

Evidence of Impact
Case Studies

Regional Communities Benefit from Creative Schools

**creative
schools**

AN INITIATIVE BY:

FORM.
building a state of creativity



Regional communities benefit from Creative Schools

FORM's Creative Schools partners teachers and creative practitioners to transform learning experiences for children and young people in creative ways through codesigning and co-delivering curriculum-embedded creative learning sessions to students in their own classroom.


The program has had tremendous impact in influencing the creative learning opportunities for children, teachers and creative practitioners over the past five years, mainly in metropolitan areas in and surrounding Perth.

In 2023 Creative Schools initiated a pilot regional hub in the southwest region of Western Australia to identify the program's efficacy in regional settings.

FORM appointed a local Creative Schools hub coordinator with strong connections to the creative industries and schools in the area, and this proved instrumental to the success of the pilot. Five schools, six teachers and six creative practitioners participated in the program.

Similar to the metropolitan program, feedback indicates the children in regional schools show enhanced engagement in learning, improved wellbeing and advanced development of capabilities such as creative thinking, reflective thinking and collaboration through their engagement with the program.

Interviews with the hub coordinator and a sample of the regional teachers and creative practitioners demonstrate that the regional pilot also has unique positive outcomes for children, teachers and creative practitioners, as well as the local creative industry more broadly, specific to the regional context.



Impact on children and young people

For regional children and young people, the program affords opportunities for deep, long-term creative and cultural engagement, which many regional children may never experience. Creative Schools also bring richer diversity of role models into the schools, which can be a real challenge for small schools. This creates opportunities for broader career and life ambitions for the children and young people, including visibility of careers in the creative industries which may often be invisible to regional children.

“The main impact on the children is that it takes them out of the ordinary. Regionally we don’t have the access to cultural events as they do in metro areas; we just do not have the access to the creative infrastructure. We are malnourished creatively in the regions. It has been really essential to bring them a regular dose of creativity in their lives. The regularity of the sessions is important; it allows them to develop competency and confidence, unlike a two-week visiting program.”

Fiona Sinclair, South West Hub Coordinator

“The negative of a small school is that some of the children may have had the same teacher for three years in a row. A massive positive of this program is that I am coming in as a new voice, a man. There are no male teachers in the school apart from the Principal. I can be a role model. The children are really open to whatever I throw at them, because I am a new voice. The impact that a creative has, even though the hours are small over the week, can be big.”

Peter Hill, creative practitioner

“The children enjoy having someone else in the class, a man as a role model. It is nice for the students to have a different perspective. Seeing a man doing manly things like fire, but also artistic things, has been really good for the children. It gives them a broad version of what a man is.”

Sarah Walker, Teacher, Walpole Primary School

“There are very few arts specialists in regional schools. Seeing artists as professionals provides children with the understanding that a job in the arts could be a professional career path.”

Fiona Sinclair, South West Hub Coordinator



Impact on teachers

The shoulder-to-shoulder collaborative work of a teacher and creative practitioner over a long period of time in the teacher's classroom frequently leads to a transformative pedagogical experience for the teachers involved in the program. Over the past five years Creative Schools has often been described by teachers as their best professional learning since it is context-specific, transferable and immediately implemented "in my class, with my curriculum and with my students."

In a regional context the impact of this personalised teacher professional learning is amplified due to the high proportion of new graduate and early career teachers working in regional schools. Many of the creative practitioners working in the program are experienced educators and qualified teachers themselves, able to provide much valued one-to-one mentoring to graduate teachers through the program. The positive impact of a weekly teaching partner in the classroom to ease their transition into the teaching profession has been profound.

"I have really loved it. I am so grateful for the opportunity. It has really helped me grow in my confidence as a teacher. Unlocking the confidence to not follow linear process in the book has been an eye opener for me. I realised you can do whatever suits the needs of your students. Creative Schools has unlocked my mind to so many possibilities. It has unlocked my creativity as a teacher, knowing how I can incorporate creativity into my teaching."

Ashleigh Madeley, Teacher, Manjimup Primary School

"Teaching can be pretty solitary. Just seeing someone else to share the space is really good. I have been working with a new graduate teacher who told me after the first session she has learnt more from me than in her whole university career. The opportunity for broader mentoring, shoulder-to-shoulder in her own classroom is priceless."

Nic Sinclair, Creative practitioner

"Teachers gain a different kind of colleague, a different relationship, a different chemistry. The impact can be quite surprising, quite profound. For teachers it offers a different kind of camaraderie, an ally, a playful ally. It must feel nice to have a friend in the room with you, a constant source of ideas, providing insight into another way of approaching life."

(Fiona Sinclair, South West Hub Coordinator



Impact on creative practitioners

Creative practitioners in regional communities often value the influence of the natural environment and the sense of community often found in smaller towns as a source of creative inspiration. However, limited access to cultural institutions, resources or creative connections may be potentially isolating and access to fewer platforms for showcasing their work can hinder career development.

The Creative Schools program holds particular benefit for these regional creative practitioners by providing a valued source of income and an opportunity to showcase their skills to a wider audience. Working in partnership with teachers and other creative practitioners reduces the sense of isolation, provides opportunities for professional growth and reflection, informs their own creative practice and even opens up new career aspirations.

“It’s been the most amazing thing in my career, just the opportunity to be out of my normal life: reclaiming a little bit of self, being paid, having that time to be creative. It can be hard to give myself permission to make time to be creative. It has been really nice personally just feeling I am being creative in a different setting and still leading a creative life.”

Nic Sinclair, Creative Practitioner

“I get a lot from it. The problem I have is too many ideas. This helps me to focus it. It is helping me to push ideas through. The speed of moving through ideas quickly is helping me. I can use some of these ideas. I can then take out and use in my other art practice. That engages me.”

Peter Hill, Creative Practitioner

“For the creatives it is an employment opportunity to showcase their expertise. Everyone loves an opportunity to contribute, to be recognised for what they do well. It is also an opportunity to just have a lot of fun, an opportunity to be playful for the creatives, which is really valuable.”

Fiona Sinclair, South West Hub Coordinator

“It has been a really lovely experience working alongside a colleague. I have enjoyed mentoring. I am now even thinking of growing into teacher training perhaps.”

Nic Sinclair, Creative Practitioner

Impact on the wider local cultural and creative industry

A surprising outcome from the Creative Schools regional pilot is the wider impact that the program can have on the wider local cultural and creative industry. Many creative practitioners lead portfolio careers with a variety of roles.

The Creative Schools hub coordinator in the south west region is also the Artistic Director and General Manager for Southern Forest Arts. This partnership between Creative Schools and a Western Australian Regional Arts Network Hub organisation created an unexpected opportunity to amplify the work of the local creative and cultural industry and attract additional sources of funding into the region.

“The value to a regional arts organisation has been immense. It allowed us to have greater reach into our communities we serve that we could never do on our own.

It helped to legitimise why we are here and is helping us leverage other sources of funding to bring into the regions.”

Fiona Sinclair, South West Hub Coordinator



THE IMPACT OF CREATIVE SCHOOLS

Laura Motherway,
Strategic Creative Learning Manager,
FORM Building a State of Creativity,

with

Mathilda Joubert,
Director of Excellence and Innovation
Sheridan Institute of Higher Education,
Creative Schools Evaluator

For more information please contact:
learning@form.net.au



THE CREATIVE SCHOOLS PROGRAM WAS INITIATED AND IS MANAGED BY FORM: BUILDING A STATE OF CREATIVITY.
IT IS PROVIDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND IS FINANCIALLY SUPPORTED BY THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

**creative
schools**

AN INITIATIVE BY:
FORM.
building a state of creativity

© FORM 2025. All rights reserved.

Copyright for imagery and written content in this publication is held by FORM
Building a State of Creativity or the individual contributing writers, where
applicable. Every effort has been made to adhere to best practice ICIP protocols.