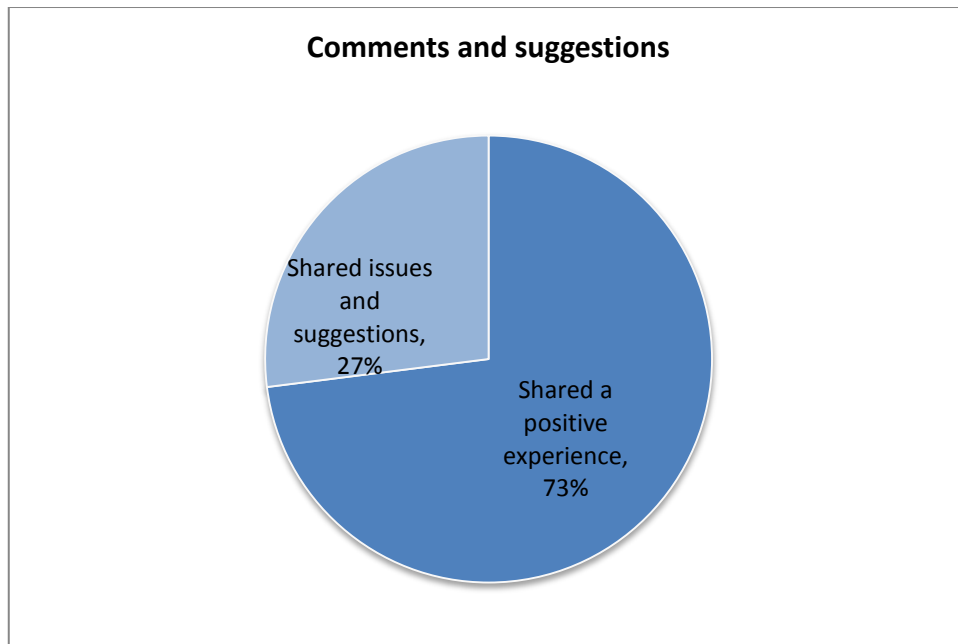
Figure 13: *Fun Run*: average rating, active vs receptive respondents



## 7.1. Comments and suggestions

Survey respondents were invited to offer their general comments, ideas and suggestions about the event. Of the 64 respondents who provided comments, 72% shared positive comments about their experience. The remaining 28% reported issues which affected their experience and made suggestions for future improvements.

Figure 14: Fun Run: Survey respondents' general comments (n=64)



Suggestions for more audience involvement included more invitations to the crowd to join in, and the use of a timer and/or greater use of the screens.

*"I thought the event was well put together as we were there for about six hours, the entertainment was good with all the different groups participating. The only thing I think which was lacking was more audience involvement" – Audience member*

*"It might have added to the audience involvement if there was a screen shot of the runners time/distance as he ran if that was possible. Could also have another treadmill next to him for people to try and see how they compare over say 1km - give an appreciation of the effort required. Good event, well done." – Audience member*

## 8. ACM Leadership

*“We loved the whole event. It was unique and had a great atmosphere. We had no idea what would happen and we just went with the flow. We participated because we wanted to honour the contribution that the late Betty Amsden has made to the Arts. We are sporty already but could not speak more highly of the event and the people involved on every level.” -  
Community group member*

As in previous years, ACM created an intrinsically vibrant and rewarding experience for receptive and active participants. ACM’s partnerships with community groups made sure that a diverse mix of people came to *Fun Run* who would not normally come to ACM or participate regularly in the arts. Crucially, the ACM team members who facilitated community engagement again created an experience for participants in which they felt respected, acknowledged and in which they could own the event themselves.

Like the other Betty Amsden Participation Program events, *Fun Run* created value for participants because:

- It was based on a strong, inclusive creative concept
- ACM reached under-represented groups through partnerships with community groups which embodied equality, respect and genuine co-creation
- Team members working on the project embodied the values of the Betty Amsden Participation Program, providing participants with an experience of creative agency
- ACM properly resourced the project, making it possible for community groups to join in
- ACM leveraged its position as a major institution to provide a significant public outcome which strengthened participants’ experience of acknowledgement, belonging and validation



# Appendix 1: List of Organisations

In the months preceding the event, ACM undertook 24 workshops with 19 community groups who then performed at the event (in partnership with ATQM and Circus Oz). Community groups were based in Greater Melbourne and surrounds and represented a diverse range of physical activity and cultural diversity. They included:

- Sri Lankan Cultural Ensemble Australia, Keysborough
- Outer Urban Projects, Coburg and Reservoir
- BAM Allstars, Frankston
- Fast Boys and Girls, Footscray
- The Fly Kings, *Lord of the Flies* participants
- Chinese Performing Arts Development, Glen Waverly
- #FilYa, Ascot Vale
- Melbourne Bhangra Regiment, Sunshine West
- Tama Tatau, Truganina
- U-bounce, Sandringham
- Base Strength Arena, Seddon
- Black Dragon Taekwondo and Fitness, South Melbourne
- Boylesque, St Kilda East
- DreamTyme All Stars Cheer and Dance, Ferntree Gully
- Ijuba Capoeira, Prahran
- Limbs2Riddims (L2R), Sunshine
- Mischa's Boxing Central, Footscray
- The Fanatics, Circus Oz, Collingwood
- Cheer Factor, All Stars, Tullamarine

All The Queens Men delivered Flash Mob Workshops at Sacred Heart School, Fitzroy, Bannockburn Primary School and Circus Oz, Collingwood.

All The Queens Men also conducted flash mob workshops with additional special need school groups from Rossbourne School, Ashwood School, Broadmeadows Special Developmental School and Bulleen Heights School through Arts Centre Melbourne's Accessible Music Program.

Circus Oz ran weekly workshops in February and March at Bannockburn Primary School, Thornbury Primary School and Sacred Heart School.

Indigenous Hip Hop Projects dancers formed the Haus da Fun Run Dancers as part of the live event.

All The Queens Men also conducted 16 general public flash mob workshops at the following locations:

- Arts Centre Melbourne – Forecourt, Hamer Hall Foyer, The Pavilion and Sydney Myer Music Bowl
- First Friday Dance Club, Southbank
- Midsumma Carnival, Alexandra Gardens
- Moomba, Alexandra Gardens
- MPavilion, Queen Victoria Gardens
- Summer Night Markets, Queen Victoria Markets
- Circus Oz, Collingwood
- State Library of Victoria Forecourt

# About BYP Group

BYP Group is a specialist evaluation, research and strategy consulting firm in the public and social sectors. We work in Australia and internationally. BYP Group comprises three core principals: Jackie Bailey, Hung-Yen Yang and Sarah Penhall. We also work with a network of professionals on a project needs basis.

Our clients include USA National Performance Network, Australia Council for the Arts, Creative Victoria, Arts Centre Melbourne, Multicultural Arts Victoria, The Australian Ballet, Opera Australia, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Symphony Orchestra, The Red Room Company, WestWords, Museums and Galleries NSW, Museum of Contemporary Art, Australian Design Centre, NSW Department of Industry, Transport for NSW, NSW Aboriginal Affairs, NSW Health, City of the Gold Coast, Asialink, the University of Melbourne, Deakin University, University of Western Sydney, Macquarie University and others.

We are professional members of the Australian Social and Market Research Society and the Australasian Evaluation Society. We are also members of the Federal government's select research and evaluation panel.

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