

Skills for Creative Events SA June 2010 – April 2012 Executive summary, May 2012

We are The Festival State; our festivals, cultural venues and events create a vibrant and energetic atmosphere, generating excitement! Primary Goal, SA Strategic Plan



A search at *southaustralia.com* will result in almost 300 events occurring across the state in the next twelve months. These events provide significant financial, tourism, employment and cultural benefits. Our major events and festivals are both growing and happening more frequently – they are a key component of our landscape, among the best in the world and a significant economic contributor. This is recognised by the government in the SA Strategic Plan:

Target 4:4: Cultural Engagement – arts activities

increase the number of attendances at selected arts activities by 40% by 2014.

- The 2010-11 target of 5,075,603 was surpassed with total attendance of 8,628,843
- In 2011, Adelaide Fringe hit a record high achieving more than 330,000 ticket sales with 762 shows. It showcased more than 400 South Australian artists whilst also drawing hundreds of performers from all over the world
- The State Government is providing additional funding to the Adelaide Festival Corporation bringing the total to over \$ 8 million per festival.

It is clear that an increase in arts events demands an increase in the size and capability of the workforce. During Service Skills SA consultations with the creative sector, event organisers highlighted ongoing problems in sourcing, skilling and maintaining contact with the creative and technical people required to run these events. These problems are exacerbated by the generally short time frames of employment and the regional location of many events.

The Skills for Creative Events SA program funded by the SA Works Industry Partnership Program addressed the primary skills shortage, which was identified as having an event-ready crew. The program was made up of three training intensives. Each intensive was aligned with the Adelaide events season and with the increased cultural activity and infrastructure generated by the Regional Centre of Culture in Goolwa. The three intensives provided training for sixty-seven individuals to diversify their skills base to help fill gaps in the creative events sector and increased individual employment prospects. Training programs were individually tailored so the number of units undertaken varied.

Intensives oo1 and oo2 trained 51 participants over five weeks, with 47 completing between one and twelve units of competency (92% completion rate) and 41 participants had positive employment outcomes (80% employment outcome).

As part of the three intensives thirteen Aboriginal participants were trained for between two and three weeks, eleven completed between one and eight units (76% completion rate) and eight participants had positive employment outcomes (61% employment outcome).

The regionally based intensive trained sixteen participants over two weeks, all completed between one and eight units (100% completion rate) and fifteen participants had positive employment outcomes (88% employment outcome).

This project clearly filled a need, was highly valued by employers and provided the skills to enable participants to gain increased employment. The project has outstanding training completion rates (89%) and employment outcomes (86%). The mentoring and coaching strategy employed played a significant role in this. The Industry Skills Boards in the Northern Territory and Western Australia have both asked for details on the project because of similar issues within their regions and they see the Skills for Creative Events project as a leading initiative.

Innovation and Business Services Australia (IBSA) are now looking at including a festival and events skillset in the entertainment training package based on the training program SSSA designed and delivered. This skillset will be a pathway to further qualification for those that want it.

For each training opportunity demand significantly outstripped supply, and there is strong evidence that this program is highly valued by participants, employers, and the sector as a whole. SSSA continues to receive enquiries from people wishing to undertake this training. However simply making funding available to RTOs will not achieved the desired outcomes. A critical component is an organisation with strong workforce development facilitation and management capability. The mentoring and coaching strategy we employed played a significant part in achieving the high rates of training completion and employment outcomes.

We have established an engaged, powerful and active network that could be utilised to increase the number of South Australians undertaking work in the creative industries, and ensure there is appropriate training available for those who wish to strengthen their careers. This industry network is asking SSSA to work with the government to turn the learning and outcomes from this project into an annual training and workforce development program for the creative events sector. SSSA believes that there are opportunities to achieve this within a flexible interpretation of Skills for All and Skills in the Workplace.

“From my perspective, we never had such an abundance of engaged and appropriately certified crew. We found that we weren’t experiencing the same crewing dilemmas as previous years such as filling two shifts of twenty people for the Fringe club build with the appropriate mix of skills (forklift drivers, riggers, boom lift operators etc.). Dave McLean (our senior production coordinator) and myself commented that both of us had the tickets & accreditations that this group of workers had acquired during the intensive but that for us it had taken twenty years! Organisations, even large ones seem reticent to commit resources to training casual/seasonal event staff the consequence of which is that the core competence of the industry as a whole is diminished.

I do believe that the event industry in SA as well as the intensives participants saw Service Skills SA’s initiative for what it was (and embraced it)...an incredible opportunity for the participants and a boon to the employers!”

Hugh Covill, Production Manager, Adelaide Fringe Festival