



MANDURAH PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

MEDIA RELEASE

MANDURAH PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE'S RECENT 'ART OF WELLBEING' PROGRAM DELIVERS REVEALING DATA ON THE POSITIVE IMPACTS OF THE ARTS ON MENTAL HEALTH.

In times of crisis, arts and culture are more critical than ever. The world changed in 2020, and the evidence about the impacts of arts and culture became more relevant than ever. Research shows that, during and following major crises such as health emergencies or natural disasters, effective arts and cultural activities reduce feelings of isolation, strengthen people's connection to place, provide opportunities for reflection, and foster a shared sense of hope and optimism.

With this in mind, Mandurah Performing Arts Centre applied and received a grant from Lotterywest to support the implementation of a 26-week program, 'The Art of Wellbeing'.

Lotterywest and Healthway CEO Ralph Addis said Lotterywest is pleased to support Mandurah Performing Arts Centre with a \$100,000 grant to enhance community connection and participation in the Peel region.

"The Art of Wellbeing program will create meaningful opportunities for vulnerable communities in the Peel region to participate in creative activities and enjoy the health benefits of getting involved in the arts sector," he said.

Working with local GPs, health, and social organisations, ManPAC created an arts-based, social prescribing program called 'The Art of Wellbeing'. The program aimed to support participant mental health, social wellbeing and assist participants to develop art skills and interests via artist-led workshops. As part of its commitment to providing a high-quality program, ManPAC commissioned The University of Western Australia (UWA) to conduct an evaluation. The evaluation focused on the impact of the program on participant a) mental wellbeing, b) social wellbeing, and c) development of art skills and interest in the arts.

Local arts practitioners led a series of weekly, two hourly 'Creative Café' workshops for 53 Mandurah community members (one in two of which had not taken part in arts related workshops before).

Community Engagement Coordinator Mark Labrow said *'We talk all the time in our sector about how important the arts are and how we'd like our community to place greater value on the work we do. We thought this was the perfect opportunity to test that theory and work with a highly recognised academic institution to prove that the arts can truly transform people's lives'*.

Dr Davies (UWA) report concluded that arts programs such as The Art of Wellbeing can legitimately support traditional methods of healthcare provision with participants reporting a significant increase in happiness, confidence, and self-esteem (see *attached report summary*).

For media enquiries please contact:

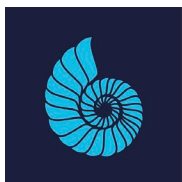
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ManPAC's data also concluded that all practitioners and their family members agreed the program had a positive impact on participant mental health.

The Australian Governments newly released National Cultural Policy (30/1/2023) also recognises the impact that the arts have on wellbeing stating:

***The use of arts in both clinical and non-clinical settings can support improved health outcomes, including mental health and healthy ageing, to support people to thrive.
For example:***

• In 2016, Australian researchers showed that two-hour 'doses' of creative activity each week could enhance mental wellbeing in a general population (Davies et al. 2016).

By positioning themselves at the forefront of the Arts and Health movement in W.A., Mandurah Performing Arts Centre firmly hopes that the work they're pioneering will lead to more opportunities for communities to benefit from the impact arts can have on individual wellbeing.

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