



CEO's report to the Creative Clunes 2021 AGM

My partner and I were appointed to a 3 day a week job share three months ago. It has been an intense learning period for both of us since then, complicated by the fact that nearly all of it has been during lockdown.

Our introduction to the organisation has been wonderfully facilitated by the Board, led by Ember Parkin, Sharon Hughes, our Administrator & Marketing Coordinator and, more recently our Creative Producer, Suzi Cordell.

Upon starting, we had three urgent issues that required immediate attention:

- Creative Victoria's Creative Enterprises Program (CEP) application for four-year funding (closing date September 15)
- 20/21 audit
- Confirming a staffing structure that would optimise our capacity to prepare and implement the 2022 program

CEP grant application

Getting this completed was an intense collaborative effort. The application required us to demonstrate how Creative Clunes would address the priorities of the funding agency, to articulate our vision and strategies for the next four years, and to present notional programs and budgets for upcoming period. That we managed to do this was due in no small part to the efforts of Board members and Sharon Hughes.

20/21 audit

This has been completed and is tabled at this meeting. It shows that Creative Clunes is in a great position to move into the future. We achieved a surplus of nearly \$87,000 in 20/21, meaning that we now have retained earnings of \$145,000.

Staffing

With the CEO and Administrator positions locked in, the remaining piece of the jigsaw was to confirm Suzi Cordell as Creative Producer. Suzi was commissioned by Creative Clunes to implement the 2021 *Booktown Festival* – that was successfully transformed into *Turn the Page*. She did such a spectacular job ensuring that there was a continuing program through the pandemic that her agreement to return to work with us is a joy.

20/21 program

I'm not really familiar enough with the Creative Clunes program from 1/7/20 to 30/6/21 to be able to make an informed report. However, Suzi Cordell was there then and is here now so she's kindly agreed to provide an overview.

What is clear is that it has been one hell of a ride. The organisation has had to negotiate both internal and external difficulties that would have debilitated a less committed and energetic group.

Along with program delivery, Creative Clunes undertook some serious soul-searching during this time. We reported on this as part of the CEP application. Here is what we told them:

Organisational Review

In early 2021, CC commissioned an organisational review to examine every aspect of CC's operations. The review appraised and made recommendations concerning CC's culture, governance, management, programming methodology, volunteer processes, partnership strategies and the structure of the organisation.

The review's assessment of the organisation was largely positive, and the report provided an 18-month timeline to shape and strengthen CC's governance and will set CC up to be leading best practice for small, NFP cultural organisations. While changeover of Board and staff members has slowed progress on the implementation of the recommendations in the report, the directions and methodologies proposed have been wholeheartedly embraced by the Board and staff.

Visioning Workshop

A visioning workshop took place with the Board and staff in May 2021. Arising from this, a range of issues emerged that will be addressed over the next three months. These include:

- Developing more effective strategies for engaging with young people
- The extension of storytelling practices beyond the book. In the first instance to include other language-based modes – poetry, song-writing, playwriting. Then into performance – poetry slams, yarn spinning, stand-up, singing, verbatim theatre. And then beyond the word – dance, music, physical theatre, sound art. And ultimately into the realm of the object – quilting and other crafts, public sculpture, street art, public lighting and projection ... It should be noted that in all these contexts CC will operate not as the creative instigator but as the facilitator of such activities.
- Extending CC's engagement with local arts practitioners – both in terms of their potential interest in participating in CC projects but also in them becoming aware of CC's interest in supporting their dreams
- Building connections with the Dja Dja Wurrung people
- Exploring the possibility of residential programs and individual residencies
- Rethinking the role of the book – from book sculpture to DIY manuals – for example, connecting specialist publishing areas with the actual practice (for example a chef does master classes along with a book signing) and designing book fairs and panel discussions that focus on particular themes, for example rare collectibles, crime novels, Australian local histories, children's books, romance, books made into films ...



- Creative relations with sponsors – designing activities that directly connect with the function of a potential business partner
- Expanding the use of spaces around Clunes
- Supporting the expression and recording of local histories
- Developing processes for more effective and continuing exchange and consultation with the wider community
- Extending relationships with Local Government, both in terms of others adjacent to Hepburn Shire but also with the divisions inside these agencies; for example, CC has excellent connections with the Business & Tourism section at Hepburn Shire but CC needs to be build closer connections with arts and cultural divisions and sections responsible for other areas
- Extending relationships with NGOs with state-wide purviews – Regional Arts Victoria, Cultural Development Network, Kids Own Publishing, Community Music Victoria, Express Media, etc

Strategic Plan

The most immediate result of the Visioning Workshop was the development of a new mission statement and strategic plan. This is attached.

IN CONCLUSION

The 2022 program is well established and we look forward to Creative Clunes continuing to be an essential element in the cultural development of Clunes and surrounds.

Sue Beal
16/11/21

The logo for Creative Clunes is a circular emblem. The top half of the circle is blue with the word "CREATIVE" in white, serif, uppercase letters. The bottom half is also blue with the word "CLUNES" in white, serif, uppercase letters. In the center of the circle, there are three interlocking gears of different sizes, rendered in white. A grey banner with a white border and a slight shadow curves across the bottom of the circle, containing the word "CLUNES" in white, serif, uppercase letters. The entire logo is set against a white background.

**Creative Clunes
Strategy
2022-2024**

CLUNES

Purpose

Creative Clunes aims to connect, inspire and engage communities through books and story

Our purpose describes our reason for existing in the world

Vision

Creative Clunes is a vibrant rural hub that supports making, telling and sharing stories in all art forms

Our vision articulates our hopes for our organisation for the future

Mission

Creative Clunes will develop a focused network through which writers and other arts practitioners are supported, seed ideas and collaborate. Through the exchange of stories, we build regional identity and wellbeing, empowering community to respond to environmental, social, cultural and economic challenges.

We encourage stories to emerge from individuals or from collaborations, across artforms and in diverse media (from podcasting to quilting) and from folk of all ages, genders, abilities and backgrounds.

Our mission describes how we will work towards our purpose and vision.

Values

Collaborative

We partner with the arts community, with individuals and organisations, working together to deliver impactful programs.

Equitable

We are committed to equitable access to arts for our collaborators, presenters, and our audiences.

Joyful

We approach our work and our communities with joy in our hearts.

Responsive

We actively work with our community creatives to address the challenges and opportunities of our time and place.

Our values describe who we are as an organisation. We put these into practice in everything we do.

Who will we reach?

Our Community

Creative Clunes will play a fundamental role in building on and developing a local culture that is creatively active. One in which the arts and arts practitioners are recognised, welcomed, and appreciated; and in which local community are invited and empowered to take part.

Creatives

Creative Clunes will be a support base for local and regional arts practitioners. We will facilitate their efforts to make meaningful connections with their surroundings and to make a life for themselves through their work.

Visitors to Clunes

Creative Clunes will support showcasing Clunes to visitors through our cultural program. Booktown Festival will continue to be positioned as a premier regional cultural event, contributing to the economic development of the region.

Lovers of books

Creative Clunes will continue to engage with national and global book-loving audiences. We will leverage our strong online and social media presence, online events, video and audio productions. We will embrace other opportunities and partnerships as they arise.

Our four strategic pillars



Strategic objectives

Strategic
Pillar

*Cultivate the love of
stories in all forms*

Continue to deliver Clunes
Booktown Festival and build on
its successes.

Test new ideas and innovations;
implement and adapt those
that are successful.

*Make community at
the heart of what we
do*

Work extensively with diverse
communities to develop
meaningful and engaging
programs.

Volunteers are the bedrock of
our organisation. Continue to
honour their contribution and
further develop our ways of
providing an enriching
volunteer environment.

*Support Clunes as a
rural creative hub*

Further develop Creative
Clunes Railway Station as a
rural cultural hub.

Become an anchor for rural
creatives and creativity.

*Maintain a strong and
resilient organisation*

Be flexible, connected and
resilient.

Make sure that our board, staff
and volunteers come together
in a spirit of co-operation,
common purpose and joy.

Strategic
objectives