



MOUNT DRUITT 2019
Walk with us - making change together.

CHANGEFEST19 DIRECTORS REPORT

Pippa Bailey
January 2020

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Executive Summary

How much did we do?

ChangeFest is a national celebration of place based social change, led by local community groups, service providers, public servants and politicians, philanthropists, academics and other citizens. The first event, ChangeFest 18 was held in Logan in Queensland.

ChangeFest 19 was a four-day event held at Kimberwalli, a new centre for Indigenous Excellence on the site of the old Whalan High School in Mount Druitt, Western Sydney. The event comprised of three official festival days 20-22 November 2019, with a preparatory community day (day zero) on 19 November.

547 people were registered across the three-day event, supported by over 50 staff and volunteers.

In addition, 110 children from Willmot Public School and 15 traditional dancers from Shalvey College Campus gave performances. An estimated additional 55—70 people attended for the community day sessions.

The event prioritised First Nations voices and leadership at local and national levels.

ChangeFest is convened by four organisations leading place-based social change: Collaboration for Impact, Griffith University, Logan Together and Opportunity Child.

ChangeFest 19 attracted support from the Department of Social Services (Principal partner), Kimberwalli (venue partner), NRMA (IAG), University of Western Sydney, Department of Education, SEER Data & Analytics, Paul Ramsay Foundation, National Indigenous Australia Agency, Reichstein Foundation, Foundation of Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR), Dusseldorp Forum and Wyatt Foundation.

Support was also received from the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation, NSW Department of Community and Justice, Wentworth Community Housing and generous citizens.



The aim of ChangeFest is to host a National event that gathers a ‘field of practice’, shares learning and helps to advocate for the excellent work being achieved all over Australia.

These presentations and conversations celebrate work already undertaken, inspire people to persevere with work they are doing, generate shared understanding and develop new learning. ChangeFest as an experience offers new perspectives to consider how these ideas sit in a national landscape within the field advocating for place-based approaches.

Appointing a Director from outside the field expanded the scope and framing of ChangeFest 19, bringing new creative skills, networks and insights to the gathering.

ChangeFest 19 attracted enormous support from a range of existing and new partners to the table, including a range of financial backers for the core program and to support 103 citizen scholarships, so that community members could attend at no cost. In addition, Dusseldorp Forum supported a screening of *The Australian Dream* at Hoyts, Mount Druitt.

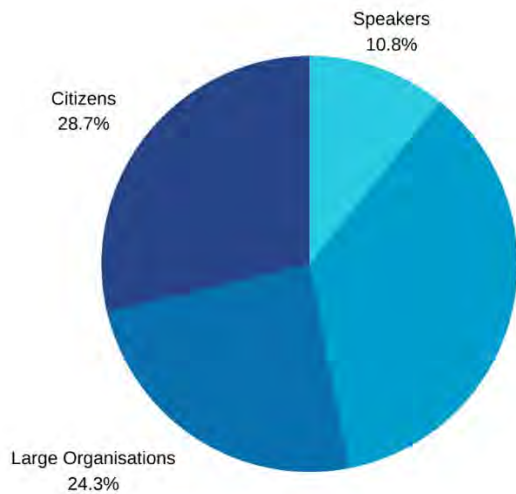
The event program featured local Mount Druitt and Western Sydney voices, prominent speakers from the place-based social change field and identified new territories for development at local, regional, state and national levels with some international perspectives.

[Prominent speakers](#) from outside the field helped to contextualise themes within the work and set agendas for both the local community and the national field.

“Our place based is our countries. Know the country. Know the fire stories. Know the water stories. That’s connecting to country”

John Davis (CEO of Stronger Smarter Institute)



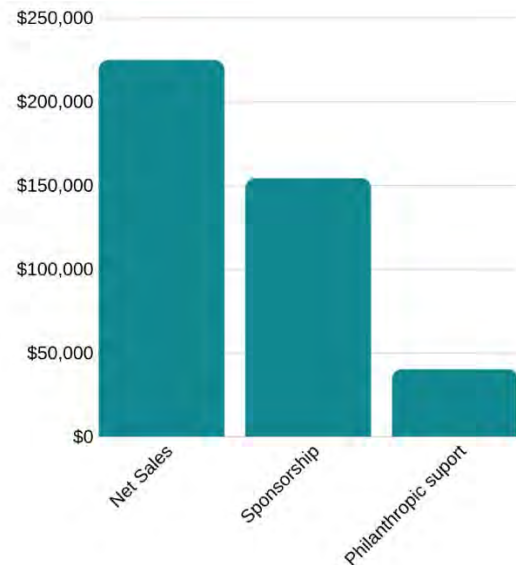


547 people attended ChangeFest19 with Community representatives from every state and territory

Funds raised = \$425 000

\$224,545 net sales
\$154,000 sponsorship
\$40,000 philanthropic support.

Over \$90 000 (20%) was spent locally, providing employment opportunities for local people and services.



“For me, part of the allure of ChangeFest is not just learning, but connecting to others in the field and taking time out of the depths of the work to think, reflect and be challenged. For practitioners on the ground, if we are only ever in the work we don’t have time for critical reflection and review”

ChangeFest 19 participant via the evaluation survey

How well did we do?

A well-managed multi-site event, led by professional director, Pippa Bailey and an independent producing team, adapted to local conditions and concerns. A well-developed flexible approach and reliable networks provided support and advice for the process and delivery.

The assembled gathering had a 'good vibe' with a lot of positive responses.

"the whole model of bringing such diverse people together and it being so grounded really impressed me and makes me want to do the same."

ChangeFest 19 participant survey

Bush Fire smoke & Evacuation

The event was disrupted by smoke from nearby bushfires.

Day Zero (19 Nov) – Community Day, proceeded as planned with low attendance.

Day 1 (20 Nov) proceeded as planned using outdoor spaces for sessions despite the smoke.

Day 2 (21 Nov) saw a huge leap in hazardous air particles and the decision was taken to evacuate during the plenary. The event reconvened at Novotel, Rooty Hill.

Day 3 (22 Nov) saw the event reconvened at Kimberwalli despite very poor air quality.

Air quality- Micrograms of particles (PM) per cubic metre of air

The nearest measurement was taken at St Marys

Good 0-33 PM	Very good 34-66 PM	Fair 67-99 PM	Poor 100-149PM	Very poor 156-199 PM	Hazardous 200+PM
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19 November 2019 – 169PM at 11am, highest in the region = 792PM

20 November 2019 - 67 PM at 7am, highest in the region = 444PM

21 November 2019 – 637 PM at 11am, highest in the region = 1306PM

22 November 2019 – 168 PM at 8am, highest in the region = 592PM

Source: <https://www.dpie.nsw.gov.au/air-quality>

The emergency response, led by Djarraba Fire and Emergency management services with DPLR production, was timely and the site was efficiently evacuated. An alternative venue was found at Novotel Rooty Hill without notice. Information was updated on the ChangeFest website and on the Facebook page. Inevitably the disruption meant some participants missed out and the program was interrupted. Several participants and speakers were unable to attend at all due to poor air quality.

Successes

- number of Indigenous participants and speakers
- the busyness of the Elders space
- the number of local participants
- the atmosphere at ChangeFest 19
- the outdoor setting - on country
- the caliber and range of speakers
- the number of people who volunteered their time and resources to make ChangeFest 19 happen
- the number of people who attended despite adverse environmental conditions
- the smooth evacuation and reconvening at Novotel on Thursday 21st November
- an increase in social media followers on Facebook & Twitter
- the verbal feedback during and after the event.

“Great example of Indigenous People’s voice being at the core, the centre of every part of an event not an afterthought, and that voice putting so much IN to the productivity and also hopefully getting a lot out.” ChangeFest 19 participant survey

Challenges

- local outreach to include community prior to the event
- communication and effective messaging across all platforms both before and during the event
- adequate briefings and support for speakers and presenters
- last minute confirmation of funding
- insufficient catering on day one
- managing participant expectations
- providing explanations about why this event was managed differently
- meeting environmental sustainability targets
- loss of program continuity and future planning due to the evacuation.

“Disappointment with some of the sessions – quality not as high as last year, and Michael McAfee and other experts under-utilised. A desire for more practical, hands-on sessions with others at the same point in the change cycle. Some felt that the panel sessions had too many people on them “less cramming of content”, “less overloading of panels”; and some expressed frustration that sessions ran over time.”

Lisa Ryan, evaluation survey

Is anyone better off?

Participants

ChangeFest 19 celebrated existing networks and brought new connections. These were enabled formally through the program and informally through the flow of sessions, breaks and associated local events. The evacuation meant that some people missed much of day 2. Those who stayed, united in adversity, taking up new opportunities to bond across the relocation process. Day 3, back at Kimberwalli, the program consolidated the need for the field to engage with the environmental challenges and Climate Action.

The handover from Mount Druitt to the Northern Territory was moving and reiterated the urgent need for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people to walk together.

Local Hosts

The ambition to host ChangeFest in Mount Druitt was to recognise and empower local community to build capacity. These aims were achieved. The team received a lot of positive feedback from visitors about how much ChangeFest 19 felt embedded in community. This was a testimony to the commitment of local hosts and the community.

@TheHive We have loved seeing elders come together from near and far. To connect, share, laugh & heal together



Venue partners

There were great learnings for Kimberwalli about how the newly purposed site works for large numbers of people. There was one toilet blockage but otherwise no major issues.

Reports from a range of Indigenous people indicated that the Elders space worked well as a beating heart for ChangeFest 19. ChangeFest brought together all the tenants on site at the old Whalan High School, led by Kimberwalli. This engenders good relations within the community.

Kimberwalli and Djarraba – Fire and Emergency Management have identified the need for a site wide evacuation and emergency response plan. ChangeFest 19 has been followed by other community focused events at Kimberwalli.

Conveners

Convening partners have expressed benefit to their organisations from investing in ChangeFest. The appreciation from participants has fueled a sense of achievement that builds on ChangeFest 18 and amplifies the Mount Druitt community context.

Local Legacy

Since ChangeFest has concluded there is anecdotal evidence of new initiatives in Mount Druitt.

- Drift Café was the first significant outing for this pop-up social enterprise, a successful feature of ChangeFest 19. There are plans to develop the project
- Just Reinvest NSW were able to have conversations with local people to help progress their work in Mount Druitt
- Awareness about the Climate Crisis started at ChangeFest 19 has peaked over the summer of bushfire disaster. Local Climate advocate Dr Kim Loo has been approached by JSS and Hope Street to help develop climate response strategies
- Partnerships with IAG and Western Sydney University raised awareness of their respective work in the area. Local community is reaching out to deepen these connections
- Follow-up events are being planned for Mount Druitt communities.

“Change moves at the speed of relationships. Relationships move at the speed of trust. Great to be at ChangeFest 19”

@FrRodBower via twitter



@marybethsheen What an emotional day at #ChangeFest 19. Aunties pathed the way for ppl like myself. Shared their wisdom and strength to keep me fighting, but remembering to take time to heal. I'll keep talking until people listen! I feel their pain, I feel their fury, I feel their resilience.

National Legacy

- New plans for action amongst conveners for future ChangeFest events and a national network of place-based change makers
- Place-based communities inspired to take learnings into their contexts including climate action
- An emerging idea for ChangeFest 'On the Road', as a series of small local events where communities host the ChangeFest team to partner in 2020. This will honour the importance of place in place-based work and create readiness for change
- The Northern Territory future hosts benefited from solid preparation through engagement in planning for ChangeFest 19, their leading role in the handover at ChangeFest 19 showed a readiness to lead. A process will be identified to gather lessons and start the planning process for ChangeFest in 2021 in the Northern Territory.

What will it take to put on future ChangeFest events?

- First Nations First - Continue to practice shared leadership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people at every level of organisation
- Greater focus on diversity so the three stories of Australia are fairly represented
- Climate Action and A Just Transition integrated into strategic and event planning
- Continue to disrupt expectations and innovate so that each event develops the field
#ChangeMeansChange
- Seek to attract a diverse range of convening partners with different agendas and emphasis in their work; Indigenous, local service, national service, community led, education and research, cultural organisations
- Plan for and provide adequate resources of time, money and personnel to ensure the quality and success of future ChangeFest events
- Local buy-in – the invitation to have ChangeFest deeply connected to the host community is intrinsic to its success
- Clear plans that draw out local character and approaches to shape the form and local purpose of the event
- Long term strategic planning so that rapid and deliberate action needed to deliver each event sits within a wider framework that is embedded in clear values to build the movement and make connection to other actors in systems change
- Balancing needs and perspectives of existing place-based initiatives with a widening and rapidly developing global systems change agenda.

ChangeFest 19 illustrated for me in a really practical way what a group of people with good will and shared values around justice, inclusion, collaboration and listening can accomplish in the face of real challenges.

Catherine Phillips, NT ChangeFest host team

Full Report

From learning to practice 2019 (How the past determined the plans for this event)

ChangeFest 18

The stories about what took place at ChangeFest 18 greatly informed the conversations and plans for ChangeFest 19. The 2018 event was reported to have lacked appropriate consultation with local Indigenous people in Logan resulting in local mob taking the lead at the ChangeFest 18 event and rewriting a pre-drafted ChangeFest statement to include the underlying principles of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. This learning was embedded into the event as the work took place live in session. The ChangeFest statement provides a framing for the mission of a growing movement.

Appointing a Director

Following ChangeFest 18, the decision was taken to bring professional event and programming experience into the planning by appointing a Director with dedicated work time to manage and deliver ChangeFest 19 in Mount Druitt.

Pippa Bailey was an external producer with an arts background and appointed in June 2019.



Objectives (as determined by the debrief report for ChangeFest 18)

A national conference on place based social change to:

- 1. To bring together 500 participants from the target audience sectors to attend this national event - the second of its kind.**

In practice: 547 people registered for ChangeFest 19 with participants from every state and territory.

- 2. An inclusive event, it will attract people from a diversity of roles and will be the start of a longer-term plan.**

In practice: The ChangeFest 19 program reflected a diverse range of speakers. Diversity was a central consideration in the planning process.

3. **Participants will share their learning's and learn from the experience of international, national and local speakers from across the different audience sectors. New ideas will be shared, connections made and success stories will be presented via case studies and interactive event elements.**

In practice: The program reflected a consciously inclusive approach with opportunity for communities to share formally through the Pecha Kucha sessions. A decision was taken to only invite international speakers who were First Nations and people of colour to ChangeFest 19, with the understanding that these are the communities within Australia that need to be strengthened by international connections to recognise this leadership.

4. **To help participants know where they're at on the change scale and provide them with knowledge to move to the next phase.**

In practice: This was achieved informally through the program and by promoting the new online tool - Platform C to help communities identify their progress in a change cycle.

5. **The event will conclude with a summit - aiming to inspire a social development plan founded on collective impact to alleviate disadvantage in Australia.**

In practice: The program featured an afternoon of shared work; 'What is getting in the way of change?' to identify future action. This work was missed due to the evacuation. As a result there was no progress for an ongoing development plan.

"Thank you for the opportunity, it was amazing to be a part of ChangeFest"

Robyn Hardge Scott, Mount Druitt Social Revolutionary, The Press Conference



Power (governance/ leadership)

Conveners

The conveners for ChangeFest are a diverse range of organisations all playing a significant role in the development and delivery of place based social change in Australia. ChangeFest 19 was convened by the same organisations that convened ChangeFest 18.

They are:

Collaboration for Impact

'We are hands-on capacity builders. We walk alongside collaborative change processes – coaching, advising, developing skills, enabling cultural change, and facilitating learning and rapid adaptation. We also roll up our sleeves and provide practical help when needed. This ranges from: community mobilisation, empowerment, equity and leadership, facilitation and co-design to enable cross-sector collaborations; through to data analysis, measurement and evaluation.'

Collaboration for Impact took the management lead on ChangeFest 19. Co-Director Kerry Graham, with Moira Were, held the responsibility for event risk and liabilities, influencing, fundraising, communication and supporting/mentoring the ChangeFest Director.

Griffith University

'We believe in the potential for all people to be remarkable. It's a word awarded to those who make a difference, those who capture opportunity and challenge themselves along the way. At Griffith University, our vision is to engage in remarkable scholarship and research that contributes significantly to society.'

Pro Vice Chancellor Linda O'Brien was responsible for connections to academic research.

Logan Together

'Kids who are doing well by age 8 have the best chance to be healthy, happy and resilient adults. The years 0-3 are particularly critical. Right now, about 70% of Logan kids are thriving across all aspects of wellbeing – we want that number to be higher. We want to help 5,000 more kids in Logan thrive by 2025 – and partners in the Logan Together movement are making sure that happens. The difference we make for our kids now will have a big payoff in the future.'

Logan Together took the management lead on ChangeFest 18 and shared knowledge and lessons with the 2019 hosts. Matthew Cox led engagement with politicians and programming related to public policy, Victoria Parker helped direct communications.

Opportunity Child

'Opportunity Child works with a growing number of communities across Australia that are focused on improving early childhood outcomes and intentionally working together to create the conditions that children need to thrive. We provide practical support to 'backbone' teams and community structures. We use our social innovation hub to help communities find solutions to complex issues. We use our helicopter view across Australia to take what is learned in and by communities, to advocate with 'One Voice' to drive systems change.'

Dianne Jackson, CEO of Opportunity Child provided strategic partnership support and advocacy. Joyce Teo provided administrative and communications support.



"ChangeFest has been transformative in showing how people can come together, not just across sectors and institutions, but across the whole of society to collaborate on community building. It embodies what we are trying to achieve in Logan and shows how devolved power and local engagement can work practically and powerfully."

Matthew Cox, Executive Director – Logan Together



Process

The conveners met regularly throughout the planning and delivery of ChangeFest. They worked dynamically with Director Pippa Bailey, made decisions together when required, provided guidance and staff support for specific areas of delivery for ChangeFest 19.

Interim Leadership Group

This group emerged from ChangeFest 18 as a collection of interested people who had participated in ChangeFest and had an ongoing interest in harnessing the perceived and potential impact of ChangeFest to grow a movement for place based social and systems change.

Over the course of 2019 this group met to explore purpose as a leadership forum for the ongoing development and production of ChangeFest events as a mechanism through which to grow a movement of place-based change makers.

Local Hosts

During ChangeFest 18 there was an EOI process for expressions of interest in hosting ChangeFest 19. Three organisations from Mount Druitt came together to apply to ChangeFest 19 to be presented in Mount Druitt.

They were:

Jesuit Social Service – Monique Perusco

Since 1977, Jesuit Social Services has grown to deliver an array of social change programs across Australia. Their unique approach to social justice, keeps action going where the need is greatest and working to solve the toughest social problems.

The Hive - Danielle Roderick

'33% of those children are considered 'developmentally vulnerable' when they start school. Together, we are working on ideas to ensure all children start school well.'

Baabayn Aboriginal Corporation

We, five Aboriginal Elders, founded Baabayn because we believe that by providing a place of healing, where Aboriginal people connect with culture and have a strong sense of belonging they will be able to recover from past traumas, regain their self-esteem and realise their potential. Our main purpose: Is to support our people in healing from the past and building towards the future. We work as a group to support individuals; we seek to build our people's pride in who they are, their sense of belonging, and their sense of connectedness to community and culture.

Future Hosts - Northern Territory

The Northern Territory also submitted an EOI after ChangeFest 18 to host a future ChangeFest event. The Northern Territory was identified for the next event following Mount Druitt. Leonie Patterson and Catherine Phillips joined the co-design process and regularly attended meetings to plan ChangeFest 19. The aim was to give them insight into the process as authorised by the NT team bid led by Randall Cook, Department of Education.

The process of engagement of the next hosts through an EOI process successfully ensured local ownership and responsibility. This innovation will continue to be used.

In 2020 there is likely to be an EOI process for ChangeFest beyond 2021.

Venue Partner – Kimberwalli

Local hosts insisted that ChangeFest 19 take place in Mount Druitt, which is without a conference venue, Kimberwalli was subsequently proposed as a suitable site.

Kimberwalli is a new centre of excellence at the old Whalan High School site, being managed by NSW Aboriginal Affairs. The site is owned by the Department of Education and shared between Kimberwalli, the Henry Parkes Educational Resource Centre, PCYC and the Whalan Community Action Group.

The Kimberwalli project was still undergoing final development and offered a rare opportunity for the ChangeFest team to work dynamically and help the Kimberwalli team explore how big events could work on their site. The venue was offered free of charge which made a significant contribution to the budget. As part of the planning, Pippa and the event team made decisions about supplies that would benefit Kimberwalli eg. Installing a permanent 3-phase power outlet in the power box and purchasing glassware.

Huge thanks to the Kimberwalli staff team with Carlo Svagelli, Sarah Hamilton, Justin Davison, Renee Thomson, Leanne Mulligan, led by Director Lil Gordon.



This was seen locally at every stage of planning and in the range of communities who applied to present their work in the Pecha Kucha sessions in the ChangeFest program.

These were:

- Ceduna, SA
- Claymore Neighbourhood Action Board, NSW
- Connected Beginnings Galiwiniku, NT
- Connected Beginnings Jordan River, Tas
- Go Goldfields, Victoria
- Hands Up Mallee, Victoria
- Hope Street, NSW (local)
- Juniper, WA
- Logan Together, Qld
- Mid Murray Family Connections, SA
- MidCoast4Kids, NSW
- Sanderson Alliance, NT
- Southern Moreton Bay Islands Project, Qld
- Tennant Creek, NT
- Tomorrow Today Education Foundation, Vic
- Constitution Hill Huddle, NSW.

ChangeFest19 was a 'living lab' for what it means to enact the ChangeFest18 statement in place-based work. While there is much to improve and deepen, it modelled what is possible when First Nations people and other Australians - united in purpose - can do create together.

For CFI the learning component is critical. We know many initiatives learn how to adopt a systems change (not just a programmatic or coordination) approach through doing, struggling, reflecting and re-setting. The same applies with learning how to share power with First Nations people and organisations. We need to accelerate and support this learning in our shared quest for greater equity and inclusion. ChangeFest is a significant moment and platform for that accelerated learning.

Kerry Graham, Co-Founder & Director, Collaboration for Impact

Sponsors and supporters – powerful friends who enabled the gathering

Principal Sponsor – Department of Social Services (also supported ChangeFest 18)

Venue Partner – Kimberwalli (new relationship with NSW Aboriginal Affairs)

Other supporters

NRMA (IAG)

University of Western Sydney (new relationship likely to have local legacy)

Department of Education

SEER Data & Analytics (new relationship to promote their services to communities)

Paul Ramsay Foundation (existing relationship with increased support for ChangeFest 19)

National Indigenous Australia Agency (new relationship for ChangeFest 19)

Citizen Scholarship supporters

Reichstein Foundation

Foundation of Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR)

Wyatt Foundation, (new relationship supporting South Australian participants)

Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation

NSW Department of Community and Justice (new relationship supporting local citizens)

Wentworth Community Housing (new relationship supporting local citizens)

7 generous citizens paid forward an additional registration for a Mount Drutt resident

Screening of The Australian Dream

Dusseldorp Forum (established relationship)



Lessons

The fundraising aspect of producing the event took significant time and with more lead-time supporters could have been more actively engaged with and integrated into planning

Local stakeholders

Western Sydney Services Delivery Reform Group (WSSDR) was engaged in the co-design process. Initially skeptical about the impact of ChangeFest 19, members of the group engaged intermittently across the planning process and provided support through speaker contacts and citizen scholarship support for six people.

Blacktown City Council were approached in July and indicated that the timescale was too short for them to meaningfully engage with or fund ChangeFest 19. The Blacktown Arts team was incredibly helpful and a number of staff supported the Aboriginal Elders and attended ChangeFest. Local hosts felt unable to apply pressure because they are reliant on good relations with council. The Mayor, Tony Bleasdale OAM and a member of the community team were in attendance for the Opening event. Unfortunately the smoke and subsequent evacuation meant that a speaker from Blacktown Arts Centre was unable to participate and the head of community services was also unable to attend.

‘This is a great event for Mount Druitt and I congratulate the community for inviting it here.’

Tony Bleasdale, Mayor of Blacktown

Politics, politicians and the public service

To the outsiders eye, place-based social change seems to be gaining traction through engagement with key politicians and personnel in the public service. ChangeFest 18 attracted a number of key high profile politicians. ChangeFest 19 failed to attract these key personnel partly due to local ambivalence and tension between different parties about the benefits vs. inevitable compromises involved in hosting prominent politicians and their agendas.

Unfortunately NSW Parliament was sitting so no NSW MP’s were available. Anthony Albanese deputised to the local member Ed Husic. His office would not commit, despite repeated attempts and he did not attend. The range of approaches and priorities to current politics in place-based social change seems to fall roughly into two camps; those who wish to devolve power and money away from Government to leading backbone organisations and those who wish to democratise power and work towards systemic change.

This second approach aims to reframe politics to embedded social values, priorities in terms of learning and change making so that people and the planet are considered in every decision at every level. The tension between these two approaches also applies to engaging with prominent politicians and other key figures.

These became an ongoing questions;

- How do we engage with current power structures without reinforcing them?
- How do we enact change?



Principles

The ChangeFest 18 Statement provided some principles to guide the process:

- **First Nations First. Ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People are empowered and enabled to be at the forefront of all system change design and delivery**
- **Result in Aboriginal-led and Torres Strait Islander-led local control of services and programs**

In practice: There were no Aboriginal people in the convening group. Baabayan Aboriginal Corporation led the process at a local level but did not engage with the white led governance meetings. Leonie Paterson from the ChangeFest NT team regularly attended meetings. They were also involved in the design process. ChangeFest 19 was hosted by a First Nations led venue, following advice from Baabayan Aboriginal Corporation and employed several First Nations led services including Kallico catering and Djarraba Fire and Safety Management.

Experienced facilitators Kristal Kinsela and Mark Yettica Paulson were invited to MC the event and the [program](#) featured First Nations people in every panel and conversation. Strategic attention is needed to ensure that First Nations are privileged and co-directing plans as ambition develops for future events.

- **Support and strengthen the treaty process in States and Territories**

In practice: This was not an overt focus but obliquely woven through the ChangeFest program and featured in the First Nations First plenary conversation on Thursday 21 November led by Carla McGrath, featuring Mick Gooda, Dean Parkin, Cassandra Ebsworth and John Hunter. It was a well-attended inspiring session, interrupted by evacuation.

- **Shifting the balance of power and responsibility to communities.**
- **Shared goals and solutions are tailored to local needs.**
- **Improved whole-of-life outcomes through strong foundations in the early years of life.**

In practice: Shifting the balance of power and tailoring the event to community needs were realised at ChangeFest 19 through local host engagement. The focus on early years was a clear focus and young people were prioritised in the program, although engagement with local schools did not have significant results.

Discussion was initiated about whether there is need to widen the early years focus to include all vulnerable people and how to recognise the specific needs for each group as well as the general issues for vulnerable people in the wider community

- **Change the system. The rules, processes, incentives and behaviours to deliver the impact Australians want where we live; including removing barriers and integrating silos of governance, funding and effort to deliver resources to communities more efficiently and effectively.**

In practice: Changing the system is a relatively new conversation for some working in the place-based change making field and has a uniquely different focus to the place-based social change work that has been developed to operate within the existing system. There is also a language creep and ‘systems change’ is used without significant change to practices or approach.

In addition the following principles were added for ChangeFest 19:

Guiding Principles for Spend decisions

- Support local economy and do no harm to local economy
- Have an affirmative purchasing approach by procuring where possible from social enterprises/ social business/ Bcorps with values alignment
- Aim for triple bottom line – economic, social, environmental benefits
- Where 2 or more options on the table, price point will not be the single determinant
- Budget control is with the conveners
- Conveners set approval limits for Director e.g. spends over \$5000 to come to conveners.

In practice: Where possible local services were employed representing 20% of the budget. Three local caterers were employed to supply lunches, 2 of the 3 food trucks were local, booked for the on-site event dinner (cancelled due to the evacuation), and local artists were employed to deliver documentation, reflections and entertainment. Values led social enterprises were employed: eg Humanitix & Oz Harvest.

“ChangeFest 19 reaffirmed my belief that Australia’s future relies on a fundamental shift in the way individuals, families, cultures, communities, organisations, and governments come together to create and implement solutions and my commitment to contributing to that shift”

Randall Cook, NT host team

Guiding Principles for investment decisions

- No naming rights for ChangeFest by any sponsor
- Differentiate between public funds, corporate and philanthropic contributions
- Capture and make visible volunteer and pro bono hours as a contribution to ChangeFest (in progress for the report)
- Conveners calculate their time and investment into ChangeFest and report back
- ChangeFest 19 deliberately sought to include a wide range of speakers from multicultural backgrounds to honour the richly diverse context of Western Sydney.

In practice: These investment principles were explored playfully, although still a work-in-progress for delivery given the short timeframe with limited resources to produce ChangeFest 19.

Event Management

The ChangeFest 19 team, led by Director/ Producer Pippa Bailey was employed by Collaboration for Impact. CFI assumed responsibility for producing the event with Kerry Graham and Moira Were managing the process internally.

The expectation from conveners was that an event company would be employed but Pippa was clear that the unique offer of this event needed to be managed 'in house' so that something unique could be enshrined with the values and principles. In an ideal world, and for future events, the role of Director would be shared.

Associate Producers

In August, Pippa identified the need for two local associate producer roles to ensure the team was embedded in the local area, one First Nations and one from a diverse background.

Dee Dogan

Dee is a local filmmaker and proud member of the Kurdish community. She was recommended through a colleague at Blacktown Arts Centre. Dee assumed responsibility for sourcing and managing local services, particularly catering and cleaning. She was an invaluable asset to the event.



William Trewlynn

William Trewlynn is a local young Indigenous leader who, with Renee Thomson, established the Western Sydney Young Indigenous Leaders Network. William contacted the CF19 team, keen to be involved with ChangeFest. He joined Baabayn Aboriginal network meetings and the July co-design meeting for ChangeFest 19 and was an obvious choice to work on the delivery team. However due to family illness Will wasn't able to take up the role. Given the limited time, a decision was taken not to replace him.

Alex Hammett – Lemon and Lime Business Solutions managed registrations, website and contributed to the marketing team.

Sandra Christie – Figure Flow was appointed to provide book keeping services, managed by **Heidi Jasprizza**, Operations and Finance Manager at Collaboration for Impact.

In addition:

- **Joyce Teo** from Opportunity Child provided invaluable administrative support to marketing and liaising with communities for the Pecha Kucha sessions,
- **Kiri Peterson** from Collaboration for Impact provided administrative support
- **Wendy Nash** managed festival speakers and general support during the event.

DPLR (Formerly Technical Event Services)

DPLR combine your creative vision with technical production expertise to create unforgettable events and experiences.

Tim Barker was the DPLR team member appointed to deliver technical production management for ChangeFest 19. The work included overseeing all aspects of transforming the site, providing stages, all technical infrastructure and support, health and safety. This aspect of the event was seamlessly executed under challenging circumstances.

Djarraba Fire & Emergency Management

Djarraba is the culmination of over 20 years of experience led by Kevin Whitehouse and reflects the changing emergency management environment with a wider focus on all aspects of the industry and not just the delivery of first aid related courses. With the current inward focus of industry into all aspects of emergency planning and management we believe it is more important than ever for industry to have a holistic approach to all aspects their emergency management.

Djarraba were employed by Kimberwalli to provide a site side safety assessment and evacuation plan. This evolved into the Djarraba team appointed as safety officers for ChangeFest 19.

St John's Ambulance was employed to provide First Aid. These services were required for heat and smoke related health issues. There were no emergency incidents at ChangeFest 19.

Co-designing the event

Two day long co-design sessions helped generate the scaffolding for the program.

Program development Step 1

The first co-design meeting in Mount Druitt on Wednesday 12th June drew out a range of specific programmatic threads and people identified programming agendas for each thread.

Each 'Thread Team' met and shared their ideas with Pippa by 12 July

- Mt Druitt way - Monique (JSS), Cassandra (Baabayn), Carlo (Kimberwalli) & Jenny (Just Reinvest)
- Koori & Murriculture - Jamie (WSSDR), John & Faith (Logan), Baabayn & John Hunter
- Arts & entertainment program – Vic (Logan), Pippa, Jamie (WSSDR), Monique (JSS) & Cassandra (Baabayn)
- Communities learning from each other - Kerry (CFI), Di (OC), Sarah & Di (WSSDR) Dani (The Hive)
- Citizen leadership - Logan Together, OppChild, CFI, Baabayn, Warril Yari-Go
- Role of Government - Jenny (Just Reinvest) Di (OC) Sarah & Bindi (WSSDR) & Monique (JSS)
- Policy (our ask of Gov.) - Matthew (Logan Together), Moira (CFI), Di (OC), John (Logan) & Bindi (WSSDR)
- Building the national movement – Di & John (representing the Interim Leadership Group)
- Research & Evaluation – Linda (Griffith), Sue West (MCRI) & Cath Capland (WSU)
- Philanthropy – Seri (Ten20), IAG and Dusseldorp Forum.

Program development Step 2

A second co-design meeting at Kimberwalli, 30 July 2019

The following key Mount Druitt agenda items were raised;

- 1st Peoples 1st/ Indigenous led
- Do it in the Druitt – prioritise the local
- Celebrate a place of resistance
- Celebrate a place of strength
- Community led
- The Mount Druitt offer?
- This REALLY is different
- Inclusive & reflect cultural diversity
- Balancing and engaging with local tensions
- Name the place
- The sacred (woven across the event)
- Celebrate and learn from experience in place-based work
- Keep it real / back it with experience
- You (visitors, power) listen to us (Mount Druitt community)
- Event organisers are accountable to community.

Program development Step 3

A draft program was created from this process and the conveners and local hosts met to agree the program on Monday 2nd September.

A question I heard voiced in many ways during these last three days has been, “why the hell are we here?” several times today I heard the answer from diverse voices ranging from elders to sponsors – “we are building the heart to drive change!”

Bruce McKenzie, Listener in Residence, ChangeFest 19

Lead up to the event

Once the program structure was finally agreed upon, there was a scramble to confirm speakers and ensure the different parts of the program were flowing together. Convenors took responsibility for helping to consolidate different sessions. This process continued until deep into event planning which impacted on communication to participants and promoting the speakers.

Local provision

Hotels and transport

Hosting the event in Mount Druitt meant that there were various challenges for visiting participants when travelling to and staying in Mount Druitt.

The lack of accommodation in Mount Druitt itself meant including a range of suppliers from other areas. The most economical option was the Western Sydney University Village in Kingswood. The ChangeFest team drew up a list of accommodation options with some negotiated discounts made available via the ChangeFest website.

Transport was also an issue. Car parking on site was limited to Elders and people with a disability, although there was plenty of street parking. Buses were provided from Mount Druitt station at the beginning and end of each day. This service was not utilised as much as the organising team hoped it would be with more people choosing to drive or catch taxis and Ubers.

In hindsight not enough support was offered to vulnerable community members travelling from afar given the lack of easy access to transport and accommodation.

On the ground at Kimberwalli

The Kimberwalli site was welcoming and peaceful. The access to country had a profound impact on the gathering, particularly for Indigenous participants. The flexibility of the site and of staff, worked dynamically with the ChangeFest team

A dedicated production office created a nerve centre for the event where ChangeFest team, including DPLR and Djarraba staff were located. This enabled a good flow of communication for technical support and on site health and safety.



Catering

In order to provide opportunities for local people, three local catering companies were employed to deliver the food for ChangeFest 19.

- *Kallico Catering- Indigenous catering service (Day 0 and Day 2)*
- *If It Wasn't for this Coffee working with Common Groundz (Day 1 and Day 3)*

Local companies learnt to provide for an event of this scale and complexity. We all learnt that allocations per serve were not adequate. Morning tea was catered for in-house with four local food service staff employed from the Mount Druitt TAFE to manage food preparation and service across the day.

There was insufficient food on Day zero and for lunch on Day 1 despite a last- minute increase to the numbers. Catering for the range of dietary requirements proved challenging at scale.

Separate local food trucks were employed to cater for the Thursday evening event. This event was cancelled due to the bushfire smoke.

Volunteers

The Hive managed the registration process for volunteers and JSS Managed volunteers supported by staff from their Melbourne Office. Coordination prior to the event was conducted through regular meetings via Zoom. Managing expectations was challenging, as JSS events staff were unused to working in the Mount Druitt context.

Volunteer issues during the event included:

- Adequate briefings for volunteers
- Signage and way finding
- Maintaining adequate breaks for volunteers
- Food as catering was insufficient, additional food was ordered in.

Childcare

A room was established for looking after small children with two childcare workers and a range of toys and games to suit ages 0-5. Only three participants identified a need for childcare, more than 12 kids and parents used this service

Specific food for the children and carers was not provided. This was an issue during the event.

The children's room, adjacent to the Kimberwalli presentation space, added a lovely energy to the event. Parent participants were able to have their children with them and also have somewhere to leave them if they needed to attend a specific session.

Event Management Lessons

- A greater focus was needed on managing expectations for a dynamic site-specific event embedded in community with a small staff team
- Attention to staff support to look after everyone's needs
- Remaining dynamic and flexible in the face of an emergency
- Prioritising requests and complaints need to be factored into planning
- Specific separate catering for volunteers, childcare workers and production staff.

Resources

Relationships

The conveners and their networks provided a great deal of support to the process particularly for fundraising and sourcing speakers.

The local hosts with both organisational and community connections provided a great deal of support. The Hive, JSS and Baabayan community connections were primarily concentrated in Whalan, Willmot, Letheridge Park and Emerton as distinct suburbs in the 2770 postcode that covers Mount Druitt.

The Director was able to open new doors and bring some unlikely partners together. With such a tight time frame this was a rather ad hoc process. Other Mount Druitt services in Bidwell engaged other community groups through Learning Ground, Bidwell Uniting. Connecting with Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Association (MECA), Mount Druitt TAFE and other organisations helped to generate greater interest and participation in the event.

The lack of lead-time meant that local schools and hard to reach citizens were not meaningfully engaged.

Time

This resource was in short supply.

Collaborative leadership and co-design take time. From the first co-design meeting in June to delivery in December, the process seemed rushed for locals, particularly the Baabayan Directors. The different cultures in different organisations and participants meant that the convening partners generally shared an understanding based on shared networks, ongoing agenda and resulting action. The local hosts and particularly Baabayan are not considered key players in the 'field'.

As a result, the process of developing this event often felt as too slow for the conveners and too fast for the local hosts, who were trying to manage the demands of ChangeFest in addition to their usually heavy day-to-day workloads. The experimental nature of the project meant that ideas were constantly being generated and scoped, shared by a decentralised work force of paid and unpaid staff. Sometimes there was duplication of effort or tasks were missed.

The Director's time was in high demand. She kept a tight rein on the schedule and budget to ensure that principles were being met and confirmed funds were not overspent. This wasn't necessarily the most time efficient but ensured a positive result.

How money flows – investment and spend

- Budgets were based on the ChangeFest 18 accounts. The budgets were redrawn several times.
- Setting registration prices

Registration prices were also based on registrations in 2018. Prices ranged from \$120 - \$1200 + GST. The three-day passes cost \$272 for a citizen, \$720 for a small organisation and \$1200 for a large org. This was a thorny issue in the local community and amongst small organisations in the sector. Even the cost of a three-day citizen pass was perceived to be too high.

Reliance on 'charity' from philanthropists to provide citizen places was perceived to be insulting to some community members and they challenged the core values of the event. There needs to be ongoing discussions about how to cover costs, encourage those who can afford to pay to do so while empowering those who cannot afford to pay in the process.

Fundraising

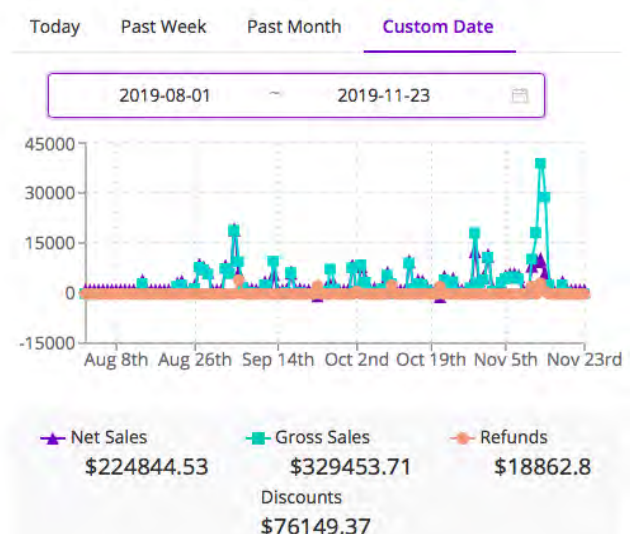
The convening partners utilised their connections to identify and reach out to potential funders. The Director provided support for this work through pitch documents, meetings, issuing contracts and also identified potential funding avenues locally.

Collaboration for Impact do not have DGR status so the Paul Ramsay funds were paid to Opportunity Child and the Department of Social Services had an existing relationship with Logan Together so paid sponsorship money for ChangeFest to them.

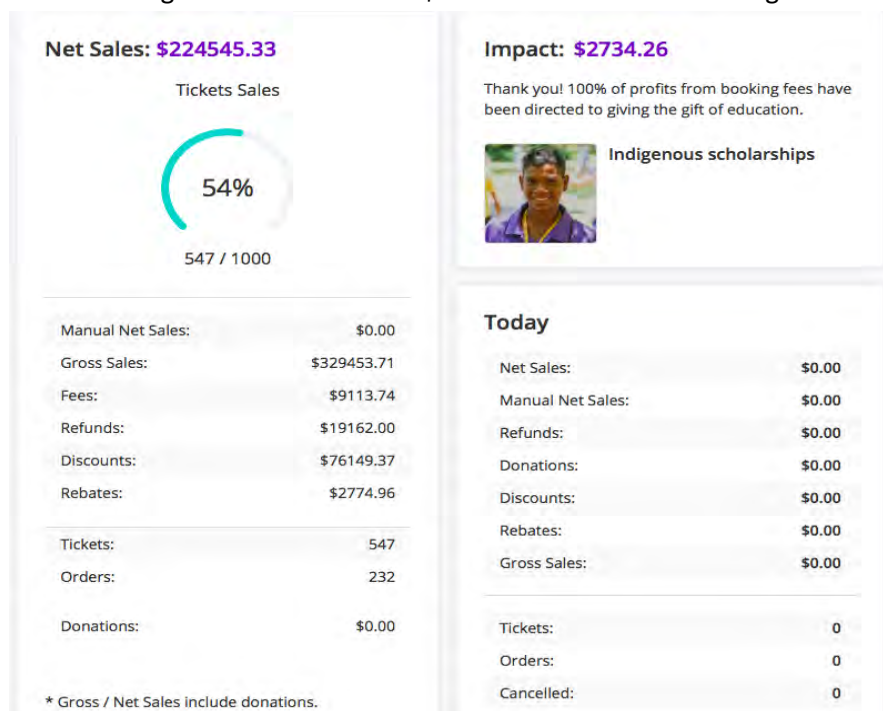
30% of sponsorship was confirmed in the final 6 weeks.

Registrations were steady with a spike early in November.

Historical Sales Chart



Almost 50% of funding was confirmed in the 6 weeks leading into ChangeFest 19. Careful budgeting and some refunds following the evacuation and cancellation of catering on Thursday evening meant that a surplus was recorded. Working with Humanitix saw \$2734.26 contributed to Indigenous Scholarships.



Breakdown of registrations

Citizen 3 Day Pass	\$14361.60	134	150
Early Bird Citizen	\$1940.40	7	50
Citizen Pay it Forward 3 Day Pass	\$3291.20	11	15
Early Bird Small Organisation	\$9581.00	13	50
Small Organisation	\$61215.00	133	200
Early Bird Large Organisation	\$43890.00	42	50
Large Organisation 3 Day Pass	\$51240.00	39	45
Citizen Day Pass - 20.11.2019 ONLY	\$616.00	5	10
Citizen Day Pass - 21.11.2019 ONLY	\$0.00	0	10
Citizen Day Pass - 22.11.2019 ONLY	\$0.00	0	2
Small Org Day Pass - 20.11.2019 ONLY	\$4207.50	16	20
Small Org Day Pass - 21.11.2019 ONLY	\$3327.50	11	20
Small Org Day Pass - 22.11.2019 ONLY	\$1512.50	5	20
Large Org Day Pass - 20.11.2019 ONLY	\$10395.00	21	25
Large Org Day Pass - 21.11.2019 ONLY	\$12375.00	25	30
Large Org Day Pass - 22.11.2019 ONLY	\$2970.00	6	7
Extended small organisation early bird	\$14253.58	20	20
Speaker	\$0.00	59	80

Citizen scholarships

This was a new initiative for fundraising and the target of 100 scholarships was met. 103 citizens were offered scholarship places. Late confirmation of funding meant that decisions were delayed which adversely impacted recipients and resulted in increased cost of flights and accommodation.

A short lead time and ad hoc processes with a need for balance of support across communities in different states and territories meant that financial management was messy and at times it was difficult to estimate projected spend.

“...Just wanted to reiterate my deep appreciation for allowing me to participate in ChangeFest 2019. I also wanted to signal that if I can support the work of ChangeFest 2020, I am ready willing and able.”

Michael McAfee, Policy Link

Communication and engagement

Approach

A communications and marketing team with was established early and met every two weeks until mid-October, then weekly until November 10 and then daily in the week before and during ChangeFest 19.

Messaging

The communications team agreed to a messaging plan. A newsletter would be emailed regularly to the shared networks (over 5000 recipients) and social media utilised to build momentum, particularly to drive registration.

Connections & networks

All of the convening partners had lists from their networks that had been used in 2018 and were refreshed for ChangeFest 19 and were combined as the core email list. Other contacts were added in an ad hoc manner.

Website - www.changefest.com.au

The website was developed with designer Heath Dundas from Redsuit, who also host the site. The website and Facebook were the key tools to enable engagement and in particular driven through the program by highlighting, panelists, communities being showcased and through the themes of the program.

Alex Hammett was able to update the website, add pages and improve functionality during the lead up to ChangeFest and as the days unfolded.

Influencing and participation

Pre-event - communities were offered an opportunity to present their work through two Pecha Kucha sessions. There was an EOI process and presenters were selected based on their location and where they are up to in the change cycle. These communities were invited to share short videos during the lead up to the event and these were shared on social media.

Each week and in the immediate few days prior to the event registrants received email communications to support and enable their participation. This had limited success where there were multiple people on the one registration and where those holding tickets did not communicate to their team. Also at the local level, community members were not always accessing information available and passing onto their networks.

Communities working with place-based practices were encouraged to make short videos to help promote the event via social media and introduce these practitioners to others in the field. This worked well and helped to create a momentum and drive registration

Communication during the event – Lessons

The Kimberwalli site posed some major challenges for communicating with the whole gathering. The plenary outdoor stage was effective for reaching most of the participants but did not reach everyone, particularly the Elders. Also the amplified sound did not reach the communal spaces which impacted on site-wide communication.

The program created some challenges because the whole gathering was scheduled to meet in the outdoor plenary space early each day but there was not an easy way to communicate with participants across the site. We were very fortunate that the evacuation happened when almost everyone was assembled in one place.

A WhatsApp group helped internal communication across the event.

Social Media and direct mail

Use of Facebook as a mechanism to communicate to participants was successful for some registrants but not for others. Additionally, the whole database of registrants was communicated with via their registration process (mail chimp database). This had mixed results as group bookings often only had the one email address of the organiser.

Some communities/ citizen members engaged well with Facebook while organisational registrants seemed to access the general email communications.

Following ChangeFest 19 there has been some communication via Mailchimp and less than 5% of participants took part in the ChangeFest survey.

Public Relations

There was a reticence amongst the communications team to utilise mainstream media or employ a PR agent. This was largely about controlling the messages about ChangeFest, particularly as Mount Druitt suffers from a lot of negative media coverage. However as the event drew closer and speakers were confirmed it was clear that there may be opportunity to utilise them to build positive messages about ChangeFest and Mount Druitt. In October Elly Baxter PR was appointed to support the event.

ABC1
The Drum
22 November 2019
<https://tvview.abc.net.au/show/drum/series/0/video/NC1907H210500>



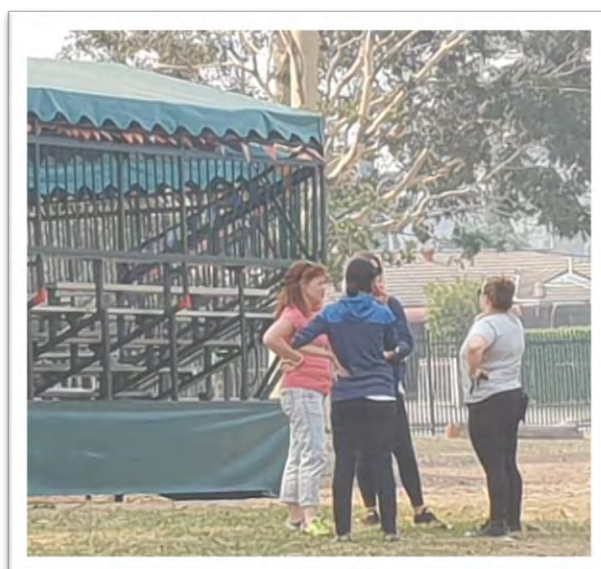
- ChangeFest and the communities that host each year have the opportunity to capitalise on media interest in future ChangeFest events. There are a number of steps that would ensure that the media are not only interested in the event but that the interest translates into media coverage that raises awareness of ChangeFest and builds the profile of the people and ideas involved.
- Engage the services of a PR professional early in the process of finalising the program, giving them access to discussions and thinking that informs the line-up and events. This would give the publicist a greater understanding the event and give them better opportunity to identify stories the media will be interested in. At least three months out from the event would be ideal.
- Discuss media and publicity opportunities with partner organisations to identify potential stories within their communities.
- Discuss media and publicity opportunities with guest speakers to ascertain their comfort level with media interviews and identify stories they would be excited to contribute to.
- Look for opportunities to program a talk or event that would deliver a strong news angle, for example, release of new research or announcing the results of a high-profile campaign.
- Allocate some budget to working with Indigenous-led media like IndigenousX.

Communicating through the evacuation

The fires around Sydney started to seriously impact the Kimberwalli site the weekend prior to ChangeFest. The unprecedented weather conditions meant that health and well-being were detrimentally affected throughout the ChangeFest event. Anecdotally we understand that many people did not attend. In hindsight there was sufficient disruption to start scenario planning before the event but the enormous challenge of hosting the event on this site meant that did not happen.

By Thursday the wind had changed direction and the smoke was noticeably thicker. Kevin Whitehouse from Djarraba made the recommendation to evacuate. Tim Barker and Pippa Bailey agreed and started an evacuation process. Transport NSW buses were called and showed up within 7 minutes, bussing people away from the Kimberwalli site. Participants with their own vehicles moved off site immediately. It was relatively smooth, all things considered.

As soon as the evacuation process started, Pippa called the Novotel conference centre in Rooty Hill. They had a room for 60 people. As more and more people arrived at the Novotel, staff there found a space that could hold 350, agreed for us to use the planned catering and ChangeFest was reconvened.



A data driven field

A lot of the success of place-based change work is based in the data, which is not currently designed with or easily accessed by communities. There is an ongoing discussion about data sovereignty that was touched on at ChangeFest 19 and needs greater attention in the field.

National place-based networks rely on technical communication to stay connected with little attention paid to the technology required to engage on specific platforms. Disadvantaged communities are not always able to keep up with technological developments. Technology has an age bias towards the young and can also show up a gender bias. There is a strong need to continue exploring the use and role of technology in this field of work.

Outreach

New relationships were required to deliver this event in each place. We know it takes time to build relationships and trust, and these are also enhanced by endorsement of peers and recommendations. In a wider social context, local communities are being fragmented by technology as people identify through special interest and engage in global conversations. This is another balancing act: virtual to real, local to global. Pippa brought arts networks and environmental networks into the ChangeFest event. There are a growing number of people engaged in systems change and it would be prudent to build relationships with other sectors and networks, advocating for a place-based approach and increase the opportunity to learn from others.

Building the movement

Ambitions to build a movement of place-based social change is embedded in the success stories evident in the work and celebrated during ChangeFest. The values and principles underlying this ambition are echoed in growing demand for greater equity in Australian Society. Following ChangeFest 19 there are plans to grow the number of communities engaging in place-based work and look beyond existing networks for new alignments and partners.

Communication Lessons

- Future communication plans need to consider two specifically different audiences, the existing field of communities and practitioners engaged in place-based work and all those who are not familiar with this world of work
- It would have been beneficial to have better promoted the Twitter handle and Instagram account prior to and during the event
- The role of mainstream media and PR needs exploring with a strategic approach and a longer lead time for developing appropriate relationships
- Sponsors and supporters could be better utilised to help promote ChangeFest with dedicated staff time and a more developed plan.

The event schedule

Day Zero – Community Day

The community program for Day Zero was developed last. Due to concerns from community about price of registrations for the ChangeFest program and tension in the local area, it was decided that the community day would be offered free to local people.

Marketing to the local community relied on word of mouth and social media. Anecdotally we understand that a door-drop to the houses immediately surrounding Kimberwalli would have attracted participants curious about the new centre. Organisers and local hosts had no idea how many people would attend. The turnout was pleasing (approximately 70 people), not registered for ChangeFest 19 and was probably reduced due to the smoke.

Several key organisations also gathered their networks on Day zero, including Opportunity Child Connects, the Department of Education’s Connecting Communities and the Justice Reinvestment Network.

The ChangeFest 19 team agreed that a soft opening enabled everyone to iron out on-site production issues.

“We learnt the value of day 0 for priming participation in ChangeFest - groups of communities were able to come together in their own network to specify their context for learning, working together and connecting after they return home.”

Di Jackson, CEO, Opportunity Child

Day 1 - Wednesday 20 November

The Welcome to Country was a wonderfully generous part of the proceedings. Uncle Greg, supported by John Hunter, offered a smoking ceremony and most of the people assembled took part. This set a good tone for the proceedings.

The program ran fairly smoothly and to time. There were some catering concerns and extra food was sourced for afternoon tea. The Hive and JSS ordered separate food for volunteers, who were not getting fed, due to short supply of catering.

The Astronomy Evening at Willmot Community Hub was a delightful engagement opportunity hosted by the Willmot community. Unfortunately, the turnout was relatively small (approximately 35% of ChangeFest participants).

Day 2 - Thursday 21st November

The morning plenary was moved indoors due to smoke. Mark Yettica Paulson and Kristal Kinsela kept participants calmly informed as proceedings and changes were made.

The Indigenous panels for the plenary sessions were well attended and received.

The plenary session was interrupted by the need to evacuate the site. This decision was not taken lightly. Buses arrived within 7 minutes and the evacuation process was swift and effective.

As soon as the decision was taken and the evacuation was underway, Pippa called the Novotel in Rooty Hill and found a room for 60 people. The decision was taken to reconvene there and word was spread. More than 120 people arrived at Novotel and the POWER session was convened. The room was too small and Novotel staff were quick to recognise the problem and find a much bigger room and allowed ChangeFest to bring in our caterers. This defied their regulations but was a common sense decision. By lunchtime more than 250 people had joined ChangeFest in the new setting.

A decision was taken by CFI facilitators not to proceed with the planned program. An alternative plan was swiftly made and implemented.

After an exhaustive search to try and find an alternative venue for the evening entertainment, this event was cancelled. Paul Ramsay Foundation agreed to underwrite dinner for participants at the Rooty Hill RSL.



Day 3 - Friday 22 November

The ChangeFest gathering reconvened at Kimberwalli. The thread of the program had been lost in the evacuation, however the plenary session was about Climate Change and was highly relevant to the evacuation and local conditions.

The program continued as planned and the missed Pecha Kucha community presentations were scheduled for lunchtime. There was not time or capacity to 'pick up' any of the other missed sessions from Day 2.

The closing ceremony brought together Elders from Logan, Mount Druitt and the NT where ChangeFest 2021 will take place.

Elements across the whole event

Stalls

The stalls helped create a festival atmosphere and provided information. Stalls were taken up by: Opportunity Child, Collaboration for Impact, Griffith University, Western Sydney University, Baabayn Mums and Bubs Art Group, Whalan Community Action craft group, NRMA, Wentworth Housing.

Seer Analysis and Research

A room was provided for SEER opposite the Elders space. The plan was to help direct participants to this space for more detailed engagement in their data tools. The popularity of the Elders space meant that non-Indigenous people kept a respectful distance and did not engage in

Creative elements

- Interactive Installation series of whiteboards with design by Rachel Dight from Swivel Creative
- Renaming Captain Cook Drive - a project from the local community
- Council of the Future - A UK initiative, interpreted and led by Jessica Montalvo
- Listeners in Residence - A role taken up by Council of the Future, local poet Paolo Fanous and Bruce McKenzie
- Embodying Platform C – cancelled due to smoke
- Send a message home – not followed through at the event

Lessons

- Creativity needed to be embedded across the program with more interactivity in sessions
- The interactive elements were only lightly engaged with, partly due to the evacuation
- Community ownership of programming, especially at the Astronomy evening was a vital component that could be developed.

Impact

Sustainability and Climate Action

The Director wrote a Sustainability Action Plan in the lead up to ChangeFest 19. This document stated strong intention to integrate sustainability into the event and the producing team made decisions every day to mitigate waste, encourage use of public transport, limit the creation of marketing materials, source materials and services locally, etc. Compared with ChangeFest 18, there was a perceptive difference in this approach but little capacity to measure the impact. The evacuation, due to hazardous smoke from bushfires, was the most impactful disruption to highlight the need for Climate Action. There is great need for the convening organisations, stakeholders and communities to address this issue as central to systems change, honouring Indigenous land management practices and respect for nature as a key outcome of ChangeFest 19. This will help ensure the vision is embedded in future events.

'As organisers in positions of power we recognise our privilege and accept that it is our duty to take exceptional lengths to address the environmental crisis, to mitigate our impact locally and, globally, to communicate about it effectively while seeking to challenge and change behaviour that is perpetuating environmental devastation. This is a vital and non-negotiable part of systems change. Through demonstrating best practice, we hope to influence uptake of sustainable practices by others and to share our learning's.' ChangeFest sustainability vision, October 2019.

Who was left out?

The Mount Druitt community is divided and there were reports of tensions within the Aboriginal community and between the Aboriginal community and Pacific Islander communities. Despite concerted efforts by Baabayn to include other Aboriginal organisations and some attempts by Pippa to build relationships with Pacific Island locals, this was not successful and required more time. This raised questions about whether this community development was within the scope of the event and needs some attention moving forward.

In the weeks leading to ChangeFest, a local Indigenous leader from another Mount Druitt Aboriginal organisation challenged Pippa about the event. She had been invited to the regular Baabayn meetings. There is an ongoing ambition to find ways for organisations that have been encouraged by funding structures to be competitive to work together.

What was left behind? Legacy pieces?

Drift Coffee Cart and the Indigenous Astronomy evening were both hugely successful. The Wilmot School community reported engagement of kids who would usually refuse to participate. Invisible boundaries were tested and there is hope for greater connection between unlikely local partners. Strangers met, stories were shared and the local community continues to fight for recognition and more effective services.

Transferable skills – many community members took advantage of this rare opportunity to work and volunteer at a big event. Opportunities to lead, host and build relationships, skills learned are transferable and can help people take up other opportunities.

The ongoing projects who engaged with ChangeFest, such as Funpark with a coalition of local organisations and Sharing a New Story through the Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Association are connected for another event in Mount Druitt in April.

The evacuation has reframed formerly polarised local conversations about the Climate Emergency and inspired some local activism.

“ChangeFest was a unique event. The darkness was present, as was the hope.”

Anna Huenenke, artist

What next for ChangeFest

ChangeFest on the Road - building the systems change movement through a series of small events in different communities.

ChangeFest 21 – NT - these conversations will be picked up in February 2020 to negotiate timescales and planning.

The main thing I saw which is the heart of Change Fest was all these people from different parts of the country doing challenging cutting edge and at times lonely work sitting in the shade of gum trees talking and sharing. Magic!

Teya Dusseldorp

Directors Reflections and Recommendations

Taking up the role of Director and producing this event has been a career highlight.

The commitment, generosity and trust of the convening partner organisations, local hosts and their extensive communities and networks enabled the event to be delivered within the time and resources available. Managing the process has been messy and imperfect. It also created a profoundly impactful and transformational event. I have learnt an enormous amount and am humbled by the experience.

First Nations First

This vital ambition needs further work to be integrated into ChangeFest at all levels. Lack of Indigenous engagement in the day-to-day planning meant the 'walking together' theme was often interpreted through a white lens. This felt uncomfortable. How to develop this aspect needs to be addressed for future ChangeFest activity, ChangeFest 21 and all strategic planning, particularly at the governance level.

Greater Cultural Diversity

As I have said repeatedly throughout the process, the black (Indigenous) and white conversations need to diversify with the understanding that dominant white Australian culture excludes many other voices and perspectives. For ChangeFest 19 this was achieved during the program and staffing for the event but rarely showed up in planning meetings. Conveners supported this direction but the lack of diversity in the convening meetings hugely impacted the manner of governance and the shape of the event. The discussion at ChangeFest 19 about colonial power and how that is continually enacted could be a catalyst for further development of diverse representation in systems change.

The urgent need to engage with Climate Action

This report is being crafted while wildfires are still burning after a summer of devastating bushfires. ChangeFest was seriously disrupted by the smoke haze and evacuation. There is urgent need for systems change that addresses climate action. Embracing this emergency will have significant implications for the place-based social change field and future ChangeFest events. I suggest prioritising these conversations to inform strategic development immediately. A Place-based focus aligns with many environmental activists' view of future social development as radically local. Disadvantaged communities are likely to find transition and adaptation processes easier than their wealthier counterparts so there is huge opportunity to see significant systems change through this focus.

Another important consideration is how to justify and mitigate the enormous carbon footprint created by events like ChangeFest. This event plays its part in the global crisis and must be reimagined and mitigated as part of ongoing strategic development. Following ChangeFest 18, ChangeFest 19 was a significant step

forward in this regard but organisers need to be wary of justifying their activity which stops them from planning for radical change. Shared experience is vitally important, and we must plan for these important events to be less frequent, shared virtually and ultimately, carbon neutral.

Greater focus on Collaboration and Learning

Here I am echoing a catchcry heard throughout the process of shaping ChangeFest 19. The same collaborative processes that steered ChangeFest 19 program could be more deeply embedded in the event and employed to determine next steps. For future events it would be more constructive to plan the debrief and ongoing local processes to ensure meaningful legacy. Learning would be enhanced through designing a significantly participatory session.

Advocacy for more place specificity in place-based change to help build the movement

My overwhelming impression after working in Mount Druitt and engaging in the field of place-based change is that there are blanket approaches and models that are not considerate of place. This includes specific conditions and issues for communities in city and suburban contexts that are very different from regional and remote communities. With aims to build a movement and increase participation in this way of working, it may be useful to identify the particular characteristics (including natural environment), challenges and approaches in place.

The ongoing need for culture change to enable systems change

Related to the previous point; many of the challenges of harnessing the exciting proposition of ChangeFest means exploring different cultures that exist within the field. This is partly about the cultures of different people, different organisational cultures and the cultures that are assumed through particular processes and tools. ChangeFest, seeking to break the conference mould for this type of event, and allowing other influences to shape the program, requires great creative innovation that amplifies the message of change. To do this, customs, rituals, attitudes and behaviours need to be unpacked and consciously enacted. There are many more opportunities to develop new approaches to enrich the field with creative practice that lead to cultural and systems change. I hope there are future opportunities to put these ideas into practice.

Strategic development and long-term funding

A longer lead-time until ChangeFest 2021 offers an opportunity to plan strategically and fundraise for longer term funding (3-5 years). This would enable at least one dedicated staff member to maintain consistency of approach and implement strategic planning. Part of this planning is identifying new constituencies and partnership opportunities that will continue to share the place-based approach and evolve practices.

Budget surplus

There is likely to be a significant budget surplus from ChangeFest 19. The Mount Druitt community must benefit from this surplus as the evacuation meant many locals went home and completely lost the thread of the event as they did not benefit from the reconvening at Novotel. Local projects such as The Council of the Future and Renaming Captain Cook Drive were not given sufficient attention and would benefit from additional support.

Hosting another event in 2020 or partnering with a planned event could see missed sessions from ChangeFest 19 reconvened to continue to support the Mount Druitt community to develop their place-based change practices and empower community members.

Budget surplus could also be dedicated to developing strategic planning processes, ongoing activities and the development of an appropriate governance model. I am keen to be engaged in this process and believe continuity through my involvement would be beneficial to the project's long term success.

Thanks to all for an incredible ride.

Pippa Bailey,
28th January 2020