# 2016 CURIOUSWORKS
# ANNUAL REPORT

## Visit Another Australia with CuriousWorks...

When you walk down the streets of Cabramatta, Liverpool, Mt Druitt or Parramatta are you struck by the intensity and diversity of these places and the people? As you walk down these streets, the world rushes in at you, its metaphors writ large in an encounter, a trade, the streetscapes, a thousand new and old words. As you stand still, fresh spaces burst open to the sky and old colonial haunts settle on Darug country. The trees vibrate in the heat. The trains roll on...

Is that the Australia you are seeing on your TV, or in films and at the theatre?

**CuriousWorks** tells the stories that have not yet been told. We are a unique media arts company celebrating our cultural diversity, and making a positive social, cultural and economic impact in Western Sydney. Using film, theatre, digital technology and education programs we collaborate with communities so they can tell their own stories, and leave them with the skills to continue doing so for future generations.

Our ultimate vision is for a more inclusive, dynamic Australia, where the sharing of cultures bridges the east-west divide of Sydney and other economic and geographic boundaries; where cultural understanding promotes bonds and dissolves stereotypes; where the largely untold stories of our Western Sydney communities become writ large in our arts, our media and reflect the lives of all Australians.

**What we do …**

- Run **community grassroots programs** that develop the talent of Western Sydney youth as emerging filmmakers, artists and cultural leaders. Our programs, designed with community partners, help young people find a voice, learn employment skills, encourage a deeper engagement with community, and establish a pride in the place they live and capacity to imagine a positive future.

- From these programs, we identify future cultural leaders – our **Curious Creators.** We mentor the creative and social development of these talented individuals so they can achieve their potential as a new generation of Western Sydney storytellers, artists and community leaders.

- Create high-profile **professional arts projects** developed and shown in partnership with leading Australian theatre companies, major film festivals and national and international art houses.

CURIOUSWORKS

## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

2016 has been an exciting year of significant creative development and new clarity about our vision for making an impact on the quality of the national conversation about the value of diversity. The Management Committee and the staff of CuriousWorks invested time and energy into discussing our vision and developing a clear strategy to achieve it. Our strategy to make CuriousWorks a recognised name in mainstream cultural spaces and the professional stage gained momentum this year with the launch of Colony, our signature new multi-platform arts project with high-profile partners including the Belvoir Theatre, Streaming Museum (NY) and Carriageworks.

I am honoured to have been selected as Chair of the Management Committee this year and happy to report that I will have the benefit of Rachel Kerry's knowledge and wisdom in the role of Deputy Chair. I want to thank all the members of the Management Committee for their work in further developing the governance structures and processes at CuriousWorks to support the future growth of the company.

In addition to governance, we have worked hard this year to build a strong financial foundation for the growth of CuriousWorks in a difficult and changing environment for arts organisations. We are delighted that Annabel Davis will be joining us as Partnerships Manager in early 2017 to support the development of existing and new philanthropic partnerships. We continued to develop our social enterprise work this year with a focus on providing training in production services with our Curious Creators while strengthening our financial position.

I want to acknowledge the staff of CuriousWorks and our Curious Creators for the quality of their work and their commitment to artistic excellence through community engagement. And finally, on behalf of everyone at CuriousWorks, I want to thank all of our supporters and partners for helping us to make a positive difference in our communities through the power of storytelling.

**Melinda Muth**
Chairperson
CuriousWorks Committee of Management

# ARTISTIC PROGRAM

**Foreword by S. Shakthidharan**
Artistic Director

2016 was a period of intensive creative development in our Artistic Program. It saw the launch of Colony, our signature new multi-platform arts project that will blossom over the coming years. Colony is the story of one family line, from before colonisation through to the 22nd Century. It is not one artwork, but a series of different projects with interconnected narratives, themes and locations. Colony's high-profile partners include Belvoir Theatre, Streaming Museum (New York) and Carriageworks. From 2017-2019, A Counting and Cracking, Laka and When the Tide Comes In will all form part of the Colony experience.

Our relationship with NITV grew, with short film Mamu continuing to receive high ratings throughout the year, and documentary Heart of the Fight having a wonderful premiere at Redfern Community Centre before also having a successful broadcast run. Riz continues to excite new audiences, whether it be through special live soundtrack screenings or picking up healthy interest online.

All of these projects were born out of longstanding and mutually respectful collaborations with communities that are largely invisible in mainstream cultural spaces. We remain committed to slowly nurturing stories towards high profile outcomes, so that they can receive the profile and audiences they deserve, and spark new conversations about our national story.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

### *COLONY*: Launch at Carriageworks

CuriousWorks' signature art project, *Colony,* launched on the 8th March 2016, with a booked out live audio-visual concert. This first event was a mix of film, music and live performance that introduced the grand narrative of the *Colony* world, as it spans pre-colonial times to the 22nd century.

*Colony* weaves together characters and plots from our professional artistic work for the next five years, exploring the impact of global mass migration and the opportunities to synthesize traditional wisdom with contemporary culture. The launch event intrigued audiences with a glimpse into the dystopic future world of 22nd century Western Sydney and encouraged audiences to take the journey into the online '*Colony*' universe, which launched on the same day with the first story in the '*When the Tide Comes In*' narrative, and continued to release a new chapter for 7 days and every new moon thereafter.

***Artists:*** *S. Shakthidharan (Direction/Music/Editing), Aimee Falzon (Music/ Production Design), Guido Gonzalez (Cinematography/Mentor), Vanessa Hyde (Producer), Andy Ko (Production Assistant), Shawn Spina, Adam McPhilbin, Dani Sitto, Andrea Beeten, Leon Wang, Wendy Pham, Samia Halabi, David Luu, Natalia Figueroa (Curious Creators/ Crew)*

## *When the Tide Comes In*

**Graphic novel, new moon online releases & Riverside Theatre showing**

2016 was a huge year of creative development, online engagement and public outcomes for the *When the Tide Comes In* project. Launched in March, together with the *Colony* world at Carriageworks, this multi-platform tale set in 22nd century Western Sydney, tells the story of Sam, a young woman struggling under the impact of climate change, social division and restricted personal freedoms. After the death of her brilliant but reclusive father, Sam is left with his mess of illustrations documenting her family's history. She sets out on an unusual and dangerous mission to discover the truth of her past.

Teasers from this gripping future dystopia were released on every new moon over 2016 in the form of an online graphic novel & animation. In June 2016, we presented a live audiovisual concert at Riverside Theatres, mixing film, live music score and performance. This visually stunning show was received extremely well by audiences.

*"Visually it is a feast as the films are cinematically beautiful, and the score – exceptional. As for the story, you are given just enough to feed an ever-building curiosity. It is intriguing despite its dark outline."* – Australian Stage

In 2017, we will continue to develop *When the Tide Comes In* as a multimedia theatre work with the support of Playwriting Australia.

***Artists:*** *S. Shakthidharan, Andrea Beeten, Aimee Falzon (Writers) S. Shakthidharan (Direction/Music/Editing), Aimee Falzon (Music/ Production Design), Vanessa Hyde (Producer), Jaime Aguilar (Animation), Guido Gonzalez (Cinematography/Mentor), Shawn Spina, Adam McPhilbin, Dani Sitto, Andrea Beeten, Leon Wang, Wendy Pham, Samia Halabi, David Luu (Curious Creators/ Crew), Marie Chanel, Benedict Hardie, Katie Beckett, Paul Cordeiro, Sophie Kesteven, Aimee Falzon (Lead Talent)*

## *Laka*

**Multi-platform Artwork & Film Production**
**Yirrkala (NT) & Brewarrina (NSW)**

*Laka* grew out of a long-term, intercultural collaboration between artists Rosealee Pearson and S. Shakthidharan, and their respective Yolngu and Sri Lankan Australian communities. Sound artist Leah Barclay is also a key artist, creating soundscapes for the artwork of processed environmental recordings, foregrounding *Laka's* keen sense of place and exploration of our innate relationship to nature. The story that has been developed is a beautiful road-trip love story from Western Sydney to remote NT. Lily, an urban lawyer, feels the need to return home to her traditional country for the birth of her child. Her ancestors join her, to provide the strength her journey requires. Also following her is Lily's husband Siddhartha, who is confronted by his family's history fleeing civil war in Sri Lanka.

In October 2016, the CuriousWorks film crew hit the road to produce this multi-platform artwork. Over three weeks, a small crew including several Curious Creators, travelled to Brewarrina in outback NSW and Yirrkala in remote Northern Territory to capture the story.

*Laka* has moved to post-production stages and will be released in various iterations over 2017 and 2018. These include a feature length audiovisual artwork for large-scale projection on screens around the world. It will also have a life as a narrative film for cinemas, and an innovative virtual reality project, which will go into production in 2017.

***Artists:*** *S. Shakthidharan, Rosealee Pearson (Script), S. Shakthidharan (Direction), Lily Shearer, Rosealee Pearson (Cultural Advisors) Leah Barclay (Sound Design), Aimee Falzon (Music/Production Design), Guido Gonzalez (Cinematography), Elias Nohra (Editing), Shawn Spina, Adam McPhilbin, Dani Sitto, Andrea Beeten, Cristobal Olguin Hernandez, Wendy Pham (Curious Creators/ Crew), Rosealee Pearson, Nicholas Brown (Lead Talent).*

## *Laka* (Prologue)

**'A View from a Cloud' Preview Exhibition - Norway**

The Streaming Museum's curatorial program 'A View from the Cloud', presented *Laka* (Prologue) as part of their preview exhibition in Kvinesdal, Norway in late 2016/ early 2017. This abstract short-form introduction to *Laka* is a screen-based work, featuring *Laka* lead performer and Yolngu women, Rosealee Pearson and explores a Yolngu creation story through dance and soundscape.

***Lead Artists:*** *S. Shakthidharan (Direction/Editing), Leah Barclay (Sound), Rosealee Pearson (Story/Performance)*

## *Counting & Cracking*

**Intensive Script Development with Belvoir Theatre**

In October 2016, CuriousWorks' S. Shakthidharan continued with intensive script development of our major theatre project '*Counting and Cracking*'. Co-directed with Belvoir's Eamon Flack, the play is a large-scale co-production between CuriousWorks and Belvoir.

*Counting and Cracking* is a play following the uprooting and resettling of a family over four generations from Sri Lanka to Australia. Through their journey, we see a Sri Lanka riven by, but by no means surrendering to, violent divisions – and an Australia transforming of, but also transformed by, the people that flee to its shores.

***Lead Artists:*** *S. Shakthidharan (Script), Eamon Flack (Direction)*

## *Heart of the Fight*

**SBS TV & Online Launch & Community Screening**

*Heart of the Fight* is a documentary film portrait of Aboriginal pastor Richard Phillips, aka Dick Blair, Australian middleweight champion and the inspiration behind The Block in Redfern.

The film follows the life of Dick Blair, one of the last in his league, a cane cutter from the north who came to Sydney during a pivotal time in the history of Indigenous Australia and became a great boxer, a Christian leader and a great father. Arriving in Redfern in the late '60s against the backdrop of the referendum and the new wave of the Aboriginal rights movement, Richard was already a fighter inside and outside the ring.

In production over 2014-2015, CuriousWorks filmmaker, Mark Taylor was welcomed with open arms at the Redfern Community Centre in July 2016, for a special NAIDOC week community screening, which coincided with the film's broadcast premiere on NITV.

***Lead Artists:*** *Mark Taylor (Direction/ Producing/ Cinematography/ Editing), Byron Arellano (Producer), Jerome Mundine, Chris Alexander, Kyle White (Producing), Roger Knox (soundtrack), Guido Gonzalez, Saif Jari (crew). Special thanks to Shane Phillips and the Phillips family. In tribute to Richard Phillips.*

## *Riz*

**Film Touring, MTV & Online Music Videos Release**

In March 2016, our first feature film, *Riz* returned to the big screen at Riverside Theatre, for its first screening since selling out the Sydney Film Festival in 2015. This special event included the angelic sounds of Kurinji playing the music score live. Throughout 2016, *Riz* also toured to several high schools in the region as part of our *Riz* School Education Package.

To further promote the incredible music in the film, CuriousWorks set to work to create three sensational music videos from the soundtrack. Each video explores how life worked out for some of the main characters after the film. These videos were released online and were widely received with over 16,000 views and more than 100 shares in just a few days. The *'Right, Right'* music video, shot in Cabramatta, was then selected for the MTV Upload program and was screened on MTV Music Awards in June 2016.

***Artists:*** *S. Shakthidharan (Direction/ Music/ Editing), Aimee Falzon (Music/Production Design), Adam McPhilbin and Dani Sitto (Cinematography), Jaime Aguilar (Animation), Thomas Barrell (Assisstant Editor), (Guido Gonzalez, Caitlin Newton-Broad (Production Manager, Mentor), Shawn Spina, Andrea Beeten, Samia Halabi, Cristobal Olguin Hernandez, Wendy Pham (Curious Creators/ Crew)*

The CuriousWorks Artistic Program is supported by The Federal Government through the Australian Council for the Arts – Community Partnerships, The Federal Government through Ministry for the Arts, The NSW Government through Arts NSW & Screen NSW, and Nelson Meers Foundation. Key partners in 2016 were Carriageworks, Belvoir, Riverside, Streaming Museum (NY), the Sri Lankan community and diaspora, and the Yolngu community in Yirrkala, remote Northern Territory.

*http://www.curiousworks.com.au/project/stories/*

# COMMUNITY PROGRAM

**Foreword by Caitlin Newton-Broad**
Community Director

In 2016, CuriousWorks engaged in deep partnerships in South West Sydney, fostering mutual trust, in-depth conversation and opportunities for the communities we work with to tell stories and develop their expressive power. Thanks to broad investment and partnership, with the key support of the Nelson Meers Foundation, CuriousWorks were able to structure a high-quality Community Program that scaffolded skills development for young people and launched our Curious Creators' work onto the national cultural stage.

Our work with the Curious Creators was recognised this year as a unique Australian capacity building program by the Australian Film and Television School, Screen NSW and Screen Australia, and we contributed to policy discussion with the aim to increase diversity in professional media production, to enable pathways for CALD, First Nations and working class voices to access and excel in authentic storytelling with a wide reach.

CuriousWorks continued to build on the integrity of the Social Enterprise program in 2016, leading to on the job training, employment opportunities and increased professional networks for our Curious Creators. Through our social enterprise program, we have worked in Redfern (NSW), Mt Isa (QLD), the Pilbara (WA) and Dubbo (NSW) with young Curious Creators in assistant roles on production.

Through our high-profile arts program, we have worked with artists and community in Brewarrina (NSW), Arnhem Land (NT) and the Sri Lankan diaspora community through the development of *Colony: When the Tide Comes In, Myth: Laka* and *Counting and Cracking*. Curious Creators have been part of this work every step of the way.

In 2016, we worked with the communities outlined here, in order to unleash the next generation of talented young storytellers who can articulate their realities and dreams through the power of their artistic voice.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

### Curious Creators

***Western Sydney wide – Campbelltown, Penrith, Blacktown, Fairfield, Liverpool***

Curious Creators are the heart of CuriousWorks. They are young people who have come up through the community program with a passion for developing as artists and also they are committed to serving their communities. They are a supportive, dynamic group of 20 young people between the ages of 17-30 years from across Western Sydney and they share interests, their time and their talents to support each other's projects. We aim to build their confidence and professional level ability, in order to carve the professional path they are aiming for.

*"Unique model of industry development... I was so excited to learn more about the Curious Creators. No-one else is doing it."*
– Christina Alvarez, Head of Engagement, Australian Film and Television School

There are 4 distinct platforms to their work:

**1. Writers Group**
The Curious Creators have a tightknit team of storytellers who meet weekly and grow original stories with the intention of moving them to production. In April 2016, they undertook their first team residency as part of the Bundanon Artists Residency Program in order to move their projects forward with intense dramaturgy from S. Shakthidharan and feedback from their peers. In September 2016, this work came to fruition in a moved reading, staging two scenes from each of their works for a full house at Riverside Theatres. The Fairfield PYT Ensemble partnered on the project as actors/readers.

*http://www.curiousworks.com.au/gathering-urban-reactions/*

## Curious Creators

### 2. Creative Production & Professional Quarterlies

We ran a series to support technical knowledge, experimentation and professional protocols that support the Curious Creators to be job ready for the creative industries. In 2016, the CCs worked with acclaimed TV series writer, Blake Ayshford, digital content creator, Jamie Andrei and CuriousWorks staff across their skillset in production. In November 2016, AFTRS partnered with us to run a bespoke Digital Futures workshop for five days, exploring transmedia and spaces for new employment, led by content producer Kate Ayrton. In December 2016, brokered by screen writer and showrunner, Blake Ayshford, Curious Creators were invited into the writers room on the new Foxtel/Goalpost series, *The Fighting Season* to observe a ten writer collaboration in action.

### 3. Social Enterprise

The Curious Creators have worked as paid assistants across the whole suite of CuriousWorks Social Enterprise program, and have been active in Western Sydney as documenters, media peer trainers and camera crew for our client work. This includes clients such as Settlement Services International, St Vincent Hospital, Liverpool and Fairfield City Council, Lebanese Muslim Association and Aboriginal Legal Services.

### 4. Arts Projects

Some of the Curious Creators who are operating at a high technical level, have worked closely with S. Shakthidharan as co-writers and crew across the high profile projects this year, including travelling with the artistic team to outback New South Wales and Arnhem Land, Northern Territory.

Co-investment for this work came from Screen NSW, Fairfield City Council, Parramatta City Council and Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre and partnerships with Australian Film and Television School, Granville Youth and Community Centre and Playwriting Australia

*http://www.curiousworks.com.au/project/curious-creators/*

***Curious Creator Artists:*** *Daisy Montalvo, Bee Cruse, Shawn Spina, Adam McPhilbin, Samia Halabi, Sean Ly, Dani Sitto, Miranda Aguilar, Andrea Beeten, Khaled Mariam, Soheil Ettehadolagh, Hayder AlBdairi, Wendy Pham, Shaun Millwood, Savarna Russell, Sam Wild, Natalia Figueroa, Karina Gonzalez, Cristobal Olguin Hernandez*

## ReFill

***Liverpool - Miller, Cartwright and Ashcroft***

ReFill is an early engagement creative arts program tailored to Year 7 & 8 students.

*"What my young people need are networks. CuriousWorks provides creative networks for life."*
– Sally Atkins, Head of Student Voice, Miller Technology High School

CuriousWorks works closely with Sally Atkins, Head of Student Voice and Visual Arts, to design a playful, skillful program in which young people tell stories, learn skills and build friendships and community networks.

In 2016, we achieved the following:

***PORTAL OF DIMENSION INTO SPACE****
For two terms, young people worked with Guido Gonzalez and Adam McPhilbin on visual storytelling using video. They began to conceptualise a 'vehicle' for storytelling – a TIME MACHINE that they would reconstruct from an old phone-booth at their school. Through weekly and weekend workshops, young people worked with local artist Christian Atkins to design and build the Time Machine.

The interactive content in the time machine (mini-films) contained messages from teenagers to their childhood peers, about what it is like growing up. These films were slapstick, serious and cosmic covering everything from body hair to bullying to self-belief. These films were bound together by a touch-screen animated operating panel, set inside a beautiful, smoking time machine called the PODIS*

***WOW FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHT***
Young people ran the interactive PODIS at the WOW Festival to thousands of curious young time travelers. The project was called BACK TO YOUR FUTURE and children intuitively understood and enjoyed

the missives from their future! Since the PODIS has appeared at the Liverpool Area NAIDOC week and will be restaged in 2017 for Youth Week at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre.

Co-investment for this work came from Crown Foundations Western Sydney Arts Initiative and Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre and partnership with the Museum of Contemporary Arts, Miller Technology High School and WOW Festival for Children (CPAC).

*http://www.curiousworks.com.au/project/refill/*

***Lead Artists:*** *Guido Gonzalez, Christian Atkins, Vincent McManus, Liam Benson, Salote Tuwale, Adam McPhilbin, Dani Sitto*

## Beyond Refuge

***South Western Sydney – Liverpool, Fairfield, Cumberland***

The Beyond Refuge project supports young and older artists with lived experience as refugees, or as children of refugees, to build their original artistic projects. They come from various cultural communities in South Western Sydney and have been identified through participation in our community program and the Curious Creator program. The project seeks to build their creative confidence, artistic voice and work towards a collaborative new work over three years that creates dialogue about the refugee experience as a part of Australian identity. This project had three distinct phases in 2016:

**Beyond Refuge: Flashback**
Sean Ly was inspired by the clear intention of the 2010 CuriousWorks *Villawood Mums* documentary (dir. Guido Gonzalez and Saif Jari). He began the huge journey of creating a dialogue on camera with his parents about their experience of leaving Cambodia and settling in Australia. For Ly, this project was about refugee stories being told by people with lived experience as refugees and countering some of the poisonous rhetoric that has been in the Australian community.

This work had a community screening at Cabramatta in May and was reedited for exhibition in August. It was selected for screening at the 2016 Kampot Writers & Readers Festival in Cambodia and Sean was invited over to speak. The Cambodian Space Project donated a song co-created by Channty Kak and Paul Kelly called *The Boat* for use in the film. The Curious Creators were the crew for this documentary with mentor input from S. Shakthidharan, Caitlin Newton-Broad and Guido Gonzalez.

**Beyond Refuge: Citizens**
Through weekly workshops the group of ten artists worked towards their own short media works responding to their biographies and personal perspectives on the refugee experience. Their work encompassed photography, installation and films and was curated into a multi-media

exhibition at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre as the companion show for their blockbuster event, REFUGEES. As part of this work, CuriousWorks partnered with Settlement Service International to create public program events as part of the inaugural national Refugees and Arts Forum that brought together projects, organisations and artists all working in this space.

Co-investment for this work came from Australia Council for the Arts, Fairfield City Council's Social Change through Creativity Program and Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre and partnership with Settlement Services International, Cambodian Space Project, National Theatre of Parramatta (Riverside Theatres) and Fairfield City Council Libraries.

*http://www.curiousworks.com.au/project/beyond-refuge/*

***Artists:*** *Shawn Spina, Adam McPhilbin, Samia Halabi, Sean Ly, Dani Sitto, Miranda Aguilar, Khaled Mariam, Soheil Ettehadolagh, Hayder AlBdairi, Natalia Figueroa, Karina Gonzalez, Thomas Barrell*

## Connecting to Country

***Western Sydney - Penrith, Mt Druitt & Lower Blue Mountains***

In partnership with Moogahlin Performing Arts, Connecting to Country linked First Nations young people, Elders, artists and community leaders in the Bidwill/ Mt Druitt and North St Marys communities together through a series of creative workshops and projects that follow songlines into the Lower Blue Mountains. This collective impact work has been fostered by Uncle Wes Marne through his powerful advocacy and belief in young people as the holders of story and builds upon cultural knowledge of place as integral to strength in identity. CuriousWorks was awarded a Mt Druitt Reconciliation Award in May 2016 for commitment to community.

*"Culture before Education. Always."*
- Lily Shearer, 2016 Ros Bower Award recipient with Uncle Wes Marne, Bigambul man and Mt Druitt Elder

This project began in July 2015 and has had three distinct phases:

**1. FUNPARK**
Through invitation from the existing FUNPARK Coalition, CuriousWorks joined this collective impact project. Through an ongoing series of community workshops that celebrate and bring creative collective action to a community. FUNPARK is a vital partnership between residents, workers, arts, community, faith and government organisations and young people. CuriousWorks was the principal digital arts partner on FUNPARK 2016, training young people to document and capture their community at its most creative. Our presence has created trust and understanding between many people, enabling all the other layers of Connecting to Country to take place.

**2. NgAl Lo Wah Murraytula**
A unique cultural walk over four days into the Lower Blue Mountains, designed as an intercultural exchange between nominated young leaders (aged 12-18yrs) and long-time Elders Uncle Wes Marne, Aunty Edna Watson and Uncle Greg Simms. This project was led by Lily Shearer and Alicia Talbot and formed through multiple partnerships. CuriousWorks were engaged as the youth development partner and helped identify outstanding young local leaders from the Penrith and Mt Druitt

areas, building relationships that bring ongoing linkage for the young people involved to cultural projects and community development roles. The preparation and undertaking of the walk was documented by Australian film-maker Maya Newell, working with Curious Creators as her principal documentary team. The film, *In the Skin of People* will be released in late 2017

***Lead Artists:*** *Uncle Wes Marne, Aunty Edna Watson, Uncle Greg Simms, Lily Shearer, Alicia Talbot, Maya Newell, Andrea James, Adam McPhilbin & Bee Cruse (Curious Creators) Caitlin Newton-Broad (Youth Engagement)*

## Connecting to Country

**3. TRUE COUNTRY at Learning Ground**
CuriousWorks ran a creative media workshop series delivered by young Curious Creators and leaders that emerged from *Ngal Lo Wah Murraytula.* This multi-arts and storytelling workshop was designed for children 12-16 years. The Learning Ground is an important local partner on Connecting to Country, as a family reparation and healing centre, grounded in Darug ethos and serving young people and families in the area.

Mentorship for local Bidwill artist Daisy Montalvo (El Salvadorian/Australian) and Bianca Cruse (First Nations Cabrogal/Yuin woman) - two of CuriousWorks most outstanding Curious Creators are now taking initiative to develop their own community storytelling projects that build strength in their community and enrich their creative practices in citizen journalism (Daisy) and cultural reclaimation (Bianca).

***Artists:*** *Uncle Wes Marne, Daisy Montalvo, Guido Gonzalez, Shawn Spina with Caitlin Newton-Broad, Sam Wild, Savatna Russell*

Co-investment for this whole body of work came from the Matana Foundation for Young People, Arts NSW Projects (*NgaL Lo Wah Murraytula*) and the Federal Government's Indigenous Languages and Arts Program (*Ngal Lo Wah Murraytula*) and Australia Council mentorship program. It has built long term partnerships with Moogahlin Performing Arts, Darug Custodians Aboriginal Corporation, North St Mary's Neighbourhood Centre, the Aboriginal Regional Education Program at Western Sydney University and the FUNPARK coalition of residents, arts and community organisations.

*http://www.curiousworks.com.au/project/connecting-to-country/*

## SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

CuriousWorks provides training and production services in filmmaking and creative online media for local council, schools, non-profit organisations and corporations. We develop individuals' and organisations' skill and capacity in storytelling and change agency.

Each year we have employed professional artists to fulfill these client commissions, and in recent years they have been paired where possible with our young Curious Creators. This model of social enterprise is proving highly successful as it generates potential for pathway opportunities, professional development and on-the job experience for young cultural leaders.

In 2016, 19 Curious Creators earned a total income of $45,300 through the social enterprise program. Each young emerging artist was paired with experienced media professionals to deliver a varied range of CuriousWorks' community /client commissions. These paid opportunities are a vital step towards building the Curious Creators' skills and capacity to take over delivery of services to community through media production, cultural advocacy and community leadership.

*http://www.curiousworks.com.au/?project=extra-services-products*

## HIGHLIGHTS:

**Young People Ahead – Sexual Health Awareness Video Production Series**
Lead artist Vincent McManus led this exciting filmmaking project in Mount Isa, Qld, following on from the very successful *Raising the Cards* workshop program the year before. 13 young indigenous participants developed a script and storyboard for six short films that promoted safe sex and sexual health awareness in the community. *http://www.northweststar.com.au/story/4229983/the-six-films-on-youth-sexual-health-in-mount-isa/*

**Aboriginal Legal Services - Talking Fact-Sheet Program**
Lead artist, Mark Taylor continued work with field officers from Aboriginal Legal Services in remote communities across NSW to create short films featuring 'Yarn Ups' around legal issues in Aboriginal communities. In 2016, we travelled to back to Bourke for a four-day filmmaking workshops with young people, resulting in a powerful series of films that aim to increase awareness of, and access to, legal rights information. A community screening night was held in Redfern, screening over 15 short films created over the life of the project with several young participants flown to Sydney to attend.

**Way Out West Festival for Children**
An annual favourite for CuriousWorks is training up the official festival reporters for the *Way Out West Festival for Children* at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre. In 2016, these young reporters were once again in the capable hands of Guido Gonzalez, this year with assistance from Curious Creator, Daisy Montalvo.

This very popular 'Kids Reporter Program' trains up a handful of 10-13 year old in all the tools of the trade necessary to document and interview the artists, organisers and visitors to this awesome kids' festival.

## SECTOR DEVELOPMENTS

In 2016, CuriousWorks launched ***The Drip Feed,*** a digital platform that aggregates useful content for the small to medium art sector and artists working in community engaged settings. This platform has emerged from the National Sector Development Initiative (NSDI) and is supported by the Australia Council for the Arts Community Partnerships.

Developed in collaboration with Dr. Rebecca Conroy, *The Drip Feed* is a fantastic resource to keep the CACD sector hydrated with a critical news feed of essays, articles and announcements, as well as showcasing rich media content from the sector via an RSS feed. Funding opportunities, international residencies, PhD scholarships, events and call outs are all featured daily in the Corkboard section. *http://thedripfeed.com/*

## OPERATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS

2016 has been an exciting year of significant creative development and clarity of vision for CuriousWorks. This year we have invested time and energy into consolidating our strategic plan, ensuring we uphold the artistic excellence of our work and continue to maintain the deep partnerships with have in the community's we work with.

Financial sustainability and good governance remain fundamental priorities. The company had a healthy year financially with a total revenue of $643,612. The surplus of the Association for the financial year amounted to $46,686 (2015: $50,071), with total retained earnings at year end of $86,930. Under the guidance of our Committee of Management, we have developed solid plans for partnerships, fundraising and marketing, to help guide the company into a sustainable future.

Our Communications Manager, Mr Gary Spink was focused on raising CuriousWorks' profile and brand awareness in 2016, alongside running targeted marketing campaigns across all our online artistic outcomes. As a result, CuriousWorks successfully increased our social media audience numbers by 200% from the previous year (totally 280,504) and 64.5% of visitors to the CuriousWorks website in 2016 were first time visitors. Our physical audiences totaled over 15,000 people attending one of eight public program events.

## THE CURIOUSWORKS TEAM

### 2016 Committee Members

Chairperson – Melinda Muth
Treasurer – Easha Ranasinghe
Public Officer – Marc Brandon
Secretary – Vanessa Hyde
General Member – Melody Ng
General Member – Rachel Kerry

### Committee of Management

In 2016, CuriousWorks Committee of Management welcomed a new Chairperson, Melinda Muth. Melinda is an experienced company director specialising in leadership and team effectiveness and has taken over the reins from Rachel Kerry, who remains a General Member of the committee. A huge thank you to Rachel for the due diligence and expertise she bought to the role for over 2 years.

### 2016 Salaried Staff

Executive & Artistic Director – S. Shakthidharan
General Manager – Vanessa Hyde
Community Director – Caitlin Newton-Broad
Cultural Leader & Filmmaker – Guido Gonzalez
Communications Director – Gary Spink

## Supporters and Partners

**In 2016 CuriousWorks was proudly supported by:**
The Federal Government through the Australian Council for the Arts – Community Partnerships
The Federal Government through Ministry for the Arts
The NSW Government through Arts NSW & Screen NSW
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Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation
Fairfield City Council
Liverpool City Council
Playwriting Australia
Matana Foundation for Young People
Crown Foundation – Western Sydney Arts Initiative
The Funding Network – Skills Share

**In 2016 CuriousWorks proudly partnered with:**
Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre
Belvoir Street Theatre
National Theatre of Parramatta
Riverside Theatre
The Streaming Museum
Settlement Services International
Powerhouse Youth Theatre
Mt Druitt & District Reconciliation Group
Moogahlin Performing Arts
FunPark Coalition – Bidwill Uniting, Urban Neighbours of Hope, Blacktown Arts Centre, PYT Fairfield
North St Marys Neighbourhood Centre
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Australian Film, Radio and Television School
Granville Youth and Community Centre
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Robert Townson High School
University of Western Sydney, Aboriginal Regional Education Program
NSW Dept of Education, Liverpool Region, NAIDOC programs
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AMP

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