

The Art and Craft of Research in Communities

Friday April 28th, at VicHealth, Carlton

This event, organized by a partnership of CDN and RMIT's Globalism Institute was attended by 140 participants, with about 10 more unable to attend because of space constraints.

Attendees were spread across professional sectors, including academia, with students, researchers and professors from arts and related areas, local government workers mostly from the arts and community, health, welfare and disability practitioners and researchers. There were also many artists and artworkers. The forum addressed issues about the process and application of research through formal presentation and discussion.

Topics included; how can our work:

- lead to better outcomes for audiences, participants and communities?
- engage practitioners, arts organisations and local government?
- impact funding priorities and influence policy decisions?

Discussion following the presentations was very heated. There was disagreement about the value of some sociological constructs including social capital, questions about the value of having a non-arts researcher speak to an arts audience and the fact that the presenters panel did not include the voice of an artist.

Despite the controversy, all evaluations received were very positive, with attendees particularly valuing the opportunity to hear perspectives that come from outside the arts and the lengthy and lively discussion.

Comments about the forum included:

Good to have social science perspective

Appreciated lengthy discussion times post-presentations and critical summary

Liked cross-sector debate

Though-provoking forum. I got a lot from it

Speakers: Kim Dunphy, Manager, Cultural Development Network,

'The full circle - research, practice and art - making it come together'. Kim described her experience working with a group of health and community workers from north Geelong who set up a network to promote the cultural development of their region, in response to Deb Warr's social research project.

Dr. Deborah Warr, Research Fellow, Centre for Health and Society, University of Melbourne. *'True Stories: The Importance Of Research As Praxis'*

Dr Warr's research is concerned with social contexts for health-related issues and, in particular, those associated with circumstances of socio-economic disadvantage. She has recently completed research for a Neighbourhood Renewal Project, and the Department of Victorian Communities.

*Sue Hartigan, artsworker from Corridor One 4 Arts and Culture Action group from North Geelong and Back to Back Theatre Company, replacing (at short notice)
Dale Newman, Community Development Worker from Barwon Health
'Outcomes of a research project on communities and organisations in north Geelong'*

*Professor Paul James, Director, Globalism Institute
'The big picture - tying together policy and practice'*

Discussion: The forum closed with a discussion session led by Nicky Welch, Research Fellow from the Globalism Institute

Papers available for downloading from the Cultural Development Network website:

['True Stories: Research as Praxis'](#) Deborah Warr, Centre for Health & Society, Uni of Melb

[Outcomes of a research project on communities and organisations in north Geelong](#)
Presented by Sue Hartigan, Geelong Arts Alliance and Back to Back Theatre Company,
on behalf of Dale Newman, community development worker, Barwon Health



The Cultural Development Network's Forums program
is sponsored by the City of Melbourne



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