



COURTHOUSE YOUTH ARTS CENTRE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2009– 2011

VISION

A unique and exciting hub for young people of the Geelong region that offers access to artistic experiences of the highest calibre.

MISSION

To deliver the best experience, skills, people, equipment and space for young artists in Geelong region to realise and share their dreams.

VALUES

The underlying principles of the way in which the staff and Board of the Courthouse Youth Arts Centre work together are:

Innovation and Excellence

The Courthouse offers quality experiences in all disciplines of the arts at all levels of ability in a safe drug and alcohol free environment. We acknowledge the diversity of creative innovative thought and strive to be a leader in the provision of youth arts in Australia through the development of an innovative program of activities.

Energy and Experimentation

The Courthouse is a dynamic centre for young people to experience the arts, and for those who want to develop a career offers opportunities as a stepping stone toward professional experience and employment. The Courthouse is a place for young people to experiment – we embrace all ideas, no matter how ‘out there’.

Access and Community

We respect the right of young people in this region to have access to quality artistic experiences regardless of ability or socio-economic background. Their needs and voices are key in the way that we develop our programs. The Courthouse recognises its place within the Community it works in and strives to create good partnerships with other organisations that will enhance the artistic experience for the young people of Geelong.

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre – Strategic Plan 2009-2011

GOALS

1. To articulate a clearly defined artistic program that offers opportunities for young and emerging artists in the Geelong region.
2. To ensure that all organisational operations contribute to the ongoing growth of the Company
3. To increase the number of young people participating in Courthouse activities
4. To be recognised as a leading provider of regional arts experiences for young people in Victoria and Australia
5. To develop a facility that will clearly support the development of a thriving youth arts culture now and into the future.

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre – Strategic Plan 2009-2011

SUMMARY

COURTHOUSE YOUTH ARTS CENTRE – A NEW BEGINNING

The next three years will see the development of the Courthouse Youth Arts Centre into an extraordinary resource for the young people of the Geelong region. By reinventing the direction of the Centre and firmly placing the focus of the organisation on the empowerment and development of young people through artistic exploration, the Courthouse looks forward to its future with renewed vigour.

The development of a three year strategic plan will assist the Board of Management and Staff of the Courthouse Youth Arts Centre to:

ensure young people can continue to **explore, participate in and experience** a wide variety of art forms in exciting and new ways

ensure the **organisational operations** of the company are in a strong position to allow us to effectively fulfil our vision

clearly **articulate** to our audiences and participants our role and function in a way that attracts more young people to our centre,

provide **leadership and advocacy** for arts initiatives developed by and for young people within the region, the state and the country

focus on **improvements** to the built environment that will allow us to undertake exciting and innovative programs for young people

Our aspirations

By 2011 Courthouse Arts aims to make itself a leader in the provision of arts experiences for young people that will be recognised in Australia as a leader in its field.

It will be seen as the cornerstone of a thriving cultural industry in the Geelong region: supporting the development of young artists and providing the resources for them to create and show their work.

The Courthouse will be seen as the place to come to see exciting and challenging new work. It will be a hub for the development of sustainable employment opportunities for young artists.

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre – Strategic Plan 2009-2011

BACKGROUND

The Courthouse is part of an artistic community that recognises the importance of artistic experience in the personal and cultural growth of young people, and the contribution that these people make to the whole community both now and into the future.

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre was established 12 years ago and is located in the old Courthouse building on the corner of Gheringhap and Little Malop Streets, Geelong. This Centre has been funded by the City of Greater Geelong, Arts Victoria, the Australia Council for the Arts, the Department of Planning and Community Development as well as several other Philanthropic organisations to provide opportunities for young people to develop and participate in performing arts activities under the supervision of experienced professionals. This has enabled thousands of young people between the ages of 12 and 25 to experience music, dance, theatre, visual art within a safe and supportive environment at the Courthouse Youth Arts Centre or at other venues around Geelong.

The Centre has delivered many successful projects in the past, including Tech Heads, the course for theatre technicians, and the Equinox Committee, responsible for the continued success of the FReeZA program. Activities throughout the Courthouse history have covered artforms such as theatre, music, visual art, dance, filmmaking and backstage skills. In 2007, there were 510 participants in Courthouse activities that were seen by an audience of 9550.

In 2001 the ABS Census recorded a youth population of approximately 36,000 aged between 12-25 years in the municipality. The 2006 census indicates that the population of the city of Greater Geelong has increased by 1.24% per annum since 2001, and the Surfcoast has population has increased by 2.01% per annum, Specific figures regarding the 12-25 year age group in the 2006 census have yet to be released, but using these figures we can assume that there are now over 38,000 people between the ages of 12 and 25 in the city. The Courthouse Youth Arts Centre sees that the next three years are crucial to develop an exciting and vibrant centre for youth arts in the centre of Geelong that will capture the excitement of and increasing number of young people in the area, and that will grow to meet the needs of an expanding artistic community in the area.

A change of key staff and Board members in 2006/2007 was the catalyst for the beginning of change and a development of a new direction for the Centre. Through a process of consultation with major stakeholders, an assessment of recent activity has reinvigorated the organisation into developing programs that provide a breadth of appeal and designed to increase the numbers of young people attending the organisation.

The first stage of our business development was the revitalisation of the Board of Management. This ongoing process has resulted in a thorough analysis of the skills needed for an effective Board, combined with the recruitment of enthusiastic and experienced leaders in the fields of arts, law, business, education, and the local community. The Board has been active in reviewing and creating new policy for the organisation and ensuring all governance procedures are in place.

The next step for the organisation is to clearly put into place and articulate a new strategic direction for the Courthouse which will clearly establish an exciting and

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre – Strategic Plan 2009-2011

vibrant program that develops a thriving culture of young artists making work in the heart of the city.

INTRODUCTION

A Change In The Way We Operate

This strategic plan is one of three initiatives that the Board of Management has focused on in 2007 and 2008. Early in 2008, after a process of consultation, a new organisational structure was approved by the Board. For the first time in the history of the company, an Artistic Director has been given full control of the artistic development and strategy for the Courthouse. Working alongside the General Manager as a co-CEO, a new emphasis has been placed on the importance of the artistic product driving the ongoing development of the organisation.

The other issues include: a review of the organisational structure and internal/external reporting arrangements and in consultation with COGG, and an external audit of operations of the Centre which is currently in progress. The outcomes of these activities will be confirmed in 2008. This has occurred concurrently with Courthouse participating in master planning for the cultural precinct along with the Geelong Gallery, Geelong Performing Arts Centre and Regional Library, an initiative undertaken by Major Projects Victoria. The Courthouse Building has been funded \$6.5 million for refurbishment as the first stage of the development of the Cultural Precinct.

The next stage of the Board development process will include the recruitment of the advice of young people to guide staff and better work with the Board of Management on the provision and implementation of the artistic program. A young people's consultation group is in the process of being formed and will actively work with the Artistic Director and the Board of Management, allowing direct access to the views and needs of young people in the area that will be an indispensable aid to the strategic planning of the organisation.

It is intended that the strategic plan be outcome focused and that it be strongly linked to the annual operational plan and used by the Board of Management as a governance tool. The strategic plan will be reviewed formally on an annual basis and be monitored regularly. Further additions to the plan will be addressed by the Executive when opportunities/partnerships arise, that are based on sound business and artistic principles with direct benefit to young people only.

A Revitalised Organisation

The organisation has developed stronger ties with major stakeholders throughout 2007 and 2008, placing strong roots for future growth. These include:

1. The application to Arts Victoria and the Australia Council for triennial funding which will allow for a stronger position in the ongoing planning of a three year artistic program
2. A complete service review with the City of Greater Geelong that will provide a better understanding of the importance of the service within the city and an argument for ongoing and sustainable funding into the future.

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre – Strategic Plan 2009-2011

3. Participation in the Cultural Precinct Leadership group and the master planning process that has resulted in \$6.5 million for the refurbishment of the Courthouse Building.
4. Closer ties with schools in the region that will raise awareness and increase participation by young people in the Geelong region.

It will be imperative to continue to build the confidence of young people in the Courthouse as a central focus for youth arts in the region. The challenge for the coming years will be to attract more young people into the precinct and make the Courthouse a focal point for artistic activity. The development of a three year artistic program, with very clear objectives for each year and a logical progression of activity from one year to the next that will encourage participation and ongoing skills development for the participants is the cornerstone of the organisation and the driving force behind the future growth of the company.

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre – Strategic Plan 2009-2011

APPROACH

The following provides an outline of the approach to the development of a strategic plan. It is anticipated that a broader consultative framework will be developed (with our constituents) in 2009 and beyond and a wider variety of reference material sourced to support the key themes identified within our strategic plan.

Since 2007 there has been a considerable amount of work undertaken to redefine and develop the identity of the Courthouse and establish a direction for the future. This has included consultation with major stakeholders – including young people, staff, the Board, finding bodies and the local community.

Much of this consultative work was undertaken with consultant Alex Haynes, after which the information was amalgamated into a briefing paper which identified the key strategies for the future of the Courthouse. The agreed strategies from the Board planning day have been used in the creation of this strategic plan.

From this work the key issues that were identified were as follows

- Create an exciting, dynamic and innovative arts program for young people in the region
- Review and implement policies and procedures for the organisation
- Refresh the brand and identity of the organisation
- Explore opportunities to engage young people
- Develop strategies to increase sponsorship and fundraising in general
- Refurbish the building as a resource for the future
- Increase membership and participation across all activities
- Redesign organisational staff structure in light of the new direction for the company

THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Toward creating the Cornerstone of a Thriving Cultural Industry in Geelong

In the next three years, the Courthouse Youth Arts Centre will work to make itself a leader in the provision of arts experiences for young people that will be recognised in Australia as a leader in its field. It will be seen as the cornerstone of a thriving cultural industry in the Geelong region: supporting the development of young artists and providing the resources for them to create and show their work. It will assist young and emerging artists who want to make a career in the arts to develop the skills that will enable them to work sustainably within the industry without having to go to Melbourne to do so. The Courthouse will be seen as the place to come to see exciting and challenging new work. It will be a hub for the development of sustainable employment opportunities for young artists.

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre will create a brand that clearly articulates its purpose and works successfully at attracting young people to its activities. Its artistic activity will be of the highest calibre and it will work to ensure that artists of the highest quality share their skills with young artists. It will work toward the creation of a venue that will showcase youth arts in a vibrant and innovative way. The Courthouse will be the cornerstone of Geelong's artistic precinct – developing young artists, contributing to a growing and increasingly vibrant arts scene in this

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre – Strategic Plan 2009-2011

regional city, while developing arts audiences for the future that will ensure the long term viability of a thriving arts culture.

The Courthouse will continue to review its business practice to ensure the long term survival of the company. It will work to expand fundraising opportunities that will enable it to expand its operations.

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre – Strategic Plan 2009-2011

3 YR GOALS (2009-2011)

I. To articulate a clearly defined artistic program that offers opportunities for young and emerging artists in the Geelong region.

Strategies	Key Activities		
	2009	2010	2011
Produce a three year production cycle with clear ladder of opportunity for young people to participate and grow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Satellite Productions • Introduce Mentorship productions • Introduce Artistic Residencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate Touring Exhibition Program • Initiate Curated Exhibitions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour work of artists • Tour Production within and interstate
Ensure projects are innovative, high quality and relevant for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate Youth Programming Committee • Develop system of comprehensive evaluation of participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Programming Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Programming Committee
Benchmark activity against other youth arts centres to ensure quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meeting of youth arts network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 2010
Develop a register of artists for use in Courthouse activity reflecting a range of skill sets and the ability to work with young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information on artists with other youth arts companies • Ask other companies for recommended artists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 2010

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre – Strategic Plan 2009-2011

2. To ensure that all organisational operations contribute to the ongoing growth of the Company

Strategies	Key Activities		
	2009	2010	2011
Develop an effective people management process that retains and rewards staff for their contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All contracts finalised • Work plans set for employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts reviewed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts reviewed
Prepare, maintain and manage budgets with financial governance requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgets prepared in timely fashion for approval by Board • Regular monthly financial reporting to Executive and BOM 	As 2009	As 2010
Regular meeting of the Board every month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 Meetings per annum • Regular meeting of Executive and Fundraising Committee 	As 2009	As 2010
Provide timely reports and acquittals to all funding bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All set deadlines adhered to 	As 2009	As 2010
Identify alternative fundraising streams and develop existing streams further	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meeting of Fundraising Committee • Develop fundraising strategy 	As 2009	As 2010
Continue policy audit and creation of new	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete policy audit • Present all policy for approval 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review policy

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre – Strategic Plan 2009-2011

policy for approval	at Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep abreast of any legislative change 		
Create procedures manual to maintain consistency of service provision across the organization .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create procedures manual • Induct staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review procedures • Induct staff in changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 2010

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre – Strategic Plan 2009-2011

3. To increase the number of young people participating in Courthouse activities

Strategies	Key Activities		
	2009	2010	2011
Ensure participation by young people in the decision making process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Youth Programming Committee • Develop and expand Equinox Committee for music events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings of committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings of committees
Create a dynamic new brand for the organisation that clearly articulates our purpose to young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new branding for organisation • Complete style guide for use of new brand • Ensure consistency across all materials – guides, websites, advertising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use new brand in all materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review branding and initiate change if necessary
Ensure all artistic programs are relevant and of interest to young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with young people on projects offered each year • Evaluate all programs undertaken at the Courthouse • Evaluate participants satisfaction with each project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 2010
Develop a communication strategy that	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review communication plan and initiate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 2010

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre – Strategic Plan 2009-2011

directly speaks to young people	strategy in consultation with young people	changes	
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Courthouse Youth Arts Centre – Strategic Plan 2009-2011

4. To be recognised as a leading provider of regional arts experiences for young people in Victoria and Australia

Strategies	Key Activities		
	2009	2010	2011
Actively advocate for the rights of young people in this area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act as conduit to local council, government, etc • Actively lobby on behalf of young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 2010
Remain connected into national youth arts networks to publicise activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet regularly with other arts organisations • Meet regularly with other youth arts organisations • Keep contact with youth arts organisations interstate • Remain as a member of Youth Performing Arts Australia and keep in contact with State representative 	As 2009	As 2010
Remain an active participant in the Cultural Precinct leadership group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Cultural Precinct meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 2010
Develop meaningful and lasting partnerships with other organisations within the Cultural Precinct and contribute to joint programming activities in the precinct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend precinct collaborative programming meetings • Meet regularly with other organisations within 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As 2010

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre – Strategic Plan 2009-2011

	<p>Cultural Precinct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with other organisations on arts projects 		
<p>Develop programs that enable Courthouse work to be seen outside of the area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop major production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop tour of major production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour major production

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre – Strategic Plan 2009-2011

5. To develop a facility that will clearly support the development of a thriving youth arts culture now and into the future.

Strategies	Key Activities		
	2009	2010	2011
Participate in planning group for building development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend planning group meetings Develop clear vision for use of the building Ensure building contains facilities for artistic program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee building works as part of planning group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works completed
Ensure that facility caters for planned activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for building development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan around any disruption to programming caused by building works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works completed

KPI's	2009	2010	2011
Increase membership	60	120	240
Increase participation	750	1000	1500
Increase audiences	9500	11000	15000
Fundraising targets	\$15,000	\$30,000	\$60,000
Partnerships	4	6	8
Brand Awareness increase of 10%	Survey 4 schools	Survey 8 schools	Survey 12 schools

Courthouse Youth Arts Centre – Strategic Plan 2009-2011

each year			
Generate annual surplus	\$8.6K	\$10K	\$12K