



## Mobilising Rural Communities to Achieve Environmental Sustainability Using the Arts

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| Program Profile             |   |
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| <b>Program Description:</b> | <p>Three different community-based art and environment events were evaluated in New South Wales, Australia.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The first, <b>Nova-anglica: Web of our Endeavours</b>, consisted of a series of art events over a three week period in 1998 that addressed rural land degradation, dieback, tree decline, and celebration of environmental repair. There were 2,000 participants (including farmers, scientists, and government workers) and 5,000 audience members. The event occurred at the New England Regional Art Museum.</li> <li>2) The <b>Bungawalbin Wetlands Festival</b>, the second event, was a day-long arts festival organized in 2003 by a conservation organization that included a play, dance, and community sculpture focused on wetlands conservation. 20 people participated in the festival including artists, scientists, primary school students, and a children's group of local indigenous dancers. It had an audience size of 250 with most audience members being adult, rural landowners. The festival occurred at the Yarrungully Nature Reserve.</li> <li>3) The final event, <b>Plague and the Moonflower</b>, was a musical performance which highlighted the importance of nature and the impacts of global environmental degradation. It was performed once in 2002 and also in 2003 at Lazenby Hall (a concert hall) and the Woodford Folk Festival (an open air amphitheatre). There were 300 participants and 10,000 audience members. Participants included an adult choir, children's choir, orchestra, dancers, jugglers, indigenous dancers, actors and a support crew. Audience demographics are unknown.</li> </ol> |
| <b>Program Goals:</b>       | <p>The goals of each of the events were as follows:</p> <p>Nova-anglica:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To celebrate the efforts of farmers, community groups, government departments and individuals in restoring land and using agricultural conservation practices</li> </ul> <p>Bungawalbin:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To promote conservation of wetlands through a festival</li> </ul> <p><i>Plague and the Moonflower:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore ecological issues through music and performance</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Program Funding:</b>     | <p>Bungawalbin was funded by the Bungawalbin Landcare Group. It also received with a small grant from the New South Wales Arts Council.</p> <p>Nova-anglica received donations from several organizations as well as in-kind support.</p> <p><i>Plague and the Moonflower</i> was funded by ticket sales, performance fees, fundraising, donations, and in-kind contributions.</p>  |
| <b>Program Links:</b>       | <p><i>Plague and the Moonflower:</i> <a href="http://www.moonflower.org.au">www.moonflower.org.au</a></p> <p>Other program links are not available.</p>   |
| Evaluation Profile          |   |
| <b>Evaluation</b>           | The goal of the evaluation was to determine how these programs assisted in improving  |

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| <b>Goals &amp; Questions:</b> | <p>environmental behavior at the individual and community level. This was determined by asking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effectively did the program mobilize the community?</li> <li>• How effectively did the program foster empowerment?</li> <li>• How effectively did the program facilitate the transfer of knowledge?</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Evaluation Methods:</b>    | <p>Data collection was conducted by the paper’s author, David Curtis. Curtis was an external evaluator for Bungawalbin but internal for the two other events (having helped to organize both). In each event, he collected archival material (i.e. length of event) and numerical data (i.e. number of attendees) from the event’s organizers. Additional methods for each event are described as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nova-anglica</b> – Data was collected primarily from participant observations. The insights that emerged from these observations (primarily the need for more detailed responses from participants and the audience) were used to inform methods for the Bungawalbin Wetlands Festival.</li> <li>• <b>Bungawalbin Wetlands Festival</b> – Four participants and five audience members were interviewed after the festival to understand insights such as why they attended, what they liked best, what they learned, and how and if their attitudes changed. In addition, the evaluator recorded his observations of the event which were used to supplement data from the interviews.</li> <li>• <b>Plague and the Moonflower</b> – Since this performance occurred twice, it was also evaluated two times. Following the first performance in 2002, the evaluator conducted 18 semi-structures interviews and one focus group with 11 people. These methods were used to further refine questions for evaluating the 2003 performance. After the 2003 concert, 17 semi-structured interviews, 2 focus groups totaling 13 people, and surveys of 100 participants and 70 audience members were conducted. The evaluator’s observations were used to supplement qualitative data. Quantitative data from the 2003 survey was analyzed using inferential statistics.</li> </ul> <p>All qualitative data (interviews, focus groups, participant observations, etc.) were analyzed using content analysis with categorization of responses.</p> |
| <b>Instruments:</b>           | No instruments are available at this time.  |
| <b>How were results used?</b> | <p>The results of this evaluation have been presented at numerous conferences and talks and have helped inform the evaluation of other environmental theatre projects. Since the performances have not yet been repeated, the results have not been used to specifically improve the three programs discussed. However, the evaluation did help convince the author of <i>Plague and the Moonflower</i> to write another oratorio (<i>God’s Drawing Board</i>) for the community of Armidale. This performance also received a grant to commission the composer.</p>  |
| <b>Evaluation Cost:</b>       | <p>\$312,221 AUD (\$283,996 USD)<br/> This included the evaluator’s salary and travel over five years in addition to evaluation costs. [Operating costs=\$29,682 AUD (\$26,998 USD), Travel=\$50,891 (\$46,290 USD), Salaries=\$231,648 (\$210,707 USD)]</p>  |
| <b>Evaluation Insights:</b>   | <p><b>What worked well?</b><br/> Using multiple data collection techniques helped to accurately inform the results of each evaluation, particularly in the case of <i>Plague and the Moonflower</i> where interviews, focus groups, surveys, observations, numerical attendance, and photographs were all used as data collection methods. The quantitative measurements provided concrete numerical data. The qualitative data enriched these numbers by providing quotes and a deeper sense of people’s perceptions. While the other two events (Nova-anglica and Bungawalbin) were not evaluated with as many data collection tools, they were still evaluated using more than one data collection method which assisted in more accurately informing the results.</p> <p><b>What were important evaluation “lessons learned”?</b><br/> Since the three events occurred at different times, the evaluator was able to progressively improve his methods and data collection tools. For example, he used insights from observations of Nova-anglica to understand what types of questions to ask in focus groups evaluating the Bungawalbin Wetlands Festival. Each program’s evaluation helped to support the addition of methods based on insights from the previous one. This process of refining instruments also applied to <i>Plague and the Moonflower</i> since it was performed twice. During the first performance, the evaluator used responses from interviews with audience members to develop survey questions for the second performance. Being able to develop refined survey questions was especially important since this performance had such high</p>   |

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|   | <p>numbers of audience members and participants.</p> <p><b>What could have been done differently?</b><br/> While the data collected from the performances indicated that some participants and audience members intended to adopt environmentally responsible behaviors, the evaluation lacked a follow-up component to determine whether these behavior changes were durable. Given funding and resource limitations, a longitudinal evaluation was not possible. However, a longer-term evaluation could strengthen this evaluation's conclusions that the events positively impacted people's behaviors.</p> |
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