

Walking the Street Review 2007

PART 2

RESEARCH ANALYSIS

Contents

1) Report Analysis

- a) Objectives of *Walking the Street* 24
- b) Historic overview 26

2) Research Analysis

- a) Community survey 34
- b) Retailer survey 38
- c) Focus groups and individual interviews 44
- d) Local contemporary cultural activity 60

1. Report Analysis

1a. Objectives of *Walking the Street*

In 1991 *Walking the Street* had the following objectives:

- Provide exhibition venue for local artists to show their work to local communities;
- Involve local retailers and King Street in the Newtown Festival; and
- Raise the value of contemporary artists and understanding of contemporary art within the community and local business community.

By 2000, the objectives had changed to:

- Foster an arts environment which reflects the cultural diversity of this state;
- Involve emerging artists;
- Enhance the recognition of artists from all backgrounds; and
- Encourage excellence and innovation within artworks produced in a community context.

The event objectives have changed from engaging retailers and providing an exhibition venue for local artists to involving emerging artists, fostering cultural diversity and encouraging excellence in art in a community context. While these differences may have been developed in response to particular grant criteria, they reveal both the ability of the event to be flexible and also the potential to become confused about its purpose.

From 1991 until 1998 the event included all of King Street from Mura Clay gallery to St Peters Station. From 1999 to 2001 it scaled down to include only shops from Missenden Road to Newtown railway station, and from 2003 it focused only on the southern end of King Street from Newtown to St Peters railway stations. This move reflected the increase in franchise businesses in the northern end, main street developments for southern King Street, the style and culture of the business community, and shop keepers' willingness to showcase the area's emerging and professional artists. Due to difficulties in securing sufficient funding, in 2001 the event linked with the NSW 'Artstart' Youth Arts and Skills festival and focused on young artists under 25 years of age. In 2006 it secured Australia Council funding to curate an exhibition of Indigenous artists.

By 2006 the objectives of *Walking the Street* had expanded to include the following:

Artists

- To provide an exhibition venue for artists to show their work to local communities and the wider region;
- To raise the value of contemporary artists and understanding of contemporary art.

Cultural Diversity

- To foster an arts environment which reflects our cultural diversity – this year particularly focusing on the Indigenous community;
- To increase the number of Indigenous artists in *Walking the Street* and to develop better ways to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

Inclusiveness

- To involve emerging artists and community groups in the event and to enhance the recognition of artists from all backgrounds;
- To encourage excellence and innovation within artworks produced in a community context.

Newtown as Arts/Cultural Precinct

- To stage a vibrant, entertaining, accessible cultural event;
- To raise the level of community awareness and participation in *Walking the Street*;
- To significantly increase the profile of the event.

Business Support

- To promote southern King St businesses and cultural institutions;
- To encourage greater corporate involvement.



Figure 1: existing spaces around Australia Square, central King Street, 2008

1b. Historic Overview

Walking the Street began in 1991 as a two week lead up to the Newtown Festival. It included shops from Mura Clay Gallery in the northern end of King Street to St Peter's railway station at the southern end. It was funded by South Sydney Council with sponsorship from participating retailers and artists. Opening night included performance elements, wine tasting and guided tours of the artworks. It received enthusiastic response from the community who were all keen to continue the event.

1992 and 1993 saw the event growing from strength to strength with an increase in profile and participation. Retailers paid to participate and artists were also paid a fee for their involvement. South Sydney Council continued to fund the event, now with additional funding from the Newtown Main Streets Committee. Participating shops were marked with the distinctive *Walking the Street* banner of shoes to highlight their involvement. Opening night was at Newtown Town Square and guided tours were conducted at 6pm and 8pm. The award presentation evening was held at a local restaurant and included the popular 'people's choice' award.

The 1994 project report described *Walking the Street* as:

“the installation of contemporary artwork from a diversity of local artists which transforms King Street and brings the Newtown Festival alive along this major thoroughfare”.

The event had become the signature project of Community Arts Marrickville, attracting 2000 people to its launch. It included guided tours and an awards ceremony and was a 'highlight' on the Newtown events calendar. *WtS* at this time provided an innovative and accessible platform for artists to reflect on the notion of local community, make witty references to merchandise of the host retailer, reflect on the nature of the shopping strip or give insight to the practice of contemporary art. It included contributions from community arts projects among local and emerging artists.

In 1997¹, *WtS* included a fashion parade on opening night, with four galleries and 70 other retailers participating. The curator's report to the board revealed that although the "*concept is great – interest is failing – Walking the Street needs new life*". The curator highlighted issues of quality of the artworks and concerns regarding the relationship between retailers and artists. Retailers felt that the project had lost its momentum and impact. Many did not want to pay the fee to participate and suggested that since many cafes and galleries now exhibited contemporary art there was less need for the event. Community criticisms focused on the quality of the artwork. The logistics of the event, along with rising community expectations, meant it had become unwieldy to coordinate. There were suggestions to run *WtS* only every second year, hand it over to another organising group or remove the window art component of the event. The report recommended specific strategies to re-engage with retailers, including:

- Removing the fee for retailers;
- Assigning volunteers to work with specific sites and artists/retailers; and
- Giving retailers more input into artworks and providing a drinks and information night to bring artists and retailers together.

In 1998 there was a resurgence of community, artist and retailer support. A decision was made to concentrate on visual arts strengths, with the report for the 1998 event stating that there were:

"few opportunities for visual artists to showcase work in public. *Walking the Street* is an opportunity to bring work to streets and to establish dialogue around contemporary art"

More local community groups were involved, including Eora TAFE, Enmore Design School, Mardi Gras workshop and a network of performers. This reinvigorated the event. Structural changes were recommended to improve artist-retailer relationships. For example, shops were to receive commission on sales, artists and retailers were to be briefed on their roles and responsibilities, there would be shorter display times, and traders would be able to view the artworks before installation. There was still conflict around meeting all stakeholders' needs, with traders commenting that "*artists hijack shopfront week*". Survey recipients expressed concern with the quality of artwork and requested the return of the guided tours down King Street.

¹ No information was available for 1995 and 1996.

The 1998 report recommended the following:

Pre planning

- A working party should meet in pre planning stages;
- The event should run every second year;
- Consistency of personnel was needed to foster long term relationships with potential sponsors and maintain relationships with traders through the year.

Quality of Work

- Application forms should include a commitment to quality;
- Proposals should be site-specific or artists should be commissioned for site-specific work;
- Galleries should have 12 months lead time to be involved;
- Artists would respond to an art award.

“In many ways 1998 Walking the Street was a success, in other ways it failed where it had failed before. Unfortunately, Walking the Street has become a bit like pushing an elephant (be it a very lovely one) up a hill with a paddle pop stick” (Fiona Munro, 1998 report and recommendations)

In **1999** the site was restricted to King Street between Missenden Road and Newtown railway station to increase impact and reduce workload. The curator’s report emphasised the importance of providing opportunities for community-based practices to exhibit alongside individual artists. It highlighted the value of the project to emerging artists. It recommended the following actions:

- Develop a document to outline roles and responsibilities;
- Develop a retailer survey for direct feedback;
- Develop a wider call for expressions of interest;
- Highlight and encourage young people’s involvement in arts and cultural areas;
- Provide an exhibition venue for young artists to exhibit their work;
- Promote the awareness, understanding and appreciation of contemporary art within the broader community;
- Foster an arts environment which reflects the cultural diversity of this state.

“We always have an artwork in the window. It creates a good atmosphere as part of the Newtown Festival, as well as having the art in the shopfronts, which is a real drawcard.” (Joanna Stapelford, retailer, Café Blue, in 1999 publicity report by Kristy Davis)

Due to funding shortfalls in 2001, the WtS committee agreed to become an umbrella event of the metro east Youth Arts and Skills Festival. Funding was obtained from the NSW Artstart Festival to focus on the artworks of young people aged 15-24 years. South Sydney Youth Services and South Sydney Arts centre worked closely with IWCS to realise this opportunity for young artists. The post-event evaluation recommended to open WtS to artists of all ages again, to promote a connection between artist and retailer whose shop front will house the event. It also recommended deferring WtS 2002 until early in 2003 and to review the location of the event. The organisers were approached by many other councils (Blue Mountains, Parramatta, Brisbane and regional NSW) who were keen to replicate the event.

In 2003 *Walking the Street* moved again to the southern end of King Street. After the project completed in April, a retailer evaluation of the 2003 event was undertaken by Karoline Eaton and Janet Che, from Shopfront, the community engagement section at the University of Technology, Sydney. The review identified the need for:

- Improved communications channels between IWCS, the volunteers, retailers and artists.
 - Volunteers to be allocated specific shops and to call the shop before visiting;
 - Information packages for retailers;
 - A get together for artists and retailers before the event; and
 - A fact sheet for retailers and contract for artists.
- Improved promotion.
 - Consistency of branding, eg flags at shops, stickers on windows, tshirt;
 - Increased street culture during the event, eg food and performances.

In 2004 the final report described *Walking the Street* as:

“an open exhibition which promotes a sense of belonging for the local residents by heightening the awareness of art and the relationships to it. It provides an opportunity for local businesses to support the arts.”

The ultimate aims of WtS were identified as the promotion of cultural diversity and community cohesion in the region. The report concluded that by bringing art into a broader public space and providing local and emerging artists with major opportunities to publicly exhibit their work, the value of arts practices to the wider community is therefore greatly enhanced. It suggested that public recognition for the artists serves to strengthen professional and community networks in the area, while the individual skills and confidence of the participants are developed by the provision of valuable assistance in terms of promotion, sales and media skills.

In 2005 the Inner West Cultural Services coordinator and project staff worked to raise the professionalism and improve processes for the *WtS*. Priority was given to artists who agreed to make new work and then the organisers matched them to suitable sites. The event was shifted to June to allow for more lead time after applying for arts funding. More community groups were involved and the Arts Awards were introduced with involvement from the Museum of Contemporary Art.

In 2006, for the first time, *Walking the Street* was part of City of Sydney's Art & About Festival. Funding was also secured from the Australia Council for an Indigenous arts project with an Aboriginal curator. Just over 40% of shopfronts used showcased art created by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. 2006 was also the first time for many years that King Street retailers were asked to contribute to the *Walking the Street* Art Awards and many retailers generously donated cash or gift vouchers. Artists paid \$20 to participate and retailers contributed \$50 or a prize. The call for artists was advertised more widely and 120 submissions were obtained. Many works were of excellent quality but, due to the funding restrictions for Indigenous content, many suitable artists could not exhibit. Delays in employing an Indigenous coordinator also affected the process and thus many aspects of planning were left too late to realise the potential of the organisation. Specific recommendations were made for each of the project stakeholders, as follows:

Retailers

- Give participating retailers a presentation folder with the *Walking the Street* logo and a project schedule;
- Improve email communication with retailers;
- A one month lead up time of retailer scouting is required before retailers are approached with artist proposals;
- Difficult or unsatisfied retailers should be approached for a second round;
- More vacant sites, particularly those that do not use real estates, should be approached.

Sponsorship

- A sponsorship worker should start in February if the event is in October; Sponsorship should target Avant Card, The Glebe, Dendy Cinemas, a graphic design company, Art Almanac;
- Retailers should be approached in the first half of the year for sponsorship contributions, in the form of gift vouchers, for prizes at the Art Awards;
- A six month lead up time is needed for strong media relationships;
- IWCS needs to honour any agreements and update supporter text.

Artists

- A seminar re. Submitting Artist Proposals should be run one month prior to the closing date of call for artist submissions;
- Clarify what images are required from artists for existing and new works
- The application fee is reasonable and this money should cover cash prizes.

Staff

- More volunteers and more people that are office-based are needed;
- More hours of paid *Walking the Street* team are needed and they need to work simultaneously.

Promotion

- A flier to advertise the event should be distributed in the local area;
- A map guide that promotes the retailer location and artist should be developed. Exhibitions need to be settled for this to be done;
- Advertise in Art Almanac;
- More time is required to secure an in kind flag. They need to be properly hung with appropriate mechanism. Council needs to be approached early for approval of flags/banners;
- Each participating retailer should have a stencil mark or shoe sticker;
- The location of banners is good. They need to be made of material that is strong with metal rings so it can be secured. Advice should be sought from City of Sydney;
- There should be backing on signage;
- There can be a diversity of signage according to site but the overall 'look' should be maintained.



Figure 2: WTS orange shoe promotion 2006

Summary of *WtS* historical development

Walking the Street arose as a community cultural event designed to bring contemporary art to the city streets. It was extremely successful in the early years, transforming the main street shop fronts, promoting artists and engaging pedestrians with contemporary art in the streetscape. It worked well to expand the cultural content of the Newtown Festival and included support from the Mainstreet Committee, South Sydney Council and Marrickville Council.

In an effort to focus the visual impact of *WtS*, the scale of the event was reduced in 1999 to show works only between Missenden Road and Newtown railway station . In 2001, due to funding shortfalls, *WtS* targeted young artists and coincided with the NSW Artstart Festival in March. In 2003 it moved to the southern end of King Street and began experimenting with different timeslots. 2005 was held in June and then in 2006 it shifted back to October to coincide with support from City of Sydney and promotion in the Art and About festival.

These changes have created a flexible and responsive event that has kept reinventing itself and its objectives. It has been constantly changing its methods, evaluating its structure and reconfiguring its processes. It has perhaps altered both location and time too many times for a temporary art event and has lost some of its following and identity along the way. *Walking the Street* has thus not built the momentum, created the project management systems, consolidated the publicity and developed the critical following that might be expected after 16 years. This review is an important opportunity to assess its current status and recommend a future direction.

Table 1 gives a snapshot of the changing face of *Walking the Street* over time.²

² Please note this is a snapshot rather than a complete picture of the progress of *WtS*.

Table 1: Changes in *Walking the Street* over time.

Year	Artists (No.)	Retailers (No.)	Community Groups (No.)	Volunteers (No.)	Funding (source and \$)	Dates	Location
2006	125 (40% Indigenous)	62 (30% of street)	8	42	Oz Co, COS, MC	October	South King St
2005	100		5	25	COS, MC	June	South King St
2004	105	60			MC	March	South King St
2003	80	70		20	MC	March	South King St
2001	39 (15-24yrs old)	44 (no fees)			\$5000 SSC, NSW Artstart	3-18 Nov	South King St
2000		30					North King St
1999	30	26					North King St
1998	79	70	3		\$5000 SSC	10 -18 Oct	All of King St
1997	74 plus 4 galleries (paid \$350, \$80 and \$60)	(paid \$60)			Fashion event \$12 000; Sponsors \$5000; fees \$5400; SSC \$2000	Oct 25-	All of King St
1994	100 (paid \$109)	100 (paid \$50)			\$5000 SSC	29 Oct - 13 Nov	All of King St
1993	121	98			\$5000 SSC	29 Oct - 13 Nov	All of King St

Notes: No information is available for 1995/96, although the event did occur in these years. The 2002 *WtS* was deferred. .

Oz Co = Australia Council

COS = City of Sydney

MC = Marrickville Council

SSC = South Sydney Council

2. RESEARCH SUMMARY 2007

2a. Community Survey

Assisted surveys were conducted at 2 community events: *Design Fair* at Newtown Neighbourhood Centre on Saturday 15 September and at *Feastibility* festival on Saturday 23 September and online. 90 were completed correctly.

EVENT RECOGNITION

Of the random survey respondents:

62.6% had heard of *Walking the Street*.

44% had never seen *Walking the Street*, of those that had 23 had seen it once or twice and 26 three or more times

Conclusion: Recognition of the event is high –it has gained a following and has a good reputation particularly from the early years. There is still some confusion when people are asked to describe the event and some expressed concern that it does not mention art or King Street or Newtown or shops in the title. Some people confuse it with Reclaim the Streets, describing it as a political or charity event such as Walk for Want. Others are reminded of ‘street walkers’.

EVENT SATISFACTION

78% of attendees think *Walking the Street* is a successful event

When asked to rate their experience of *Walking the Street* on a scale of one to five, with one being bad and 5 being excellent, 89.5% of respondents rated it average or good (21 said average = 43.7%, 22 good = 45.8%, 2 bad and 3 excellent)

Conclusion: There is strong community support for, and interest in, the event.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Of the 90 random survey respondents, 62.6% live in the Newtown area and 46% “come to Newtown to shop, eat or drink or see friends”

58.5% said they were very interested in visual art and 40% said they were somewhat interested, only one person said they were not interested at all

Conclusion: The interest of people in the geographical catchment in visual arts is very high.

Of those that had seen *Walking the Street*, 60.8% came across it “by accident” and 18 people come to King Street with the intention of experiencing the event

Conclusion: People have not been attracted to come to King Street especially for the event. It works as both a destination event for people to plan a visit to the street and as an accidental treat.

23.9% of survey respondents had actually participated in *Walking the Street*, 7 as Artists, 5 as volunteers or workers and 3 as retailers.

Conclusion: People in the Newtown area are engaged with artistic endeavors as participants rather than just spectators.

PUBLICITY

Of the 90 random survey respondents, 30.5% found out about *Walking the Street* by word of mouth. 23.7% saw a flyer or postcard, 22% saw a poster and 11.8% saw it in the newspaper

Conclusion: Only half of the people who had seen the event had been reached by publicity. Traditional marketing methods need to be enhanced to support the grassroots nature of the event that spreads mainly through word of mouth.

AIM OF EVENT

When asked "Who do you think benefits most from *Walking the Street?*", 61% of respondents ticked artist, 57.6% ticked local community and residents , 47.5% said retailers, 25% said visitors to Newtown and 8% said Council

Conclusion: Reinforces the holistic nature and mutual benefits of the event. Survey respondents recognize the value of such an event for artists specifically and for the Newtown community as a whole.

TIMING

72.8% said *Walking the Street* should be part of a larger festival (such as Art and About, Feastability, Newtown Festival)

72.8% said *Walking the Street* should be held every year

45% said *Walking the Street* should be held in spring, 12 Summer 13 Any time of year

Conclusion: There is clear consensus about the frequency and placement of the event. It should be an annual event coordinated as part of a larger festival.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESS

When respondents were asked whether the event was successful or not, 78% said YES. Of those that said YES it was a successful event:

11 commented on the benefits for artists and audiences of exposure and experience

"it gives young and upcoming artists a good opportunity to show their work and get some exhibition experience"

"it exposes art to people who otherwise perhaps would not look at art. It gives local artists a chance of exhibiting. It keeps ART LIFE going"

8 commented on how the event transforms the environment and 4 on how it attracts visitors to the area

"it brings the street alive, and even better, brings art into our everyday lives! I fear it's become a little too commercial"

"the reason we live here is coz it's interesting so anything that makes it more interesting should be supported Good use of council money"

"Newtown is a very arty area - I think it would be great to keep something going as a permanent thing! should be sculptures in the streets not just shop fronts - like 'Sculptures by the Sea'"

8 comments suggested an increase in scale and content of the event

"a festival might be too big but buskers could be included, or chalk drawing or something interactive"

"I think every art event such as this one is fantastic, no matter what. As I said it definitely educates people about contemporary art, and it gives artists a chance to exhibit. And of course it builds a bridge between art and business. I think the more sponsorship one could get for this even the better it would come out."

5 comments focused on how *Walking the Street* showcases local retail

"it's unusual and takes advantage of the interesting shops and window-shopping activity on King Street"

Of those that thought it was NOT a successful event,

8 commented on lack of quality of work and presentation

"Sometimes Walking the Street can go by completely unnoticed; the artwork tends to blend in with the retail. Some displays are very poorly installed and come across as very shabby and 'shop-soiled' after a period of time."

"Overall the event lacks the ability to allow the art or the artist's scope to change the whole streetscape. As it is quite disparate overall and needs to have a greater impact on the whole area. Seems to be more of a community event rather than an arts event".

7 thought that it could promote art better

"It is more successful for the retailer than the artist I would imagine. I don't think the retail environment is the best context for art that wants to be taken seriously, saying that I think it is good for a sense of community and

connection, and more graphic or light hearted work could function better there. It would need to be better curated to be very successful."

6 commented on insufficient publicity

Didn't know it was an 'event' - just 'stuff" for sale in various shops featuring local artists

It is interesting to note that of those that thought it was not successful, their suggestions give us ideas for improving the event – there was no indication that *Walking the Street* is intrinsically a bad idea.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

When asked how *Walking the Street* could be improved;

16 respondents identified the need for increased publicity

*'more information about the art, the theme, the event'
'maps to identify sites, artists, prices'.*

14 comments related to increasing the linkages and scope of the event

People suggested using more interesting sites including lanes, murals, architecture and community venues. Others focused on increased scale and density for the event.

*"larger scale artworks like Art and About in Glebe"
"concept of retailers is cute but more dense"*

9 commented on the need to improve the quality and selection of the art work

"need to be more outrageous. Needs to push the barrier of people's thinking"

"better curation, it has to struggle with a lot of background 'noise' in the context so maybe a theme that carried through the exhibition could tie it together. A sense of relationship to the area and the retail context."

"I think the key is generating a high standard of proposals to choose from".

6 comments related to quality of organization, relationships with retailers and volunteers

"I appreciate that this is all volunteer work but at times seemed to lack coherence from an organisational side"

"It is a wonderful organisation as it allows Newtown to further develop its avant garde personality" Integral property, retailer, 2006

2b. Retailer Survey

20 retailers on the South End of King Street were interviewed by assisted survey. It was decided to target those who had participated in *Walking the Street* to gather information of their experiences across a number of years.

All respondents had participated in *Walking the Street*.

5 had participated once or twice, 10 three to five times and 5 more than six times

Half commented that they participated to be part of the community and 8 expressed interest in supporting emerging artists

- It is a good event , that it brought people to area. It's nice to exhibit art, ties in with what the store does
- We thought it was a great thing to get other artists started or to help them get sales from their work. It's part of the community spirit. We really enjoy being part of it.
- It's a good initiative to promote the local area and the people in it, local artists
- A good community event, also to bring people through the shop
- Thinks it's a good idea. It's easy, you don't have to do anything
- Great community cultural event
- To give artists exposure, get more exposure for ourselves
- To help out the artists and to make the street a bit more interesting and busier, to bring people to the area

When asked to rate their experience of *Walking the Street* on a scale of one to five: 3 ticked excellent, 10 ticked good, 5 said average, 2 said not good enough and no one said very bad

When asked to identify who benefits most from *Walking the Street* from a list; 7 said Local community and residents, 3 said Visitors to Newtown, 12 said Participating artists, 3 said Retailers and 2 said None of the above

Of those that said artists benefited, some were not sure how much,

- I would like to think the artist benefits but I don't think many people really realise what it's about, or that the artists get the exposure they deserve
- The artistic community, not individual artists
- Not sure if artists get that much recognition for it. Nobody asks about the art.

One commented that benefits are linked to efficiency of event

- based on the current way it's run, no-one benefits. If it was run well, everyone would benefit.

Q4. 10 said Yes, 7 said No and 3 were not sure whether or not local retailers benefit from Walking the Street

Of those that said yes, most acknowledged that it was an indirect benefit of promoting awareness of the area rather than a direct benefit to the retailer

- It's hard to say if there's a direct benefit – I don't notice people stopping to look, and although it definitely brings people "down this end" of King St. probably no direct financial benefits.
- When you're involved in the community, then the community gets behind the business
- it enhances King St reputation as a location of alternative goods and services
- Because it brings new people to the area. And "I like art".
- in that we benefit by contributing to the community. People look at the windows and stuff. We haven't ever sold anything for anyone though.

Of the 7 respondents that said No it did not increase trade but that they liked doing it or saw benefits for the broader community

- because it's an exhibition designed to be seen from the street, not designed to encourage people to come inside.
- makes no difference to sales. no financial benefit, but we like doing it.
- In the early days, it used to be more of a festival event with a start and finish, and party oriented, which attracted a lot of interest. In the last few years, there has been no party atmosphere, so you don't know who's seeing it

Q5. When asked is the publicity for Walking the Street is effective, 11 said no and only 4 said Yes

Of those that said Yes, comments included

- It's good. one of Sydney's most original art concepts
- Yes, for what they offer. If they want more, they'd need more community spirit.

Of the 11 respondents that said No, most commented that they had not seen much publicity themselves.

- There should be more publicity. Invest in a banner hung across the street so people really know it's there. Large posters would be good. Take advantage of huge amount of traffic that goes up and down King St
- A lot of people don't even know what it means/is. it needs to have more marketing behind it. Not enough signage around. Last year banners blew off. People aren't educated to know what WTS is, it needs a lot more clear signage, and maybe an explanation of what it is. To a lot of people, especially from interstate, WTS means nothing, and a shoe symbol is just a shoe, it doesn't explain the event.
- The art is "a bit hard to find".
- doesn't seem to be enough publicity both locally and further afield. Only the savvy locals seem to know about it

Q6. 15 respondents thought Walking the Street was well organised by the Inner West Cultural Services, acknowledging the small resources available.

- It's been made easy for us, as a retailer, it's been well-organised. The choice of artist etc all flowed nicely.
- They've organised the artists fairly well, communication has been good. We have specific requests that the work must be to do with the environment or transport, and they've always accommodated that.
- they do a great job with small resources
- The Inner West Cultural Services do a fantastic job on a shoestring budget and many volunteers - they do the best job they can do on their resources.
- Getting artists into the shops and communicating with shop owners, but if publicity comes under being organised, then no. Somebody forgot to bring the shoe last year.

3 respondents said No , it was not well organised by the Inner West Cultural Services, focusing particularly on 2006

- The last one was really poorly organised. Rushed, last minute, no consultation on which artist was in store. In the past retailers could choose the artist and this time they couldn't. Respondent says, previous years have been fine, well-planned in advance, well organised, but last year was "horrible".
- I never knew who organised it or how it was organised.

Q7. 11 said *Walking the Street* should be a stand alone event, they felt that the event got lost as part of Newtown festival and that it would be overshadowed.

- If there are things ongoing of interest during Newtown this is good, although there might be benefits in clustering things together. people come for food, ambiance, the eccentric nature of the area. it's good if there's always something for people to see when they come to Newtown
- Just needs to be better promoted
- Because if the people come to eat and drink, they eat and drink, not see art. The people who like art will come to look at the art.

8 said *Walking the Street* should be a part of larger festival, mainly to increased profile and publicity

- It used to be held for the 2 weeks leading up to the Newtown Festival . That was when it was the best.
- That might work. Feasibility is pretty insular though, the people come for food and wine and rarely even cross the street to come into our shop.
- The marketing has to be cross-pollinated or it won't work
- Maybe it would be better to hold it with something else when you'd get better volumes of people.
- Could it be part of Sydney Festival? At the moment, it's pretty unknown. I've never heard anyone mention Walking the Street

Q8. 7 respondents think *Walking the Street* should be held in Summer and 8 said in Spring. Many said christmas period would not be good.

- At the beginning of any season, as a retailer [clothing retailer], this is when you usually do something [with your window].

Q 9. 16 respondents think *Walking the Street* should be held every year, for continuity and consistency

- If it was every two it would "lose it". It gives opportunities to artists without being mainstream
- People will forget about it if they don't see it regularly

Q10. 7 respondents think Council should fund *Walking the Street*.

- If Marrickville Council can do a parking blitz to raise money for a graffiti camera, they can pay for this". Sydney City Council should also chip in, the boundary between both sides of the street need to be broken down.
- Council, because it is a community event. Do artists have to pay an entry fee? I guess they're pretty poor, so that could be difficult. As a retailer, I probably wouldn't pay money towards it. I might, personally, as a resident of the area, and I have lots of love for the town, but not speaking as a retailer. We donate a prize.
- I don't know. Local council? At the end of the day retailers pay for it through rates anyway, so the council should just keep paying for it

An additional 8 think Council should organise it in partnership with business or sponsors

- Anyone that's prepared to put their hand in their pocket. Ideally a govt body
- 50% council, 50% private businesses. Respondent's business often donates something small, but this is only tokenistic and wouldn't encourage anyone to enter. Shouldn't ask small poor shop owners such as myself to back it.
- Should be good prizes to get more good artists to do it. That would "make it more substantial". The event has "a HSC feel", when it should be like sculpture by the sea which is going from strength to strength. I haven't seen it grow, there's no incentive for decent artists to participate. The call for artists should be publicised very widely and substantial prizes should be offered. It's just got so much potential, it's a shame. South King St is crying out for events. It needs participation from "substantial artists" to take it "up a notch or two or three."
- A lot of artists are very poor, so they can't fund it. Retailers already devote money by giving the window space - it costs us money to have it in the window. Councils should contribute, as should main street committee. Artists themselves should pay something, particularly if they're showing a commercial [saleable] work. The artists very rarely sell their work, but it depends on the artist.

- If you are trying to grow an event you inevitably need sponsors. Could be a joint collaboration with the cultural centre and others. Maybe think of some sister streets in other cities in the world, and get some sponsorship, or at least the knock on effect of some publicity as they advertise their own. Definitely need both councils (Marrickville and City of Sydney) to be in on it.

Q11. Comments on how could *Walking the Street* be improved, are listed below

5 respondents focused on the need for more promotion

- Definitely worth continuing, not difficult for retailers to participate in. Event needs more promotion, stickers and things. Give retailers a choice of what they get in the store.
- Definitely lots of publicity, marketing, signs - big banners would be great. Maybe holding it during the festival month? I love the concept of WTS, we'll often look at it more than once and go for a stroll down the street after work; but is it too big a strip for people to get around? Could it be at Carriageworks or something - but then it wouldn't be WTS. Or that lovely space outside the hub, but you can't stay there very long ... Or on perspex mounted on walls, I've seen that in the city recently. Sometimes people don't identify the works as art, they just think 'that's a funny thing they've got in their window'
- Better advertising in the right places, that's it..
- The promotion is important, on the internet because it doesn't cost too much. The papers are quite expensive, but you can even get free promotion in the papers, free listings, if you know where to look. Lost of different kinds of promotion. Not enough people come. There should be an event in Sydney Park or something for an opening or something to get visitors to walk all the way down [respondent's end of] King St.
- Somehow get the public a bit more involved, retailers and artists are quite involved, artists bring their family and friends etc. This year it was in the paper, so that was good because people asked me about it.

5 mentioned the need for direction and focus for the event

- Last year it didn't seem like it was "anything in particular". No sense of the event, or the reason for it. It needs to be more "important" have more of a sense of occasion.
- WTS needs to have a more cultural bent. The launch needs to have social impact, like a gallery opening with booze and nibbles. Couldn't local cafes or hotels participate in doing a launch? Feastability always drags a lot of people in, so there's interest. WTS does have an end of festival cocktail party that I rarely go to, but this needs to be the launch, to create that 'opening atmosphere'. That's what it used to be like, you could physically see people walking up and down the street, but not any more.

- Having a strong local content, as was initially intended is a must. Outside artists with interests in the community of Newtown could also be another category, as well as community groups (the Kites, etc) Lifting the quality of the artworks is important as well as showing Newtown for what it is, a REAL community.
- There needs to be some direction to WTS, and some idea about what it's for.
- All it did was take over our window, and we pay big rent. We got nothing and the customers got nothing from it. It's such a great idea and it could be so good, and I can tell you about 10 retailers right off who would be interested in supporting it if it were properly organised.

6 comments referred to the scale of event

- Earlier contact between shops and artists
- More artists, more shops, more publicity, could be an iconic event like SBTS
- Used to see a lot of really good exhibitions, but has felt it has been less visible over the last couple of years. needs to be on most of the shops. needs big signage over king st, should be launched, or contained to certain area. this would attract a better calibre of artist if well-organised and promoted
- Walking the Street is a "good" event, even though she "didn't get any business from it" she thought it was "interesting" and liked to see people on King St looking at the works
- Walking the Street makes art more approachable less elitist
- More needs to be done with it. Needs to be organised with energy. Could there be events, like fashion shows. Or bring someone famous in that attracts people, like an actor or a singer. If you're famous or known, people will look at it, but if you're a small fish no-one is interested

2 focussed on the need for selection criteria

- The year my daughter participated, the head of the MCA was a judge and the respondent felt the judges "were not looking at anything that wasn't contemporary art" and suggests there be separate sections.
- There needs to be minimum criteria for actual works, because some of them are just crap.

2c. Focus Groups And Individual Interviews

Small focus groups were organized with key target groups to review their experiences and attitudes to the event. These included the board of Inner West Cultural Services, artists that had previously participated, emerging professional artists that had never participated and the local business association. They were organised for between one and two hours in the evening in suitable community venues and local businesses. These sessions included analysis of the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for the event as well as questions concerning timing, site, context and publicity.

Direct interviews in participant's places of work or local cafes were organized on the phone with representatives from key groups. Cultural and events staff from Marrickville and City of Sydney councils were interviewed regarding their assessment of the events current status, future opportunities and funding context. A meeting with previous *Walking the Street* organisers was held to review possible options for the future. One on one meetings with local contemporary gallery owners also focused on their current community activities and assessed their interest in contributing to *Walking the Street*.

For ease of analysis the key points from these interviews and focus groups have been organized in point form under three key headings: Strengths, Weaknesses and Opportunities. Where appropriate the key points have been summarized in underlined sub headings. This information along with the community and retailer surveys then informs the recommendations in the final section of the report



Figure 3: Street art , Gray's Lane, Melbourne, 2007

STRENGTHS

Marrickville Council Staff

- It is a great model that has been used by other councils i.e. Auburn, Wollongong
- Good name that has history
- Shoe icons are memorable
- A well loved event contributing many positive memories
- Engaging community groups is good and interesting and not as aspect of cultural practice integrated elsewhere
- Artists awards program is good initiative
- Good matches of art work and artist to content of shops are effective

“Walking the Street has become a local institution. It brings together our local artists, businesses and residents in appreciation of each other and our community. The awards presentation really highlighted the importance of this opportunity for our local emerging artists and gave them the recognition they deserve. For a long time after this unique exhibition closes, we are all still discussing the inspirational displays and the shops they were placed in. A truly community event.”

Clr Fiona Byrne Marrickville Council, 2006

City Of Sydney Council

- 10 years ago it was cutting edge and focused on emerging artists – has lost some focus and zing!
- A site specific event
- Branding was very strong – bands of orange shoes across the shops
- Traditionally opening was a real event – anticipated and well attended
- A street focus is important – must have strong clear, recognizable signage – labels, contracts with retailers, artists information business cards with shops
- Good contribution to the ‘Art and About’ program

“Last year I was introduced to the many programs offered by "Walking the Street" - I am now an enthusiastic supporter!

John McInerney Independent Councilor City of Sydney, 2006

Inner West Cultural Services

Increased relationships between artists and shopkeepers

- Retailers continuing to show work beyond *Walking the Street*, exhibitions of artists work in shops and in many local cafes
- Matching of artists to shops. - years when art is specific to the shop have been most successful i.e. newspaper shop papered up. This works for spectators as it enhances their experience and the play with space

Accessible community event

- A good and interesting local walk – an evening activity
- Group tours by local artists/curators to discuss artworks
- Creating “camaraderie on the strip”

Experience for artists in displaying work in public

- First time exhibition for many artists, professional development for emerging artists
- When coordination infrastructure is strong and in place, it gathers many volunteers and is a true artist run initiative
- Anecdotal evidence of artists getting exhibition offers/selling work/ securing longer display times in shops

Includes community arts and organizations

- Encourages community cultural development engaging groups like schools/ homeless men’s groups in projects with local artists
- Engages local artists with IWCS and involves them in practice of community arts

Non Participating Artists

- Site specificity of work is interesting to them. They want their work to be relevant to the space it exists in. Most artists are very interested in working with ‘the shop’ as site.
- Summer is a good time for *Walking the Street*
- Selection by a curator or “someone good”, providing status and value as an arts event.

Participating Artists

- The best years were in the north end of King Street and attached to Newtown festival
- It is well designed for emerging artists and gives well needed opportunities “it was really accessible”
- All the artists are very interested in the fundamental of the art in shops concept.

- They like to custom make works for specific shops but are also interested in other options for the display of work, including permanent light boxes with changing contents. Windows need to be well selected and able to give over all their space - the best windows are: the button shop, Tricia's, Embryo, Leo Monk Handbags, some of the hairdressers

“This project is too good to let go. 2003 was my second venture in WTS. I had great rapport with the business owners. For emerging artists it’s a wonderful way to develop skills in dealing with the commercial world. My own project was fun, it’s an inexpensive way to get work out into the public eye and I received an invitation to show at another gallery.” Lee Bethel, artist 2003

Newtown Precinct Business Association

- All the executive committee knew of the event
- It has a good history and was an exciting idea to show art in windows
- Concept is good. The three main objectives remain important
 - 1) encouraging people to promenade, actually *Walking the Street*
 - 2) supporting local and emerging artists
 - 3) promoting Newtown as a destination
- When work is sympathetic to the shop it is great
- Engaging retailers and artists with each other and with art on the street
- The tours from two ends of Newtown meeting in the middle at Australia Street Plaza was great community celebration
- Including wine tasting and involvement of restaurants was good
- The Aladdin shoes are good, the frieze strip of shoes to showcase participating shops was great

Previous WtS Coordinators

- Good system in place, Entry forms are better
- Standard of art works has increased
- South end more visible with 70 shops in smaller area
- Relationship to shop context or material/content of the retailer
- Art awards are good – helps to engage artists

WEAKNESSES

Marrickville Council Staff

- Better and more consistent promotion. Brand recognition should be reinforced year to year
- Difficult getting quality window spaces, increasing presence of franchises and designed window displays on the street
- Lack of information and knowledge by retailers of artist's works
- Retailers not involved in choosing works or meeting artists
- More focus on the central area of King Street, the station and community centre
- Role of project workers that keep changing. Importance of maintaining relationships and networks, rather than always reinventing them.
- Need to evaluate annually and pass on contacts to new workers
- Funding insecurity

City of Sydney Council Staff

- Needs to extend westwards, at least up to and around the Hub, to create more focus and attention for the event
- Needs to come up with exciting new projects to attract more funding
- Needs better and more consistent promotion, "*its hard to even know which shops are participating*"
- Need to raise profile for the art works, identify where works are and say more about the artist

Inner West Cultural Services

Insecure resources

- Year to year funding creates insecurity and shortens timeframes. The event needs longer term planning to succeed
- A paid project coordinator, rather than a worker who had to produce event within general workload.
- Finding volunteers is hard and organizing them can be even harder
- Short term planning and year to year funding limits long term thinking and overall direction

Inconsistent publicity and marketing

- Not enough investment in long term publicity and reusable resources i.e. banners
- Lacks the right people and business marketing skills
- Launch needs to be more engaging and interactive

Lack of artist's ownership

- Not enough ownership of the event, artists should run, design and organize it
- Depends on the worker employed, volunteers often less when workers are paid more

Non Participating Artists

- *Walking the Street* is more known as 'the thing in shops' than by its name. The name does not reflect the purpose of the event
- Confusion about the inconsistent identity of *Walking the Street* and where the participants are drawn from
- Negotiation with retailers can be a difficult part of the process.
- A themed event is not so appealing
- Artists like being paid, but \$50 is a pointless/insulting fee. Prizes are not necessary for them to be involved in a project.
- Insufficient arts profile of the event.
- Seminars or workshops and 'mentors' are not important to these artists, although they can see the benefit of that to 'community' [non-professional] emerging artists.

Participating Artists

Location

- It seemed a lot more noticeable when it was up here [King St proper].
- I don't see why it couldn't be on the whole street - you always get shops that don't have good windows or don't want to be involved anyway
- Artists want to work with retailers earlier for better outcomes all round
- The work needs to be displayed better, more related to the site or larger in scale or from more recognised artists to have an impact

Name

- Artists are not that attached to the current name. Good event names are suggested as those that describe themselves with their names. "if you don't know its art, you don't know its art".

Insufficient Publicity

- There's definitely an audience [for the arts in this area], but they [WTS] didn't get their attention.
- WTS is not achieving a strong, positive reputation - "it's not even listed with free listing services! If we're not even doing that, what are we doing?"
- The artists would want to know that WTS was to be more visible and that there would be more publicity before applying again
- Not enough people are being attracted to WTS

Newtown Precinct Business Association

- Placement of art in shops is too disparate
- Art world does not take the event seriously and is dismissive of the event
- Perhaps it has finished in its current form and needs to move further onto the street
- Needs to link better to other community events and organizations
- Not a good idea to have stencils on footpath, encourages more stenciling and ruins some heritage buildings
- Should be more promoted that you can actually see the artwork

Previous WtS Coordinators

- Administration is too complicated
- Too many stakeholders – retailers, artists, volunteers,
- Too few staff and budget resources to manage this complexity
- Fluidity of shop keepers/contacting owners, shops closing, artists moving – means many last minute changes and adjustments required
- 2006 – change of curator due to waiting for funding allocation, employed too late and too hard to communicate with all stakeholders involved, sad because so many quality applications that year but had to prioritise indigenous artists and make last minute changes
- Need a worker for 2/3 days per week, need consistency in staff to maintain relationships and information
- Too many volunteers or workers with too many tasks can create confusion

“Not only does the festival bring together local artists and promote individual artists and local businesses. Through various voluntary roles it provides artists with new skills in arts administration and enhances the profile of local artists.”

Jennifer Caldwell,
artist 2003



Figure 4: current street facade, Newtown Station, 2008

OPPORTUNITIES

Marrickville Council Staff

Aim

- Focus on outsider art focus and/or a theme for the event
- Professional development opportunities - seminars and forums, debates and network opportunities for artists
- Sustainability is essential – engage professional artists and create mentor links.

Location

- Needs to reach into the centre of Newtown especially the plaza outside train station. It's a good starting point and can focus the event on the central stomping ground

Timing

- Connect *Walking the Street* to another event i.e. *Feastibility*, Marrickville Cultural Festival and/or *Art and About*
- Run annually or alternate with another event such as a busking festival

Publicity

- Produce street maps and walking trails to encourage exploration
- Connect to local galleries – 25 in Marrickville LGA, Vanishing Point, New View in Australia St
- Introductory event for retailers and artists to inform them and develop networks
- A kit – criteria, guidelines, contracts for artists and information, signs, maps, artists info for retailers
- Promotional booklet explaining artworks and prices
- Promote idea of buying affordable local art

Organisation

- Working party or committee to manage event and to employ quality project worker – perhaps a three year contract to develop event
- Volunteers focused on a few shops only – opportunity to develop relationships
- Mentoring project – professional artists with emerging artists helping to hang works, write descriptions

City Of Sydney Staff

Aim

- Transform the street space – temporal or permanent site specific work
- Separate components – funded and managed discretely, 10- 20 curated sites, one big thing commission, school contributions, curating team from SCA/Enmore Design College, business community – map of galleries and sites and studios

Location

- Extend to Sydney Park, previous proposal for sculpture/ environmental arts symposium, chimneys are projection sites, inside storehouses as exhibition sites, launch at Sydney park – lead people down the street
- Display cases in city lane ways, vandalism has occurred, ongoing cleaning costs. Costs for COS on curating- now inviting artists groups to manage exhibitions
- Idea of Taylor square wrapped overnight – introduce the element of surprise and wonder – a transformative event

Timing

- Connected to another event Art and About (October) provides much needed publicity
- Must be annual or alternate with another event regularly

Organisation

- Invite submissions from community/artists – introduce new and exciting elements
- Identify venues for community works too, keep both artists and CCD works but create separate briefs and locations for each type of activity
- Develop clear parameters and then standardized competition model that artists are familiar with
- Develop links to MCA youth program to grow seminars/mentoring/forums and information exchanges
- Link to local galleries and active cafes and school grounds are a great event site
- Murals, projections and tours add an experience and information

Publicity

- produce maps and walking trails to encourage exploration – consider Business Grants from City of Sydney

IWCS Board

Aim

- Emerging artists get to exhibit in a non threatening non traditional setting/ get feedback from a broad cross section of community/possibility of exposure and sales
- Established artists get to exhibit in a different venue/ interact with other artists/ share skills and experiences/ bring work to new audiences
- Retailers get to participate in a local community event, recognition for supporting creativity. Retailers are always changing – need to build relationships and ownership.
- Consider perspective of spectators - what do they get and want in return. Review the quality of information required for 'the gallery on the street'
- Develop stronger relationship with local artists -include local community development with artist, volunteers and retailers

- Important to keep art on street and shops are not galleries - demand a more challenging and witty response. Different context to gallery, attracts different audiences

Increase community connections

- Links to educational institutions – promoting more community ownership
- Links to local galleries - Mura clay gallery has always been a strong supporter – idea of exhibition for winners as a prize also possible retrospective of past exhibitions and previous artists. Also to expand concept of tours with gallery staff involvement and expertise
- Link to other events like Newtown Festival, Marrickville Cultural festival and Flaunt it fashion event
- Alternate visual arts event with performance focus – link to theatre spaces

Location

- Consider any other possible places – galleries/community centres/schools/ libraries/ theatres – still connected by a map and people walking along sites
- Idea of permanent display boxes – retailers can co purchase and use all year. Issues – vandalism –need 12mm glass, maintenance and scale
- IWCS moves project around – different years/different areas i.e. Enmore/ Marrickville
- Focus on a smaller area of organized activity and then get other retailers to decorate their own windows and merchandise to promote the same theme – prizes for best retailer decorated window included
- Build up guided tours- place explorations - focus on blocks/streets around galleries/studios

Organisation

- A community event to establish connections and networks
- Increase public exposure for emerging artists and retailers
- Tutorial for artists to enter and work with expert/mentor
- Early planning and organization particularly to connect to schools and community events and activities.
- A working party with a broader base to engage other stakeholders in decision making
- Criteria for artworks would include: Theme and relationship to place/local context
- Themes – have had in the past i.e. local, young artists, innovations. A theme helps promote and consolidate the exhibition facilitates tours and discussions. Visitors return to see artist's interpretations and use of spaces.
- Include pavement artists/ buskers/ performance
- Art markets as start and finish events

Publicity

- Link to name of a charity – raise money on their behalf and thus increase publicity – think about merchandising i.e. postcards of the winning artwork
- Celebrity hosts – Expand involvement of MCA, continue to develop awards for artists
- 4 banners across King St – north/south/Enmore road and community centre
- Retailers asked to donate to prizes
- Develop awards program
- Approach utility companies i.e. Telstra square for sponsorship

Non Participating Artists

Aim

- It is a great opportunity for artists whose work is “not so saleable or commercial” such as artists working with performance, installation or video. Elements such as “multi-venue works, pod casts, performance” could be part of WTS i.e. incorporating “video art at the Dendy”
- Carriageworks is “just down the road”. If the event could be linked to Carriageworks it might “raise prestige”.
- “There are particularly good artists who work with communities, like spat & loogie and Squatspace, who you could engage to keep that angle”.
- 3 days of workshops in lead up to the event to engage artist and audiences and create buzz

Location

- Determine good sites early
- ‘the shop’ as site interests artists
- Site specificity of work is interesting to artists. They want their work to be relevant to the space it exists in.
- “Why does it have to be a shop? It could be someone’s house on King St”.
- “It would be nice to have a list of sites that were open to it, that you could propose to”.
- Some artists “would be more interested if it wasn’t just about things in windows”.
- It’s ok for artists to have to work within “certain parameters, for specific spaces” but not for work to have to be “about Newtown”.

Timing

- Artists think summer is a good time for WTS

Organisation

- Needs to be selected by a curator or “someone good”.
- “You want to know that you’ll be showing with other people that do good work, that you respect, or with your peer group.”

Publicity

- Marking each venue is necessary, such as with stencil or flags
- A tour or a map would be useful.
- An opening/launch would be important for both artists and retailers and would “bring people” to the event.

Participating Artists

Aim

- Artist agree the event needs to be more entertaining and fun to engage audiences
- “70 artists is a lot” and too much for the organisers – may need to reduce scale to have more success and a higher standard of work.
- Good if WTS was a bit more selective - Artists think selecting sites is good but still needs to have impact on streetscape
- Ensure quality work and presentation

Timing

- The artists like the idea of linking with Feastability or Art & About. They definitely want it to be attached to another event.

Organisation

- Engage volunteers earlier and with more specific purpose
- “I wanted to be more involved in it, and it seemed like they needed it” but that wasn’t recognised. She says it seems like “a year’s worth of work was done right at the end”.
- WtS needs “dedicated administrators in charge, even if it’s only part of their week”. A central, reliable point of contact “so if everything goes pear-shaped, there’s somewhere to go”.
- Involve only committed retailers. Inflexible retailers shouldn’t be involved.
- Retailers “should all get a proper letter, on paper, detailing what they need to know and do”.
- Artists like the idea of a ‘meet the retailer meeting’
- “A volunteer team to help people install their work would be helpful” - enlist visual merchandisers.
- A workshop on installation techniques was a good thing. “I was surprised how little some people knew about it. A lot of artists seemed to need the basics.”

Budget

- Artists agree that \$15,000 is not enough to adequately fund WTS
- “It’s a fulltime job for three months to coordinate WTS. Every year it’s reinventing the wheel” and adds that it needs “the budget to set up a system”.

- A \$25 entry fee [for artists] to help fund the event. Artists are very surprised to hear that artists were once paid to be in WTS, joking 'bring that back!'

Publicity

- WTS needs more promotion, suggesting websites, advertising at the Uni
- Get more young people involved, the majority "seem over 30".
- Shoes could be painted on the sidewalk.
- Getting established artists involved "would be great".

"As an artist and member of the creative community, initiatives such as Walking the Street are invaluable since opportunities are limited for recognising and enabling art its place in society. Shop fronts are also powerful points for exhibiting". Barbara Doran, artist 2006

Newtown Precinct Business Association

Aims and Concept

- Newtown has fantastic graffiti artists – link to Mayes Lane
- Work with the concept of Visual merchandising – engage students from Enmore Design School to work with interested retailers- have a special category
- Include opportunities for performance art on the streets – idea of linking to Cracker comedy festival in March, or idea of organizing a performance art bus tour from Tempe bus museum down King Street
- Contemporary art is hybrid, includes visual and performance elements – i.e. *red painting* music and performance art
- Must be a curated event – need to ensure professionalism and relevance of the material to shops involved and select the appropriate artists for the task and site
- Link event to other local activities like studio and gallery tours, artists talks in restaurants
(Janet from Wilson St gallery has many local professional artists who may be interested)
(Stephanie organizes Under the Blue Moon festival on Enmore Road to place art in new and surprising contexts including shop fronts)
- Open up Feasibility onto the street , engage artists to work with food in windows
- Idea of retro festivals in Newtown- pick up on vintage stores and feel of the street, include retro recipes
- Could include a ceremony at Newtown festival to promote local arts at this high profile event

Location:

- Include both north and south King Street, focus around the public places – Telstra plaza and Australia St plaza
- Take it out of the shops and onto the streets – banners, poles, walls, panels, billboards

Timing

- Group discussed January – is a quiet time for business, locals are away and perhaps tourists come. Would be good to have an event then but many people are away so hard to organize and may miss the student population. Liked the idea of linking to Sydney Festival but street is not at its full potential
- Plans are afoot for a fringe festival around 2 weeks in November to link to the Newton Festival – focus on performance but could link to arts on the street concept – planning now for 2009
- Straddling Art and About and Marrickville Cultural Festivals would mean an increased chance of publicity and add value to other events during this time. It could also activate the promised Newtown partnership – getting political leverage between City of Sydney and Marrickville Councils
- Perhaps a month long festival of Art on the Streets of Newtown. The association is keen to support Artists creating on the street – busking, portrait painting, tours, readings and talks, site specific work and performance events

Organisation

- The Newtown Precinct Business Association are very keen to activate the street, to encourage support for and opportunities for local artists of all disciplines and to promote the brand of Newtown as an arts community. This is what makes Newtown unique
- A representative from the group is keen to help on the event working party

Previous WtS Coordinators

Aim

- Must be more creative and sexed up
- Focus on contemporary art show
- Dress a window as an artist
- Include visual merchandising students and artists using recycled materials
- Street Art is interesting and important but has issues with public liability and insurance and security, need more resources to create temporal art works

Location:

- Site specific work only - allocate artists to sites, and remove complications of matching process
- Not a lot of curation required in exhibition, it is more about finding suitable spaces

- Worth cutting out windows that have no impact or will not allow enough space
- Good idea to be selective and to use the whole window space
- Issue is how to be selective with shops but still keep the visibility
- Great to get a group of shops together in a block, but experience to date is its hard to even get 4 in a row – 40 windows would be a minimum, 20 if they were all in a strip
- Could have different art forms each year – i.e. photography, graphics etc. But then hard to be relevant to shop sites

Timing:

- Has kept changing in response to funding issues – trying to secure grants from different sources. Notification for key grants only comes through in late May/June so event can be delivered by October
- Experimented with many times – Sep/Oct is the best time – good to link to festival times to maximize publicity
- Will take a while to get schools on board and to get funding for 2008 now

Name:

- It has been an issue for many years – have been thinking about changing it, added the “Art in Shop fronts” tag to address confusion - ‘it doesn’t say its art’

Organisation:

- Artist applications to include previous works – chosen on this basis, challenge for artist to engage with selected sites
- Target Art colleges – SCA, Sydney Uni, Enmore TAFE – staff to talk to directors, teachers and classes – sell the call for artists, photograph suitable shops/sites – give sections to art schools to develop ideas
- Contact mission church – they have an annual exhibition, could this be at the same time and provide opportunities for community artists
- Hard to get retailers to participate as judges – not much consistency
- No manual for “How To” produce the event – this would be good to assist project workers
- May: 1 month to secure shops can’t be too much earlier as things change
June : advertise for artists
End June: submissions close 2 weeks for selection time
Artists have 10 weeks to produce work
Organizers can promote event rather than be fussing with matching artists to shops
Also time to organize some workshops and the opening event

Budget:

“the event is always half hearted if it is not resourced properly”

- IWCS Board agreed that it would not run with less than \$25K (in 2006 funded by COS \$15K, MC \$8,500 plus coordinator wages, \$17,500 OzCo)
- Would be great with \$25K for organization and \$20K for publicity
- Consider OzCo community partnership section – next round in March – notification would be July – is that too late?

- Good time to approach Visual Arts and Crafts Board for a curator position to work with art schools and selected artists
- MCA have been partners for last 2 years – keep this going
- Target different funding sources for different parts of the project
- Hard to get corporate sponsorship – it takes too long for too little resources, mostly offered in kind

Publicity:

- Important to be part of other festivals for publicity
- Avant card – WtS image, all cards went but not sure how this translates into visitors to events
- Only one SMH story in the events heyday – would be great to get again
- Most publicity from WtS has been stolen
- A banner can be put up at the Hub but has to be installed by council – expensive to pay them for the service. Banners on 3 St Peter's Towers funded by COS – great opportunity, but need quality materials to withstand elements
- Jester shoe logo has had its day – new look shoe or new logo needed. Have used Orange since 2003, Great to have shoes in lights like Christmas lights
- Map distribution is an issue and hard to have all information i.e. artist, shop, work listed on the brochure in time for printing and distribution
- Stickers with logos are good



Figure 5: ideal shop window on King Street

“Overall the event lacks the ability to allow the art or the artist’s scope to change the whole streetscape. As it is quite disparate overall and needs to have a greater impact on the whole area. Seems to be more of a community event rather than an arts event” community survey, 2007.

2d. Local Contemporary Cultural Activity

Newview Gallery – Director - Liam Kennedy

The Newview Gallery was established in August 2004 as part of the Newtown Precinct Art Space program; a collaborative venture between the Newtown Entertainment Precinct Association and Marrickville Council connecting artists with venues and alternative art spaces.

The goal of the Newview Gallery is to provide a professional gallery and support network for established and emerging artists and artistic services across the whole spectrum of the arts. Our goal is to provide a unique art space that promotes emerging artists and art services. (www.newview.com.au)

Liam has supported *Walking the Street* through promoting to artists, retailers and in community. Thinks it is a good idea but needs more presence and promotion. . Liam is keen to see contemporary arts in the area flourish and is keen to work with IWCS to support their endeavors

Liam is active in supporting emerging artists by providing gallery space, organizing events and cultural activities. He is launching the Weekes lane project in January 2008, engaging stencil and graffiti artists to provide stencil art workshops and then to paint the back lane behind Newtown Neighbourhood Centre. This event includes a street art exhibition, workshops, demonstrations and guided tours of local graffiti walls from Newtown Cemetery through to Mayes Lane in St Peters.

Summer Sessions & The Weekes Lane Artist's Walk is an initiative of Newview Gallery, its friends and neighbours and is made possible with the support of Marrickville Council. The goal of the project is to create and maintain a public art space contributed to and cared for by local artists and residents that come together to celebrate and explore the newest styles in Street Art. (www.weekeslane.com)

At the Vanishing Point - Brendan Penzer and Renee Briggs

ATVP is an independent contemporary art space that showcases a challenging and dynamic program of contemporary art exhibitions. The gallery has an educational focus for the community, providing workshops for children, adults and community groups as well as offering information sessions, artist talks, forums, guided tours and lectures that engage with contemporary art and contemporary issues. Since establishing in April this year, At The Vanishing Point – Contemporary Art has become one of Sydney's most popular and influential artist-run contemporary art initiatives. The gallery, so far, has provided exhibiting

opportunities for over 200 individual artists and has been attended by over 6500 viewers. (www.atthevanishingpoint@hotmail.com)

ATVP's philosophy is that the gallery is here as a result of contemporary art and contemporary issues demanding a place to be exhibited, conversed and engaged with on meaningful and accessible levels.

The owner Brendan has been involved as an artist in the Blue Mountains art in shop fronts project linked to the Winter Magic festival. He sees it as a good way to live up shop windows and to promote art. He thinks it is important to provide opportunities for children, young people, community groups, artists and for collaborative works. The challenges of working with businesses and shop environments are challenging and interesting. It is also important to challenge and surprise shoppers. He is motivated to work in a new platform more than by prizes, awards or certificates.

In managing such an event, it is good to invite proposals and select the most appropriate work for the available sites. Newtown is “known for its artist and activities – anything that solidifies this is good to develop”. Such an event needs to create real opportunities for artists. If it is more professional and high profile, it will create more opportunities for participants. They have earned this through the selection process and winning their place in the show.

He coordinates the Marrickville Contemporary Art prize in At the Vanishing Point and next year at Chrissie Cotter gallery too – this is already under the umbrella of the Marrickville Cultural festival. Artists have to live or work in the Marrickville area and are short listed for the awards. He is interested in working with any working party to assist in developing the event.

'The area contains one of the highest percentages of artists, cultural workers and arts industries of any local government area in Australia' (www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au) and has 'the reputation for being a centre for new and emerging independent artists' (www.newtownprecinct.net.au).

Mays Lane

“Pieces. Paste-ups. Stencils, freehand, aerosol and brushes. Monthly shows, constantly updated walls and the finest graffiti art Sydney has to offer. It's all at May's Lane – Sydney's premier curated street art space”.

Located at the end of King Street opposite Sydney Park and near to St Peter's Station. Each month, MAY'S Lane exhibits five large panels by street artists from across Australia and overseas. Once removed to make way for the next panel, each work is included in the MAY'S Collection which is an attempt to produce one of Australia's best and most dynamic collections of street art. The laneway is a public space so is always open and free for anyone to visit. Besides the panels, May's is home to sprawling, exuberant and constantly evolving works on walls – work that has the full and unwavering support of neighbouring residence and business. These works change rapidly and regularly, so there is always new work and new artists to see.

May's Lane assists emerging artists by commissioning panels, exhibiting them and documenting their work in our permanent collection. May's also acts as a commissioning body for persons or businesses wishing to employ street artists for murals or other works. May's is a non-profit association that runs off donations from business and members of the public. (May's Lane What Where and How, *From the forward of the May's Lane 1st Cycle book (2nd ed) by Founder Tugi Balog*)

“May's Lane is unique not just because of the raw talent it attracts. It's a showpiece”(www.maylane.org.au) Milo is employed part time to managed the May's lane space for the owner of the framing business in the building. He is keen to support street artists and offers a once a month painting and exhibition event with a Friday evening opening. The 4 small and one large plywood panels that are painted on the walls are then taken down and kept for posterity. Photo and research documentation from the artists are gathered for future use in CV's and exhibition catalogues. Mays Lane has been managing this process for 2 years with artists visiting for all over Australia. An annual retrospective was held at Carriage works this year. They are keen to discuss possibilities for street art events, graffiti site tours and installation projects.

Under the Blue Moon festival

Is organized by the Gallery Serpentine on Enmore Road which makes and sells Gothic fashion. The owner received Marrickville Council funding to develop the Sydney Under the Blue Moon Festival during Marrickville Cultural Festival in 2007. The Event included music and performance, art in shop fronts along Enmore Road, tours of local street art and funeral parlors and costumed participants. Stephanie would like to talk about future possibilities and connections with *Walking the Street* events.

Carriageworks

CarriageWorks was developed by the NSW State Government through Arts NSW, the Eveleigh Rail Yards at Wilson Street has been transformed into a bold new centre committed to the nurturing, development and presentation of contemporary arts.

CarriageWorks offers an exciting addition to the cultural life of Sydney and its artists, providing an environment which pulses with a unique spirit of creativity and innovation. This is a new home for physical theatre, spoken word, music, dance, visual and hybrid arts. The multi-purpose centre will provide an accessible and revitalizing cultural focus where the local community can discover new connections.

CarriageWorks contains two large flexible theatre spaces (800 seats and 300 seats), a smaller space which will commence life as a gallery, a scenery construction workshop, exhibition spaces, offices, a bar and café. Performance Space is the first established arts company to call CarriageWorks home. All resident and visiting artists and companies will be able to create, rehearse and perform work entirely on site, in an atmosphere which encourages collaboration and the sharing of ideas. (www.carriageworks.com.au)

The Newtown Entertainment Precinct Project

is an exciting initiative from Marrickville Council and the Newtown Entertainment Precinct Association developed to support the arts and entertainment in the Precinct and includes:

The Newtown Precinct Guide - a monthly lift-out in the City Hub offering reviews, profiles, features and listings.

The Newtown Precinct Poster Bollard Project - 3 poster bollards have been installed in the Precinct located at Newtown Square, Cnr of Enmore and Stanmore Rd, and at St Peters Station, will act as gateways to the Newtown Entertainment Precinct.

Council and the Addison Road Centre recruited a Cultural Development Officer to implement the Newtown Arts Development Project- a project designed to support visual artists in the Precinct. The project ran an artist business development seminar series, and the inaugural Marrickville Open Studio Trail (MOST) in July 2005. MOST will again be happening in July 2008. This is another possible link to a future Walking the Street event including site maps and artists studio and gallery showings. (www.marrickvillecouncil.nsw.gov.au)

Newtown street art (from www.wikipedia.com)

Since at least the 1980s, the area around the historic inner [Sydney](#) suburb of [Newtown, NSW](#) -- including the suburbs of Newtown, [Enmore](#), [Erskineville](#),

[Camperdown](#) and [St Peters](#) -- has become well known for the many works of creative graffiti and "street art" that have been placed on local walls.

These works range across many styles and methods of execution. They include a number of visually striking large-scale murals, hand-painted political slogans, hand-painted figurative designs, spray-painted semi-abstract designs, and recent stylistic developments such as stencil art and poster graffiti (also known as "wheatpasting").

Notable "street art" styles and locations in the greater Newtown area include:

- the numerous murals facing onto King St and adjoining streets
- the growing collection of stencil art around the photographic studio in Gladstone St, near Newtown Railway Station
- the numerous stencils, slogans and murals in and around the pedestrian tunnel under the railway line, linking Bella St and Bedford St
- the numerous and varied graffiti works in the area between Enmore Rd and the railway line, including Gladstone St, the Wilford St industrial area, Wilford Lane, Phillip Lane and Thurnby Lane
- the wide variety of murals, stencils and graffiti slogans in and around Camperdown Memorial Rest Park
- the numerous striking works of wall art in the vicinity of St Peters Station and Applebee St, near Sydney Park

“Walking the Street 2003 was brilliant. It allowed me to meet other artists, get recognition for my artwork and most of all it created a stronger sense of community in the south end of King St. Newtown. I would have to say that council should not underestimate the power of art” “ Kristie Marcollini, artist 2003