

CASE STUDY – SOCIAL RECOVERY

When COVID 19 swept into Burnie in April 2020, it was such an unusual and dramatic change to normality for many people. The Northwest Regional Hospital, in Burnie was declared a hot spot and the city was locked down, literally with roadblocks on the Bass Highway, to the east and west of the city. Fast forward to September 2021 and the COVID -19 landscape across our nation is still one where hot spots are flaring and state-wide lockdown is part of the new normal. Key issues have emerged across the nation and indeed across the world. Mental health, digital literacy and access to health, education, and other services remain challenged. Inequalities have never been more keenly recognised and responsiveness to act locally as a place- based collective to approach these issues is emerging as best practice.



Burnie Works called together a social recovery zoom workshop with key stakeholders across social services, education, and employment sectors, as the dust settled on the initial outbreak of COVID in Burnie. The workshop ran with the support of the Burnie Works team, who were the leads in break out groups online, facilitating conversations over two sessions. The collective group deep dived into the state of the community in the aftermath of

a lockdown, noting the ongoing influence of COVID on business as usual.

Stories get to the heart of the matter. The way we interpret stories is different for everyone, though there are common threads to our human experience that are recognised through themes and visual symbols. One thing that resonated with the collective group involved in the social recovery workshops was the shared experience of COVID. A key objective being, how might we share the stories of the Burnie experience to 'normalise' it? It was agreed that strength based storytelling to build on resilience would support Burnie's social recovery.

The rich ideas that were shared in this group work were key drivers for the Burnie Works backbone team to build a social recovery campaign, alongside other shared actions eg. advocating to keep increased Job Seeker payments at a higher rate, exploring flexible funding delivery and attending

monthly “Recharge” lunches that Burnie Works hosted for service delivery providers who were feeling increased fatigue during this period.

Several Social Recovery workshop participants were familiar with a campaign that ran in Burnie, several years back, to increase literacy for school aged children across Burnie. A giant papier mache clam travelled around the schools and public buildings, such as the Burnie Child and Family Centre. It could be opened with great excitement to reveal the gift of a book.

“Wouldn’t it be great if we could have a prop like the giant paper clam that travelled around Burnie, promoting resilience and a positive social recovery?”
Workshop participant

There was a shared agreement with other group participants for this creative approach.

Burnie is the city of makers. ‘The Pulp’, The Burnie Paper Mill was a major industry in Burnie for 70 years and the industrial history is revered in the community. A result of this industrial heritage has been the rise of paper arts and crafts in Burnie, with the calibre of the artists and the Paper on Skin art competition nationally renowned. Artist Cynthia Hawkins was touted by the Burnie Arts Council as the best placed woman for creating a sculptural prop for the social recovery campaign, after being highly commended for her Paper on Skin contribution in 2020 and earlier years. Cynthia was briefed by the Burnie Works team, with key detail from the Social Recovery workshop about what was deemed important for this work. She agreed to take on the project. A concept design that evolved to a striking 9- foot- tall sculpture, known as *Set Me Free*, came into being as 2020 ended. What was not apparent when Cynthia took on the project was how it would come to positively affect her own social recovery and inspire the storytelling component which has followed the piece around the community.

[Link to Cynthia’s story.](#)

Set Me Free began its tour at the Burnie Regional Art Gallery with a public talk. It travelled to 8 different public places in 2021 (and is still on tour through September 2021). An additional resource was designed to travel with the sculpture as it was simply not feasible to have our artist at each visit, and individual school leaders had their own ideas about how they wanted to integrate the artwork and activities into their school calendar. The Burnie Works backbone team researched materials on emotional intelligence, building resilience, mental health first aid and self-care strategies and

consulted both community and respected professionals in the local mental health space. A simple solution emerged that could be tailored to each environment.

A collection of activity sheets was designed by a coastal watercolour artist *Ebb Draws*. The activity sheets were offered to the school as a resource to share with the school community more broadly and use in a classroom setting to foster conversations around the artwork and social recovery. Ebb Draws is otherwise known as Liz Braid and visual storytelling is part of her tool kit. Burnie Works approached Liz after seeing her translate content from professional



development training on the *'Art of Conscious Leadership'* and making it accessible in whimsical, emotive imagery. As the campaign came to life, the question was raised how might an individual be able to create a story that is meaningful to them based on viewing and discussing the artwork, *Set Me Free?*

Liz ran several workshops at 2 schools, as well as the Burnie Wellbeing Hub and the Burnie Library. After each session, the Burnie Works team and Liz would reflect on the key messages and stories from the students, teachers, and community members.

A teacher from Natone reflected on the value for taking the time to reflect on the COVID 19 experience for kids which they hadn't done in the school setting. This school was inspired to create their own sculptures while they hosted *Set Me Free* and invited the broader hinterland community to visit the school exhibition.

The Northwest Support School made postcard sized watercolours, picking out imagery that represented the things most important to them which has been exhibited in an empty shopfront in the Burnie CBD.

Montello Primary School students did reflective writing while their school hosted *Set Me Free* in their library. Two of the school leaders from the Student Representative Council spoke to the Burnie Works

team about their experience. The students were invited to be the voices in a radio advertisement, sharing their stories. They visited local radio station Sea FM and were given experience in the recording studio. Their stories were shared to a strong listener base in the Burnie area. [Link to Radio Advertisement](#)

Common themes came together throughout the social recovery campaign in response to the Burnie tour of *Set Me Free* and accompanying workshops. There were tales of challenge (some quite extreme) and an overwhelming response of overcoming challenge with strength- based stories of survival. Artist, Ebb Draws also had a body of visual stories which culminated into the Burnie Works Survival Cards. The Survival Cards continue to encourage therapeutic reflection in a personal, or group setting beyond Burnie.

More published about the Burnie Works Social Recovery Campaign

[*The Advocate, A Striking nine- foot artwork is travelling around Burnie to spark difficult conversations*](#)

[*Alcohol and Drug Foundation Community Hub, Art leads a Tasmanian community's COVID-19 recovery*](#)



IMPACT CASE STUDY TWO

SOCIAL RECOVERY

CHANGE IN THE CONDITIONS OF COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Movement building	The social recovery workshops led to the community art projects which led to the production of the Burnie Works survival cards. The initiatives began with around 20 people and touched thousands of Burnie community members demonstrating a collective focus for social recovery post COVID.
Community Aspiration	The art projects enabled community members to participate in sharing their aspirations post COVID.
Strategic Learning and Shared Measurement	Reflection on action throughout the initiatives enabled the art projects to respond according to the community's reactions.
High leverage and system focus activities	The art project moving around key locations, including schools enabled maximum people to be involved.
Authentic community engagement	The initiatives in this case study engaged school children, community members, and service providers and invited them to share through art and conversation the impact of being part of the first regional lockdown of the pandemic.
Container for community change	The Burnie Works team roles were facilitator, funder, organiser, communicator.

CHANGE IN THE SYSTEM

Policies	Taking the community art project into several schools and other community sites has created pathways for future initiatives.
Practices	
Resource Flows	Burnie Works resourcing enabled the project, including supporting local artists.
Relationships and Connections	The emergent nature of the initiative enabled new stakeholders and people to participate beyond the formal Burnie Works networks.
Power Dynamics	This initiative was led by the community empowering people of all ages to share their experiences of COVID.
Mental Models	Feedback from the use of the Survival Cards demonstrates the power of this local resource to facilitate meaning-making for the community as it continues to grapple with the impact on COVID within and beyond Burnie.

CHANGE FOR INDIVIDUALS AND THE BROADER POPULATION

Individuals	Individual feedback demonstrates impact on those who participated in the social recovery initiatives.
Population	The response to the art initiatives is a lead indicator that this work contributed to community meaning-making and conversations about the mental health impacts of COVID.

Power Dynamics	Providing access to the logo artefact to the community and providing access to knowledge and experience of the history of Tasmanian Aboriginal community shifts power dynamics as knowledge builds understanding and empowers those who now have access to this knowledge.
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Mental Models (Mindsets)	The in-house evaluation of the workshops demonstrates a change in participant's mindsets about the experience of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community and this in turn changed the way they see their role in increasing cultural respect in their spheres of influence.
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CHANGE FOR INDIVIDUALS AND THE BROADER POPULATION

Individuals	The in-house evaluation of the workshops demonstrates personal change that can be attributed to participation.
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Population	The number of businesses, public places and individual cars displaying the pataway works logo is a lead indicator for longer term population change.
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