



Newstead Arts Hub: Building Strong Connections Project

July 2019

Background

Newstead Arts Hub was created in 2015 and opened in 2016. The Arts Hub was a priority in the Newstead Community Plan and funded through the VicTrack Community Vacant Use program. MASC is the head lessee and Newstead 2021 Inc the sublessee; the Newstead Arts Hub committee operates under Newstead 2021 Inc.

The Newstead Community Plan 2013 recognises art, culture and creativity as important within our community and sense of identity. Newstead aspires to: foster a culture of welcome where people are valued, and their skills and talents nurtured; and to be an art rich community that provides opportunities for creativity.

Since the Arts Hub opened in 2016, more than 25 month-long exhibitions and a variety of workshops have been held; there is a strong exhibition program for 2019. Many local community groups meet at the Hub. We have a website, Facebook page and Instagram.

Our vision – captured in our 2018 Strategic Plan (<https://newsteadartshub.org/governance/newstead-arts-hub-strategic-plan/>) is: *To be a creative hub where art, community and learning are celebrated.*

Five strategies accompany our Vision. Working with the Regional Centre for Culture in late 2018, we identified the next step in the development of the Arts Hub is to reach out and engage much more strongly across our community and our region, focusing on arts organisations, potential partners, audiences and artists. And we want to deepen and strengthen our connections across the ‘Newstead and surrounds’ communities.

While we have a dedicated team of volunteers who run the Arts Hub, we need access to skills in areas such as digital communication, outreach, stakeholder relationships, graphic design (etc) to help us achieve this next major step.

This project

Newstead Arts Hub is being supported by the Mount Alexander Shire Council’s Community Grants Program to deliver this project. It will enable the Newstead Arts Hub to connect more effectively with our community, arts organisations, artists and audiences by expanding our networks and relationships, developing quality engagement/communication tools, increasing local engagement with the Hub’s arts activities, and increasing the activation of all the spaces at the Hub.

The project will benefit the MASC and Newstead communities by:

- Developing and harnessing our resources to enable more effective outreach to artists, art organisations and potential partners across a wider region and the establishment of partnerships to deliver our vision (e.g. resources include social media; newsletter; networking opportunities etc)
- Increasing the activation of the Arts Hub and use of our spaces, internal and external by reframing and promoting our 'offer'
- Increasing our reach to new audiences and strengthening our links to existing local/MASC events to help build visitation and associated economic and cultural benefits
- Diversifying the range of artists engaged in presenting their work at the Arts Hub Increasing opportunities for local people – especially young people – to engage in arts practice through hands-on activities (e.g. 'come and try' days) and breaking down barriers around the word 'art'
- Being a platform for the future expansion of the overall arts offerings within the Arts Precinct (as the Goods Shed workshops are developed).

Project Outcomes

We have designed this project to address some specific questions and issues for the Arts Hub, and with specific project outcomes in mind.

1. To develop a better understanding of our exhibitors, visitors and other users:

- a. Who engages with the Arts Hub now, what works and what could be improved? (survey)
- b. Who visits the Arts Hub? Improving data collection (their origin, travel mode, purpose of visit to area, how they hear about us)

2. Building more effective communications, marketing and engagement tools

- a. To organise effective communications/engagement tools, to advise on our website development and our use of Facebook and Instagram
 - i. Website and social media (Facebook and Instagram): review, improve, integrate
 - ii. Communications calendar – including key local/regional events to link into
 - iii. Resolve Mail Chimp and blog followers into a one system for news postings
 - iv. Establish a newsletter mailing list as a promotional tool to regional arts orgs (link into Mail Chimp?)
 - v. Identify key websites that the Arts Hub should be linked from
- b. Contribute to ideas about brand (i.e. name and logo – this will be a separate commission)

3. Wider engagement of artists and community members with the Arts Hub

- a. opening up the Arts Hub for more community-based arts and creative activities and expanding the diversity of people who participate
 - i. re-establish Friends (underway)
 - ii. find out who uses Arts Hub now and who doesn't (see 1) and develop strategies to attract new visitors
- b. engaging a wider range of artists in activities at the Hub – including in demonstrating their art practice and showing their work
 - i. annual call for exhibition and workshop EOIs (done 2019 – refine for 2020)
 - ii. feedback from past users, comparative pricing and facilities, identify any barriers to use (interviews of past users, research)

- iii. identify, through research, potential artists and arts activities we could target for 2020

4. Building and sustaining links with arts organisations across the region

- a. Identify key arts movers and shakers (initial cut done)
- b. Set up meetings with local/regional organisations, directors/arts administrators to build and sustain links with arts organisations
- c. Identify their needs and how we can use our communications tools (or other ways) to building relationships.

Project Officer Role

Start late July – complete 20 December

The project worker – with members of the Arts Hub committee – will take the lead in delivering key project outcomes, with a strong focus on items 2 and 3:

The Project Officer we are seeking will have the skills necessary to understand the Project and its intended outcomes, and to design and implement opportunities for the increased engagement to be achieved. With support from the sub-committee, the Project Officer will lead the Project and deliver the Project outcomes.

The Project Officer will be appointed for a period from late July to 20 December 2019 (20-22 weeks). Funding allows for a total of 144 hours paid at a rate of \$40 per hour (including GST if applicable). The Project Officer would be engaged as a contractor and will need their own ABN, and to provide their own laptop and phone. The Project Officer will be based at the Arts Hub.

To successfully deliver this Project for the Arts Hub, the Project Officer will need to possess the following skills and attributes:

- strong skills in website design, function, content creation and promotion
- sound knowledge of common social media platforms and how they can be used effectively
- knowledge of the local and regional arts sectors
- good communication skills and experience, with the ability to make approaches to and establish professional relationships with people and organisations
- good administrative, research and reporting skills
- demonstrated capacity to complete projects and deliver outcomes on time and within allocated resources, and
- demonstrated capacity to use self-initiative and to work independently but also as part of a team, recognising that the volunteer Arts Hub committee will actively contribute to the project.

The Position Description provides details on how to apply.