

# CULTUREBUSINESS CANBERRA

## KEY LEARNINGS: Aspiration, not desperation

<u>Speaker</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Sheena Boughen, Life Ambassador, Four Winds Australia	<p>Welcome to Bermagui</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bermagui is off the South Coast of NSW. Town of 1,000 people, fishing village</li><li>• 1991 Four Winds operated just over Easter as a music festival - musicians come together, committed to new works and working with an Indigenous community. For a long time, nothing was permanent at the site.</li><li>• Sheena became the Chair in 2006</li></ul>
<p><u>Key Learnings</u></p> <p>Leaders are not at the top – everyone can be a leader</p> <p>Aspiration upholds energy. Desire to thrive rather than survive.</p> <p>There is no separation between being a supporter and being a believer</p> <p>Nurture your team – talk, reflect, work through difficultu.</p>	<p>Making audiences see your value</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It would be indulgent to just put nice events forward and to remove the elitist tag - they begun community development, and people understood it better. If you include people and include them with you, anything is possible.</li><li>• They begun entering the schools as there was no classical music education or sole music teachers at the local schools.</li><li>• Insight: They had to reset ambition. They are a national organization that happens to be placed in a particular region. Let's assume that music making is part of a rich life.</li><li>• How to break through with philanthropy in a traditionally low income region? Decided to make Community, Culture and Commerce as a trifecta.</li><li>• Leaders are not at the top – everyone can be a leader (Me Too movement is shaping that)</li><li>• A leader is somebody who steps across a threshold. Leadership is an accountability role about breaking open and seeing our nations in different ways – it generates beyond accountability. Amazing capacity of the human community to shape its future – if you do this, you own it and you need to become it.</li></ul> <p>Thinking bigger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• They saw themselves as navigators – it was crucial for the whole of the team – to bring people along to an ambitious and bold idea</li><li>• To see, was to believe – a national centre for music making, a statement for the nation, with the voice of our local community and across the nation</li><li>• Insight – aspiration not desperation. Staying in a place of aspiration maintained energy. It is almost beyond you, but you believe it. 8 core people (2 artistic directors), the board, 2 architects, 2 project managers, administrator and small team (most pro bono). There was no culture of giving. There was one person who provided a third of Four Winds overall income. The campaign launch for the first building, it was made clear that</li></ul>

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donations over \$50 were accepted.

- A winning team – people talk about success but not about winning, but if it isn't about winning, why would we spend so much time and effort for the things we do?
- Worked not from a desire to survive but a desire to thrive.

## Writing the future

- Insight – keeping a circle of critical friends. Every time a team member felt anxious or vulnerable, we knew it was a gap in skills or experience. We talked and reflected so that it was understood what was being struggled with and then invite people to fill that gap – people like to be invited in to something that is bold and adventurous
- Reached out the opera house, MONA, and their work and research, as well as ANAM, who are all now key partners
- Insight – STRATEGY – what matters is that it is not just a plan but about a position – define clearly what you want to stand for and your commitment – they applied realistic constraints from that – you then find freedom and space to liberate what you can do – it helped to crystallise what you can and cant do
- Insight – orientation – leaders in your own areas at every level.

## Strong message and meaning

- Music matters to having a rich life.
- The aspirational zone found the power and the voice where collectively, across the nation, we had people talking us up, with \$3million and multiple grants, with only 150 people.
- They try to act and have debates – they are reminded they need to be loud and enthusiastic
- What is winning and what is the magic?
- So much going on: the Capital Campaign to build, a range of activities throughout the year, a rich database of 5k supporters but no recurrent funding apparent from the Four Winds Foundation, no debt, no reserves, grants are applied for monthly – behind the public campaign – it is relentless and exhausting, but also exhilarating.

## Questions

- A: How many people did you involve in this adventure to work with you?  
Q: Core team of 8 – pro bono activity – she was CEO and Chair, pro bono for 10 years of her life. Critical friends of 35 people. Then 150 who were supporters and early donors plus a circle around that of influence – who would respond, talk it up, be advocates. Then an audience of 1500 who came to the festival.
- Q: I am a board member of a charity. How did you work with the team involved to help them learn to teach them how to make the ask?  
A: Louise Walsh and Frankie Airey – she said that you listened and took advice – who then recommended Frankie. Once she

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met the board, she understood us much better and guided them very well who introduced us to critical friends. There is no separation between being a supporter and being a believer – if people could understand and give them an invitation to belong, asking for the money was not easy but it flowed. Skills then critical friends to guide, then a design of the belief and the dream so that it was irresistible.

- Q: How important was it for you to have one leader? Or can you have multiple people?

A: Sheena's parents were musicians and raised 4 children, so she feels very strongly about it. Through natural ability and practice as a teacher she is articulate about helping people to believe in things bigger than themselves. It was more that we didn't have people saying No. It is wrong to be a nation where artists aren't core to our culture and economy. CPA was essential to the fundraising efforts.