

Case study

Spotlight Cairns

Details

What:

Spotlight Cairns is a council-managed music development program to support young and emerging musicians and their managers.

The program provides access to industry resources and contacts, and aims to raise the profile and provide opportunities for young artists to showcase and present their work.

During 2014, Spotlight Cairns supported musicians by

- hosting four music industry workshops that provided capacity building for 80 participants. These workshops provided access to interstate industry professionals. Assistance was given to participants for crowdfunding and grant writing and year-round career advice was offered.
- providing support with quality promotional tools. This included the production and delivery of over 100 professional quality bio shots, five slideshows/videos and two professionally recorded tracks.
- supporting showcases and performances there were 46 paid performance opportunities exposing local musicians to over 8000 audience members.

When:

January 2014 to January 2015

Where:

Cairns



Spotlight Showcase 2014 poster. Image courtesy of Creative Partnerships (Cairns Regional Council).

Key stats:

- 68 activities
- 8,284 attendees and participants
- 60 paid artists/arts and cultural workers

Arts Queensland contribution:

\$60,000 – Projects and Programs Fund

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Links:

[Spotlight Cairns' Facebook page](#)

Outcomes

- The workshops and showcase have provided artists with opportunities and knowledge about the music industry.

All together The Spotlight Showcase has opened the doors for myself and the group into the Music industry and has put us on the right path to be successful in our music careers.

I am so happy I had the chance to network with the some of the music industry's most experienced people. I now have a better knowledge of what I need to do to be successful

- Acts were provided with career advice and guidance. Six local artists have gone from having no promotional material to having professional electronic press kits. One artist now has a website, business cards and five recorded tracks and has been added to triple j unearthed rotation. The artist is planning a crowdfunding campaign to support the release of her EP and is about to sign a licensing deal with an indie label.
- New partnerships with Cairns businesses have created further performance platforms, ensuring broader exposure and community audience development. For example in 2014, 16 local acts performed to hundreds of delegates over three days of the Australian tourism exchange in hotel foyers around the city.



Spotlight showcase 2014 event. Image courtesy of Creative Partnerships (Cairns Regional Council).

Learnings and reflections

Spotlight Cairns program continues to have a large impact in the community. Feedback from participants and previous learnings continue to shape the program. Project Officer shared this reflection on changes to the program in 2014:

There has been much learning over the last few years whilst running the youth music development programs.

The Spotlight Showcase program in particular was developed because when trying to book artists for certain events and community gatherings it was noted that most young local acts had no real online presence or decent bio shots to promote themselves. The first year we paired local acts with local photographers to keep production costs down with varied results. This year we varied the program to focus more on the delivery to the artists so we chose one photographer with a music industry interest and experience in order to deliver the best possible shots for the acts. This worked very well and all participants got some great results and professional quality shots to help promote themselves and further their career.

The Project Officer shared the following advice for others working on similar projects:

In facilitating the workshops I have realised that creating a sense of community amongst participants works very well – creating a more intimate or round table environment and encouraging participants to be active in panels and conversations. Also important is gathering information from participants and making sure that facilitators and panelists know who is attending prior to events - age; background; what stage in their career they are at; and their specific genres etc. This enables panelists to tailor workshop and information sessions so they are relevant to participants and cover the most beneficial topics for attendees. One-on-ones have also worked really well with some great outcomes and ongoing connections have been made.