



YOUTH ISSUE – BRIEFING

TO: CHIEF MINISTER

DATE: 2 DECEMBER 2014

FROM: CHRISTINE GARDINER

TOPIC: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT THROUGH ART WORKSHOPS

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Northern Territory (NT) Government:

1. utilise the workshop platform outside of schools with strong school engagement to create a program that will encourage students to attend school and/or other work or training through awards recognition; and
2. promote youth engagement in schools through workshops similar to the eARTh Art Project.

BACKGROUND

The idea for this project came from participation in Kaleidoscope, a Youth Leadership Summit coordinated through Multicultural Youth NT (MyNT). Through this summit the idea was developed to find a way to engage young people in school and work through encouragement, rather than simply telling them they need to or trying to force them to attend. Personally, I have seen how progressively throughout high school, fewer and fewer students are interested and stop attending. By the time I reached Year 12, my year group had diminished to less than half compared to past years. This has given me the motivation to find a way to encourage young people to engage with school by actively showing them pathways that they can take with the skills they learn in school and take them further.

Currently, students are told to go to school as it is important for their future. This is true, however simply telling them that school is important and they should attend is not the most effective way of convincing some students of this. Through my own experience, I have seen many students become less interested or are unaffected when they are told what they have to do with their lives. Many of the things that I heard from my own peers was that they did not see how school could benefit them, and there was no point in going.

This is an issue for young people as they become disinterested in learning and school, and therefore stop going. Young people who do not go to school may develop a disinterest in their future, which leads to reckless behaviour as they do things without thinking about the consequences. Studies have shown that '*students who fail, or behave disruptively at school, or who are persistently truant are more likely to offend than those who do not,*' (Brooks, 1996, as cited in Beck & McNally, 2010). This can negatively impact them physically, mentally and emotionally depending on the behaviour they engage in, while also impacting on their chances of maintaining a stable future career. (Beck & McNally, 2010).



For this briefing, research was undertaken into youth participation in school and work, and the effectiveness of workshops in a particular area (specifically art in this project) to increase the youth participation and engagement rate. These results will be utilised to see how effective a program of workshops would be to engage young people through their interests, and use these interests to show them the pathways that they can take through school and/or other training to encourage their participation in school and other training available to them.

The target group for this project was young people aged 12-25 years. Young people are identified as being of school age from 12 to 19 years and are expected to be attending primary, middle or high school. Between the ages of 19-25, young people may be attending university or undertaking another form of training for a future career path. This is the reason they are the target group for this project, as they are at the ages where attending school or other training will benefit their adult life.

What I hope to achieve with this project is a way to encourage young people to go to school by showing them how important it is, rather than just telling them so. The workshops and art exhibition showed how effective these workshop platforms are, by demonstrating how well they can engage young people through their personal interests. Additionally, running these workshops separate to but engaging with schools, could potentially be a way for young people to see how they can benefit from their involvement in school, and how they can apply their school learning to real life situations was achieved.

Stakeholders in Palmerston and Darwin involved in this project included young people, parents and teachers at local schools. Young people are the primary stakeholders, as this issue directly involves them and their future. The engagement of youth in school or even other programs that can provide them with skills leading to a future career and can be a vital part of ensuring a positive future for young people. Parents of these young people are also a stakeholder as they have a role in encouraging their children as they grow and develop. Teachers as well have a similar role as they are with students throughout their school life, which is a very large part of the lives of young people.

DISCUSSION

This project briefing will detail the research conducted to support the topic of Youth Engagement through Art Workshops. Primarily, this research was undertaken through workshops centred on particular topics to get young people interested and to attend, so that they could be engaged in their community and learn something new for themselves. The implications of my research will also be discussed, as well as consultation that was conducted with stakeholders and the benefit to them. Finally I provide a list of findings on the topic.

Workshop 1: Aerosol Art Workshop

Part of the action-based research previously conducted has been through a series of workshops and an art exhibition to engage young people in the community. This was to gauge how effective this method would be getting young people engaged and involved in an activity through their personal interests.

The first workshop held on 19th July was an Aerosol Art Workshop. The aim of this particular workshop was to engage young people by having them work on a joint project together. The idea for this workshop came about from the initial plan to use art as a method for trying to



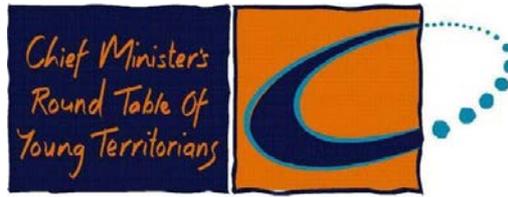
engage young people. Aerosol paints are easy to use and are often used by young people, just not necessarily in the right ways, instead for graffiti on public and private property. To aid this workshop, MyNT offered their plain white bus for us to paint. It benefitted the workshop and participants as well as giving the bus a new paint job. The point of using aerosol paints was to encourage more participants to attend, as many young people are interested in the use of aerosol paints to create art. By using it as the focus of this workshop we hoped to not only engage the participants, but also to discourage them from painting on public property by allowing them a public platform on which to present their art. This would also help the community, as youth are not deliberately vandalising property.

<p>The results of the Aerosol Art workshop on the MyNT bus – a collection of colours and artwork made by the participants</p>	<p>The facilitator and a participant working on the bus – the facilitator painted a few examples to get participants started</p>	<p>Three examples of the artwork that participants had the opportunity to produce as part of the workshop (done on canvas they could take home)</p>

The workshop successfully engaged around 10 participants for the duration of the workshop (from 10am to 3pm) and gave them the opportunity to learn a new skill and have their work displayed on a public platform (the MyNT bus). One of the appeals of graffiti is that it is a public forum: people walk past and see buildings every day, which makes them an ideal canvas for art to be displayed. There have been many sanctioned art installations displayed in major Australian cities such as Sydney, which proves that there can be sanctioned art of all kinds allowed in a space that encourages creativity while decreasing defacing of public property. Graffiti is used primarily by young people simply because they have an interest in art, or it is part of the culture that they grew up in. (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2007). By being engaged in this workshop, it kept these young people busy for the day, giving them something interesting to do and also gave them an outlet for their creativity and energy, as well as providing them with an allowable, sanctioned public platform for their artwork.

This is an example of a way that young people can be encouraged to use their interests and creativity wisely, rather than being discouraged from doing the wrong thing.

An overview of this workshop can be found in **Attachment A**.



A few examples of Art Installations in Sydney:

<p>A colourful overhead installation in an alleyway in Sydney</p>	<p>Harvest Festival Installation; installations featured in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane</p>	<p>Light Box Installation on Hosier Lane, Melbourne</p>
<p>http://www.mymodernmet.com/profiles/blogs/nike-savvas-rush-rainbow-ceiling</p>	<p>http://www.pagesdigital.com/harvest-festival-calling-art-proposals/</p>	<p>http://theseroads.wordpress.com/2010/08/27/5-examples-of-awesome-melbourne-street-art-hosier-lane</p>

The above examples of art installations show that the combined effort of many people working on a single project can create great things. Although the outcomes of this workshop were smaller, the effect is still the same, allowing young people to freely express their creativity on a medium (the MyNT bus) that will be seen by many people, they can feel a sense of pride in their work and be encouraged to direct their energy into more positive outlets. As well as this, participants also had the opportunity to speak with the facilitator, a professional aerosol artist, and learn about the ways that they could take their interest in art to a career level.

Workshop 2: Visual Art Workshop

The second workshop that was held on 1st September 2014 for young people was centred on visual arts. The workshop facilitator, local artist Amina McConvell, designed the activity to teach participants how to create abstract art, which shows them different ways that form, shape and colour can be used. Each young person involved was given the same guidelines to follow: to create a three-panel artwork using abstract art. By using the three different parts for the one artwork, this allowed participants to see and experiment with creating separate parts that connect and become one solid work.

The result of this workshop gave all involved an artwork to take home that they could be proud of. Each piece of work created had some element that reflected the person who made it, for example an analytically inclined person created a piece of work that had a lot of straight lines and followed a logical pattern. The workshop was designed to allow participants to get involved in an artistic project to engage their minds creatively. Part of this was to encourage entries for the then upcoming Art Exhibition, which will be described later in this project. Another aim was to encourage young people to think about things in different ways, and how to combine different ideas into one, which is what they did with the abstract art. Creating art in abstract allows one to think in an imaginative way, which develops the way that they think about things.

On the day, there were five participants involved in the activity. Each of the young people involved got the chance to create a piece of artwork using a variety of provided materials. The workshop began with the facilitator, Amina, going over various aspects of abstract art and how it can be implemented. She also gave the participants a few historical points about



the use of three separate panels to combine into one artwork, and showed participants examples of each.

Not only did participants get the opportunity to learn a new skill, they also gained a new way of thinking and looking at other things in an abstract and creative way. Like in the aerosol art workshop, participants also talked to Amina about her involvement with art and where it has led her in her life.

Workshop 3: Music Workshop

The third and final workshop conducted was a music workshop on the 1st October. This workshop was facilitated by local musician Ward Hancock, and gave participants the opportunity to learn more about how to get into the music industry as a career or a hobby, and a few tips about song writing. Ward used his own experiences with the music industry as real life examples, which emphasised the points he made about starting with smaller opportunities before working their way up through the industry.

Parts of the workshop also brought in the participants' personal goals and aspirations with music, whether as a career or as a hobby. By doing this, not only did participants gain knowledge and understanding of the steps involved in getting a career in music, they also got to have personalised advice for each of their music aspirations. This personal advice included helping participants create a series of short and long term goals for themselves, ranging from one week to one month, six months, one year and three years respectively. The aim of this activity was to get participants to think realistically about their expectations, and how they can start working toward their larger goal with smaller actions.

The effectiveness of this workshop was great, as it gave participants a chance to connect with other people that share similar interests and aspirations for their future. It also gave them knowledge about how they can begin their journey into the music industry, and additionally how to set goals that make their larger dreams achievable. Unfortunately there were only two participants, despite a larger number of registrations for the workshop before the day. Had there been the full number of participants expected (around seven) this certainly would have heightened the effectiveness of the valuable information that Ward provided. This workshop especially highlighted how the workshop platform can be used to connect the information students receive and learn about in school to real life applications to connect to their community and future career choices.

Culmination of Workshops: Art Exhibition

The Youth Art Exhibition was the final part of the eARTh Art Project's plans for the year. There were a large number of submissions from various young people in both the Palmerston and Darwin regions, and was on display for one week in the Palmerston City Library. An opening night was held to launch the exhibition, and give an explanation about where the idea for the eARTh Art Project came from, and the purpose of the exhibition itself. By allowing young people the opportunity to have their artworks on display for viewing by the public, this would give them a sense of pride in what they do and give them the confidence to continue. Encouraging this positive feeling in young people can be a powerful thing, as it can mean the difference between a young person making positive or negative life decisions because of their mindset.



On the opening night, there was a judge to decide the winner of two of the three award categories set up – two age categories (12-15 and 16-25 years), and a People's Choice Award was held for the night where the general public could put in a vote for which artwork they liked the most. All three awards were announced on the night, and the prizes included a membership to the Darwin Visual Arts Association.

The implications of my research were mostly on the young people that attended the workshops described above. The participants of each workshop had the opportunity to engage creatively with a medium while learning more about it and how they can use it for their own benefits, including where they can use the skills they learned in school and their future. This meant that the people who attended each workshop could take something personal away from each one, as well as giving them encouragement to strive to do better in school to develop their skills further. For example, in the music workshop the facilitator gave personalised advice to each participant to help them on the way to find a career in music, or simply pursuing it as a hobby. From this they can then apply the skills they continuously learn in school from music classes to their life outside of school, and begin to build a set of skills that will enable them to engage with music as a career in the future.

Another implication of the workshops that were conducted is that they are an effective way of getting young people engaged in an activity that they have an interest in. It also allows those participating to learn more about a particular topic and gain new skills. By providing this opportunity to young people, they are being given the option to learn more about a topic in a different way than how they would normally learn about it in school classes. Young people learn in a variety of different ways, and the workshop platform provides a different, fun and interesting way of delivering information to young people that can be very effective at engaging their attention. Additionally, by providing these workshops outside of school, it gives students the opportunity to apply the skills they learn in school to real life, which will then encourage them to think broadly about their future pathways, rather than constantly thinking about their skills in the protected school environment.

The stakeholders in this project were impacted by the workshops conducted in different ways. Of the young people involved, the impact was that they were able to be involved in an activity that gave them skills that they may not have had the opportunity to learn about previously (e.g. how to apply aerosol paints in a safe and fun way) as well as the chance to interact with other like minded young people and make new friends in the process. The participants of each workshop benefited from this as it was a great way to improve their relationship building and working with other people toward a common goal, as well as allowing them to build their personal skills in a particular area.

This chance to show the work that young people produced publicly gave them the opportunity to feel a sense of pride in the effort that they put in to the artwork that they have created. The exhibition was also a great way to encourage the young people that submitted artworks, to feel that they have done something worthwhile with their hard work in their art. The consultation that was conducted allowed the opinions of young people and a teacher from the local school about the exhibition to be shared. The general consensus that was gathered was that young people and the local teacher thought it was a great idea, and that conducting further workshops in a range of different areas would be a way to improve the project and continue into the future.



After the opening night of the art exhibition, there were many young people in attendance and a teacher from Rosebery Middle School whom had supplied a few artworks from students in her classes. We spoke to both the teacher and other young people, and got their opinions about what would make good workshops and what they thought of the exhibition. Some of the feedback received included praise for the exhibition itself, and suggestions for a range of different topics for workshops to be supplied for young people as well as the art related ones that had already been conducted as part of this project.

Benefits of this consultation include ideas for improvement to this project for future endeavors, so that if this project were to continue in the future it can be improved for better attendance and relevance to what local young people are interested in. This would benefit those young people involved as they would have the opportunity to learn a new skill or more about a topic that they already have an interest in.

From the research and workshops conducted, there were a few findings.

- The workshop platform is an effective method of getting young people engaged in an activity. As outlined above, the workshops conducted were able to successfully engage up to 10 young people at a time with one facilitator, as seen in the Aerosol Art workshop. The workshop format had participants working together for a common project with an art medium that many young people like to use already, however may not know any real techniques for using it. Also, the effectiveness of the workshop platform is not limited to art subjects – this template can be applied to any subject to engage the interest of young people.
- The other workshops were based on a more formal classroom like setting, with the facilitator delivering information to participants and having them engage and respond. For the participants that did attend, the workshop was fun, interesting and gave them useful information. It is not clear what caused the lower numbers for the second two workshops, as there were a number of registrations for each. This could have been due to how the workshops were set out – as mentioned previously in this report, classroom settings can affect attendance, and these workshops were similar to that setting.
- Another finding is that although youth engagement in schools is not a severely large issue with 83.8% attendance rate by Term 1, 2014 (Department of Education, 2014), it is still an issue nonetheless. There may not be a very high number of students disengaged with school, but it still happens – when it does, students are more likely to have poor grades and or/attendance at school. Additionally, students disengaged with school have a higher chance of being involved in criminal activity, and may encounter problems with gaining and maintaining a career in their future.

NT GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

This briefing aligns with two of the four goals under Framing the Future, *Strong Society* and *Confident Culture*.

This briefing also aligns with the Learning goal under the NT Youth Participation Framework 2014-17, that – young Territorians are engaged with positive education and career experiences. This briefing also aligns with the Participating Goal under the Framework, that young Territorians express themselves and participate in decisions that affect their lives.



CONCLUSION/SUMMARY

This topic brief has gone through ways in which young people can be better engaged in school, work and other training. At the moment, around 85% of students (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011) who attend school are engaged through to completion of Year 12, and have the opportunity to go on to attain careers later in life. However, there are still a number of students who are disengaged, and young people who do not attend school at all. It is important that young people attend school or otherwise gain an education, as it not only benefits them personally but also the community as a whole. Educated individuals find and maintain careers a lot easier than those who do not have an education. (Beck, E. and McNally, J. 2010).

To aid in keeping youth engaged in school, research was conducted into the effectiveness of the workshop platform to deliver information about a topic and engage young people in a related or relevant activity. As well as testing the effectiveness, the workshops were also conducted to raise the engagement of young people in their local community, if only in a small way. Three separate workshops were held: an Aerosol Art, Visual Art, and Music Workshop respectively. These three workshops led up to a Youth Art Exhibition designed to showcase the work of young people throughout the Palmerston and Darwin regions.

The Art Exhibition drew a large number of entries, displayed for a week at the Palmerston City Library. There was also an opening night held to launch the exhibition, where approximately 20-30 young people were in attendance to view the art displayed. Holding the exhibition as a culmination of the work put in to the workshops was an effective way to close the sequence of events. It gave young people an opportunity publicly to have their work displayed, which would give them encouragement to further their involvement in what they do. By holding a similar event as the culmination of work put in to a series of workshops for particular subjects provided in schools, it would give students a collective goal to work towards which would then encourage their engagement with the workshops themselves and subsequently their engagement and participation in school.

What I learned from completing this project was that using workshops can be an effective method for engaging young people in a topic, and giving them new skills. There were also learnings to take on in the future such as it can be a difficult task to pick an appropriate time and venue to get the most amount of attendance for each workshop, as was mostly experienced with the very low attendance for the Music Workshop.

The outcomes of the workshops and exhibition were mostly what I had hoped they would be. The first workshop (Aerosol Art) was the most effective for attendance out of the three workshops, with around 6-8 participants on the day. All of the participants had fun using the aerosol paints on the bus, and also on the canvases provided so that they could take them home. The visual art workshop was still fairly effective in terms of attendance, with 5 young people participating. The participants interacted and communicated their ideas throughout the workshop, and each one made an artwork that they felt proud of and could take home. The music workshop had great content, and was extremely helpful to the participants who attended. Although this workshop only had two participants despite the much larger number of registrations before the workshop was conducted, the facilitator held the workshop as planned and gave the participants personalised information regarding their goals for their music careers and tips about how to get into the music industry from his own experiences doing so.



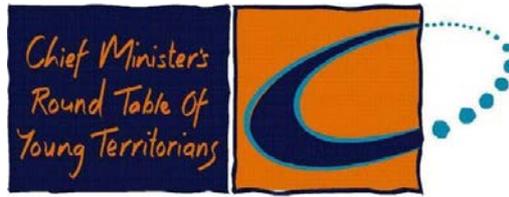
The main part of the workshops that would need to be improved would be a larger number of participants. To try and gain the most attendance for workshops in the future, more correspondence could be conducted with young people via a survey, talking to young people in the community or other forms of communication with young people to get their opinions on what workshops they would be most interested in attending, and what location would be best for them to get to at what times. From this information, workshops can be planned for times when young people would be most available and in subjects that they are most interested in.

The Art Exhibition gained a respectable amount of people on the opening night to listen to the origins of the eARTH Art Project workshops and the exhibition itself, and to vote for the People's Choice Award that was given along with two age category awards on the night. The people in attendance throughout the exhibition commented that the work displayed was very good, which would have been a confidence boost for those young artists also in attendance on the opening night. Overall, the workshops and exhibition generated the outcomes that I hoped they would – engagement of youth in their community in a fun and interesting way.

To conclude, the recommendations that I have put forward from this project are to:

1. utilise the workshop platform outside of schools with strong school engagement to create a program that will encourage students to attend school and/or other work or training through awards recognition; and
2. promote youth engagement in schools through workshops similar to the eARTH Art Project.

CHRISTINE GARDINER



Attachment A

US Embassy Grant Write-Up

eARTh Art Project is the creative initiative of Project Leader & Art Director, Christine Gardiner, a CDU Visual Arts student & member of the Chief Minister's Roundtable of Young Territorians. As a 2013 Kaleidoscope Youth Summit participant, Christine was able to conceptualise & develop her Creative Arts Project, which is inspired by her passion for Visual Arts & Youth Participation.

eARTh Art Project - The ART in Earth, is a youth-led project for youth in both Palmerston & Darwin. Our aim is to inspire youth to be more engaged in their community by embracing the Arts and expressing their creativity.

The eARTh Art Project is exploding with sound, colour and creativity! eARTh Art Project Aerosol Art workshop was RAD! The creative aerosol artists, mentored by Dave Collins transformed the MyNT bus into a mobile canvas! eARTh Art Project is also calling for Young Artists: 15 – 25 yr to submit Visual Arts entries for the final event: A Youth Art Exhibition in October.

The Aerosol Art workshop gave youth the opportunity to express their creativity by using aerosol paint to create a MyNT artwork 'tag' for the sides of their bus. The inspiration for this workshop started with a combination of ideas – the possibility of using aerosol paints to create art, and finding a fun imaginative way to dress up MyNT's plain white bus.

The use of aerosol paints is a very interesting and creative way to implement artwork. As well as simply using aerosol paint, the design for the bus's new look was inspired by New York style graffiti wall art. The art that is seen plastering walls of buildings in American cities was a great driving force behind the decision to emulate this style in our workshop. They are often bright and eye-catching pieces, a way for the artists that paint them to announce their presence to the world – just like we used the same style to announce the presence of MyNT to the world through their funky new bus design.

Below are some pictures sourced from the internet depicting some of the graffiti art designs that inspired our own adaptations that were painted onto the bus, also included below:





<http://www.nyccorners.com/2013/08/graffiti-truck-union-square-august-2013.html>



<http://stylebooze.blogspot.com.au/2011/04/graffiti-graphics.html>



<http://newyorkgraffiti.com/blog/index.php/graffiti-legends-part-1/>

The first picture shows the side of a truck that has been painted with graffiti, which is what we were originally planning for the bus – however due to time constraints we decided to go with a design that was simpler and smaller. The second picture depicts the same sort of background image collage that we painted – instead of one large picture, a lot of smaller shapes, colours and designs were painted to fill up the background with a bright array of colour. We've emulated the third picture in that we created a design contained within a border rather than a full art design that would completely cover the space.

As well as painting the bus, participants also got the opportunity to paint a canvas to take home with them. Many participants chose to paint a multi-coloured background and then their name in graffiti style font in black over the top.

Below are some examples of fonts that gave us some ideas of how to implement our own text design, as well as the idea to use a myriad of colours behind it as a background. A black border around the lettering separates the collage of colours behind it with the more solid colours of the text.



<http://work.byhandmedia.com/2013/12/25/bronx-new-york-graffiti-locations/bronx-new-york-graffiti-locations-130612-028/>



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/100artworks/4570279331/in/photostream/>



<http://kingsofnewyork.net/kony-updates/sane-smith-graffiti-pictures/attachment/kingsofnewyork-net-sane-smith-sanesmith-graffiti-pictures-nyc-pinksmith18/>

These are pictures of some of our finished products. We used the bubble text design in addition to the flowing nature of the lettering. The main difference between the designs we did and the examples shown is that we chose to paint our lettering in black over the top of a



bright collection of colours to make it stand out against the background. After the paint was dry we outlined the text with a white marker to separate the two even more definitively:



Not only did we use American style graffiti as inspiration for the content of the workshop, we also used another aspect of American culture for the day – hot dogs! We thought that it would be a great idea to include hot dogs to emulate the hot dog carts found on New York streets for passersby. To make them as authentic as possible we made sure to get the American-style mustard to adorn them with.



Overall, the workshop worked to engage youth in their local community and give them a fun activity to participate in for the afternoon. In addition, the participants also got a taste of America – literally from the hot dogs, and also visually by being involved in the creation of New York inspired graffiti art.



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- City of Palmerston, and the individual work of Emily Zesers.
- The workshop facilitators Dave Collins, Amina McConvell, and Ward Hancock