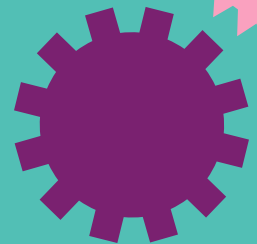
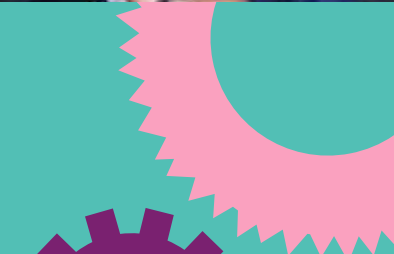


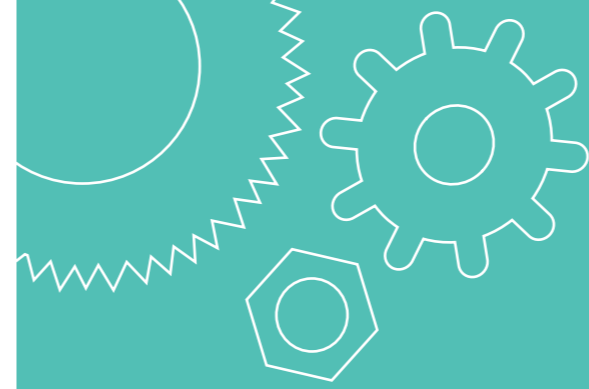
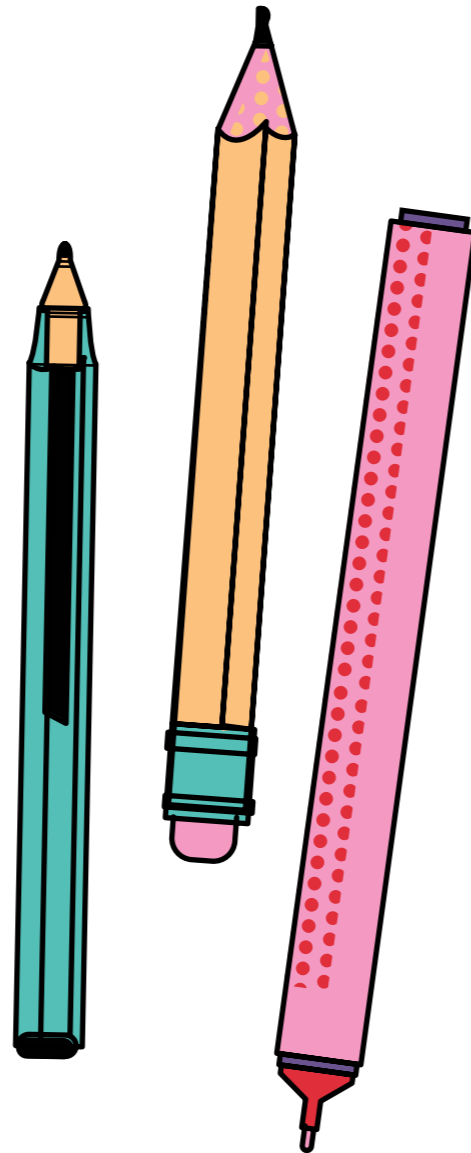
Sydney Story FACTORY



2016 - 2017
ANNUAL REPORT

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Meet Joseph



Joseph (age 10) is no stranger to the Sydney Story Factory. He attends the after school program at Yurungai Barnardos Learning Centre in Waterloo and he's been doing workshops with us there for three years now. Joseph was one of our students who went on an Australian Odyssey, packing up his imagination and writing an adventure story that took him across the country and back again.

Joseph has always been a very conscientious and attentive student who's a willing story writer and strives to do his best. Working with our volunteer Ian, Joseph found someone who he could really connect with to help stretch himself and grow more than he ever has before. In the past, for example, he has written stories about his mates, but with Ian he took on the challenge of creating a character based on himself and wrote something much longer and more involved.

The rapport between Joseph and Ian has been wonderful to watch. Ian and Joseph worked one-on-one and every week they were busy writing, writing, writing, with Joseph staying focused and engaged in the task throughout. There is a similarity in their personalities, and Joseph responded extremely positively to working with someone he clearly saw as a role model.

This consistent one-on-one support has made all the difference for Joseph. Storyteller Helen Coolican says, "Joseph has always been a good student but he does need the extra support. Working with Ian he's gone further than what was required of him in a way he hasn't before. He really pushed the ceiling as high as he could and we saw something new; never before has he seen the stars on the other side of the ceiling."

Like all of our Yurungai students Joseph stood up and read his story from the group's published anthology in the final presentation workshop. He was proud as anything. And rightly so.

What does Joseph think about his experience of writing with the Sydney Story Factory?

Do you remember coming to the Sydney Story Factory for the first time? What was it like?

Yes... I was excited because I get to draw stories and make them up.

What's so good about coming to the Sydney Story Factory?

The best thing about coming to the Story Factory is drawing what you think will go in the story, and drawing pictures and stuff.

Do you like writing now?

I still enjoy writing. I've liked writing since I was in preschool.

Do you feel like the writing you do here has helped or changed your writing at school?

Yeah, just generally.

Has it made you different in other ways too?

I think it made me different, made me more interesting and more interested in the world around me.

Any other comments?

I like the Story Factory because when you write your own stories and make them up, you put them in books so that everyone can hear it and know them all.

Executive Director's Report



When I think back on the last year, one image stands out.

We're on the terrace of the publisher, Allen & Unwin, to launch seven novellas written by seven of our students. Our young authors are aged between 13 and 16, and it's taken them all of 2016 to write their books, coming to the Sydney Story Factory every Thursday afternoon. It's been hard. Hard to stay interested in a story for that long. Hard to write about things that are, in some cases, very close to the bone. And very hard to have professional editors suggest how their work could be improved.

But they have done it. Today, their books are published.

Their smiles are incandescent. As they read from their novellas, pride swells through the room. These young people were not sure they could do this. Now they have, and their sense of what is possible is changed forever.

Much has been written about recent NAPLAN results, which some say reveal a 'catastrophic' decline in the essential skill of writing. International testing confirms this decline is disproportionately felt by young people from low socio-economic backgrounds, who are, on average, three years behind their more advantaged peers. This deeply worrying trend calls for a radical rethink and urgent implementation of new strategies.

Australia needs to turn things around for our most vulnerable young people, and we at the Sydney Story Factory are determined to play a part in this. We know – and independent evaluations demonstrate – that we can help improve literacy rates and engagement at school. But we can also do so much more than that.

Our young authors smiled so broadly that day because writing a novella had helped them find a voice. It taught them about persistence, and the grit required to be truly creative. Perhaps most importantly, it taught them that their story matters and that they are part of a community of writers that extends, imaginatively, all around the world. The joy in that was palpable.



Year of the Novella 2016 authors
Steven Stewart

It's been a fantastic year at the Sydney Story Factory; our sense of possibility is changing too. Demand for our programs far outstrips our capacity, which is what's driving us on with plans for our new centre opening in Parramatta next year. We are constantly refining our programs and practices to deepen our impact and maximise our reach. We know there is much more we can do and we are so excited to do it.

Thank you for supporting us. Together we really can change the lives of Australia's young people, one story at a time.

Dr Cath Keenan
Executive Director & Co-founder

Sydney Story Factory continues to grow from strength to strength. As we mark the fifth birthday of this vibrant powerhouse of an organisation there is much to celebrate.

Three years ago we set ourselves some ambitious targets. In our first strategic plan we established a clear vision. Our goal was that by the end of 2017 the Sydney Story Factory would:

- * be a flourishing small enterprise helping many thousands of young people a year;
- * have deep impacts on students and be a leading force in creative writing education for young people in Australia;
- * have diversified income streams and be ready to significantly expand.

Not every organisation can say they have ticked off everything they set out to achieve in their strategic plan, but I am hugely proud that we are well on track to achieving all that, and more.

The organisation is not just flourishing but booming, we're in a robust financial position and our reputation as creativity experts is secure. Our reach is impressive, and growing exponentially - a staggering 57% of our near 11,000 student enrolments happened in the last two years. Most importantly of all, evaluations are proving that we are making a very real difference in the lives of the young people we are privileged to work with.

All of this places us exactly where we wanted to be - ideally positioned for significant growth.

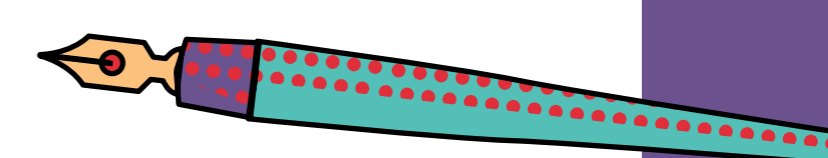
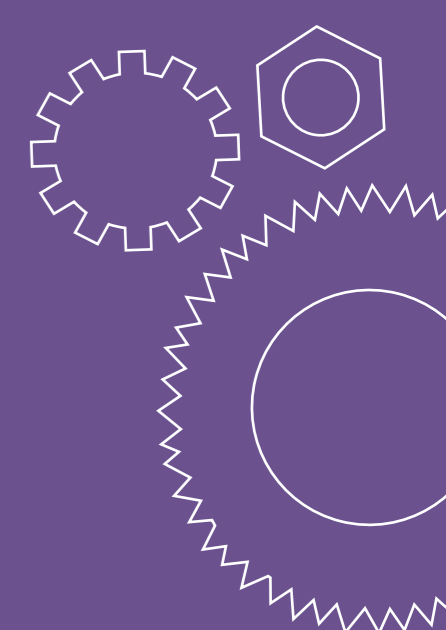
Sometimes I wonder what the secret is. The answer though is easy. It is the people involved. We have incredible staff, led by Cath Keenan and Richard Short. Truly, the sky is the limit of what these people can do. And our volunteers - each and every one of them has helped change the lives of the thousands of kids who have participated in our workshops. Thank you to all of you.

And of course we owe a huge debt of gratitude to our funding partners, who walk side by side with us to make it all possible. Particular thanks goes to the stellar group who invested in us from the first - UBS, Dusseldorp Forum, McLean Foundation and the Limb Family Foundation. This year we acknowledge too the visionary partners who are helping us lay the groundwork for expansion - Pantera Press, Crown Resorts Foundation and Packer Family Foundation, Balnaves Foundation and Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation. Thank you all so much.

The year ahead promises to be a hugely exciting one, as we prepare to open Sydney Story Factory Parramatta. This will allow us to bring a love of writing and creativity to thousands more young people every year. We look forward to celebrating many more achievements for many years to come.

Michael Gonski
President, Sydney Story Factory
Board of Directors

President's Report



Our Mission and Purpose



At the Sydney Story Factory we believe all Australian young people, no matter their background, should be given opportunities to develop the communication skills and flexibility of thinking that will allow them to live their lives to their full potential and flourish in a rapidly changing world.

Our Mission

To change the lives of young people, especially those from marginalised backgrounds, through creative writing and storytelling.

Our Purpose

Every day we set out to:

- * Run innovative and fun creative writing programs, with expert teaching and one-on-one tutoring.
- * Encourage young people to communicate ideas, giving them more confidence in their skills, themselves and each other.
- * Create and sustain a vital contribution to the community, by respecting and giving voice to the stories around us.

Our Focus

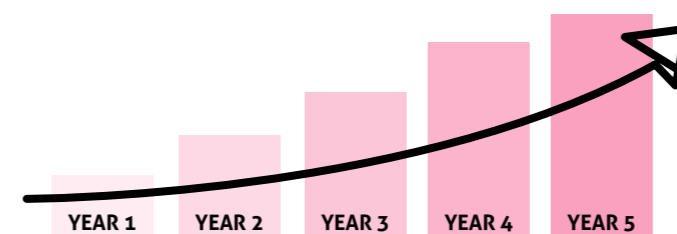
Our focus is marginalised young people – particularly young people who are Indigenous, from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, i.e. those most at risk of losing confidence in their writing abilities and switching off at school.

We run creative writing workshops that improve literacy and boost academic attainment for young people ages 7 to 17. In fun, inventive programs our students are inspired and encouraged to unleash their creativity and write. They are supported to succeed and leave with a new belief in themselves and what they're capable of. By engaging young people in positive arts-based learning experiences, and equipping them with essential skills, we empower them to seize the educational opportunities available to them, opening up their futures, and changing their lives.

Strategic Vision

In 2017 we conclude the three-year period of our first Strategic Plan (2015-17). Our first and second phases saw us consolidate our base and explore options for expansion. This year, while sustaining quality and consistency, we have been positioning for growth by laying the foundations for significant and sustainable expansion. As a result of the scoping activities undertaken last year, which gave us a clear blueprint for action, our growth strategies have been focused on one clear goal - opening a second creative writing centre in Parramatta in 2018.

5 Years of Growing Our Reach



10,887 Total student enrolments

24% Indigenous young people

38% Young people from language backgrounds other than English

157 partner schools, community groups & arts organisations



"It was fun because you get to experience your self a little more."

2016-17 By The Numbers

3,307 Total student enrolments

25% Indigenous young people

39% Young people from language backgrounds other than English

13,705 Student Workshop hours

4.14 Average hours of quality tuition per student

14% increase in ENROLMENTS

14% increase in STUDENT HOURS

"I can express how I feel through writing."



Sydney Story Factory Parramatta



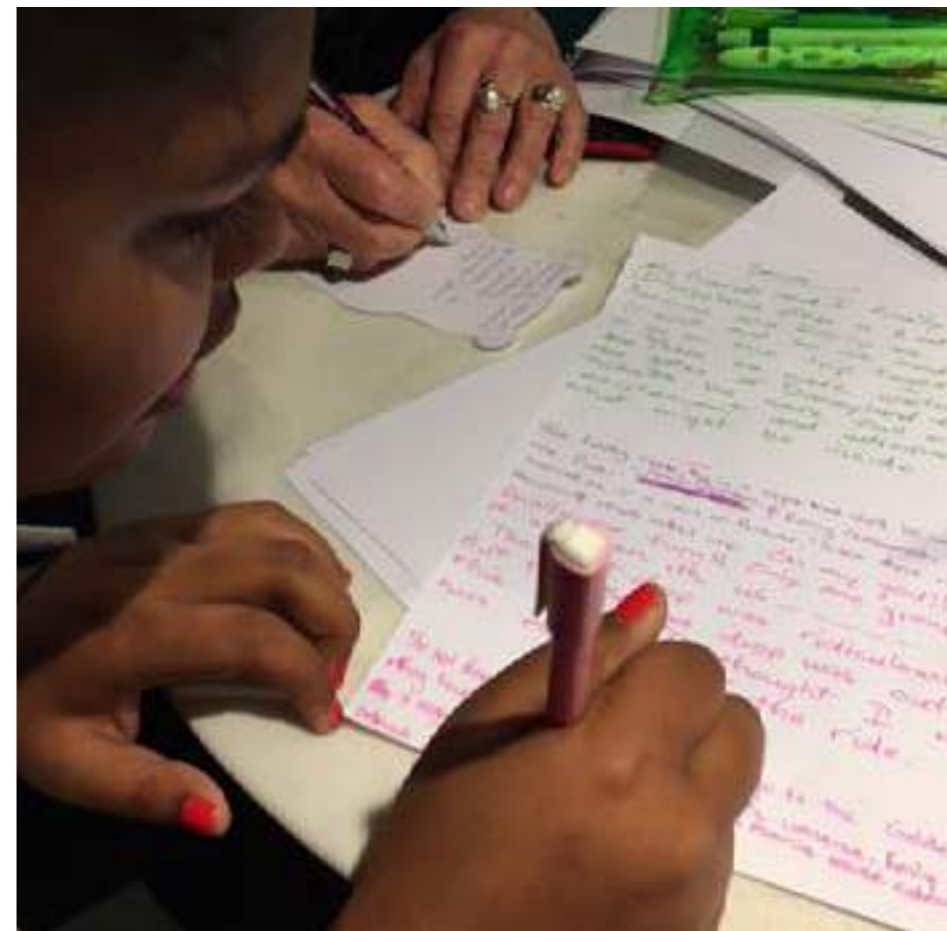
The pressing need for our programs in Western Sydney is clear. Already 30% of our students are from Western Sydney.

Many of the young people who live in Western Sydney find mainstream education challenging. NAPLAN results place students at many Western Sydney schools "below" or "substantially below" the Australian all-school average in all literacy categories, placing them at significant risk of leaving school with lower literacy levels than their peers and dramatically limiting their future prospects. Western Sydney has the lowest school retention rate from years 7 to 12 in the Sydney metropolitan area.

Yet Western Sydney's culturally diverse and rapidly growing population is far less likely to be offered access to quality arts education or literacy programs. With Sydney Story Factory Parramatta, we aim to fill that gap.

Over the last year we have been progressing steadily towards our goal of opening Sydney Story Factory Parramatta in May 2018. This has meant:

- * **Building capacity** - in late 2016 we welcomed two new staff members to the team in Redfern - administration officer Bheki Mkwanzani and fundraising and development co-ordinator Amber Dalrymple. Both immediately freed up the time of senior staff to focus on Western Sydney expansion.
- * **Foundation programs** - three major projects with Western Sydney primary and high schools commenced in early 2017, allowing us to demonstrate the value of our programs and establish relationships that we will be able to build on long-term.
- * **Site search** - the search for the right premises for our new creative writing hub has continued throughout the year.
- * **Fundraising** - a major capital campaign was launched in March 2017 to raise the total budget required to open the doors of our new creative writing centre and run our first full year of programs (through to June 2019).



"May the creativity I have come across from this experience stay with me forever."



Our Director for Western Sydney

In May 2017 we appointed Nikola Amanovic as director of Sydney Story Factory Parramatta. Nikola has considerable experience in performing arts, community development and business. He spent the last three years leading social change initiatives across Western Sydney.

Nikola is consulting widely with community leaders and organisations, schools, young people and other stakeholders across Western Sydney about how Sydney Story Factory can best meet their needs.

"For me, the most exciting thing about our expansion to Western Sydney is that thousands of kids who don't have access to meaningful arts programs will now be able to participate in workshops we deliver in their schools, local community organisations or at our new centre in Parramatta.

Not only will they be able to improve their writing skills and confidence, but through our publications, performances and media work, Western Sydney kids will be given a voice and allowed to take part in the wider cultural and social dialogue - proving that our diverse neighbourhood is a microcosm of the world!"

Nikola Amanovic, Director, Sydney Story Factory Parramatta

"We couldn't be more excited to support such an incredible organisation and help launch the new Sydney Story Factory in Parramatta. Pantera Press is all about investing in Australian writing culture by encouraging the next generation of writers and readers. We are immensely proud to be a Foundation Partner."

Alison Green, Pantera Press Co-founder and CEO



UBS SCHOOL WORKSHOP PROGRAM

1,327 Young people had a one-of-a-kind school-hours creative writing experience

43 Groups of primary school students from 18 schools

25 Groups of high school students from 13 schools

36 Workshop series or term-long programs

32 One-off workshops

Writing, Workshops & Wonder

Every day in Sydney Story Factory workshops young people discover the joy and freedom of writing, and it changes them.

You can see it. You can see it in the big eyes of the little girl who has just been told that her ideas are fantastic. You can see it in the slow grin of the boy who realises that for the first time he's written a complete poem, one that fills a whole page, and it's really good. You can see it in the body language of the self-conscious teen who, in spite of her nerves, stands to read her writing out loud to her classmates and gets showered with applause.

Unleashing young imaginations and lighting the spark of creativity is loads of fun but also a serious business. All Sydney Story Factory workshops are designed by our team of creative writing and literacy experts to:

- * improve written and oral communication skills;
- * enhance self-confidence and self-efficacy;
- * nurture creativity and empathy; and
- * deepen engagement with learning.

All workshops are devised and led by our expert storytellers. Under their guidance, volunteer writing tutors work with students one-on-one or in small groups, providing support and encouragement throughout the writing process. In a safe, structured environment students are given the scaffolding to build on, and the freedom to let their ideas flow.

Importantly, every workshop ends with publication. Our young writers see their stories, or poems, or play scripts, or audio narratives, or animations, typeset and bound as a handsome book, or produced in multimedia formats - with their names on it as authors. They've made something real, and it's out there in the world. Wherever possible, workshops also conclude with presentations, where our young writers get to share what they have created with everyone who's been cheering them on. We celebrate their achievement then share their stories as widely as we can, for the whole community to enjoy.

UBS School Workshop Program

Workshops run during school hours with class groups of primary and high school students are a core part of our programming. This year we ran 68 workshop programs with schools from Waterloo to Villawood and Bankstown to Bourke. We ran 32 workshops that were one-offs, where students had their first taste of writing with us. For primary school students visiting our home base in Redfern, that usually also meant their first thrillingly terrifying introduction to Marcia the Martian Librarian.

This year however, we saw a change in balance, with more short series or term-long programs than one-offs, and more programs delivered on-site at schools than in Redfern. All the schools we partner with are in lower socioeconomic areas and/or with high proportions of students who are Indigenous or from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Longer programs mean we can achieve deeper impacts and it's easier for schools if we run programs for them on-site. It's been a real privilege to have been invited into so many schools this year, and to have played a part in opening up the world of creativity for their students.



"It made me feel more confident reading out loud."

"The students were engaged and inspired from the moment they arrived at Sydney Story Factory. The workshops allowed them to explore a way of storytelling that was new to them in an environment which fostered creativity... This workshop will have a direct benefit on the students' future class activities. They responded to the program with enthusiasm and wonder."

Carrita Nardi, Teacher, Bankstown Girls High

"The boys are still discussing the fact that they are now published authors and just cannot believe that they have their very own books. I have had feedback by their parents/carers and they said that B and K haven't stopped talking about the session at home either, they are so chuffed!"

Courtney Schacht, Teacher, Casuarina School

After School Workshops

12 Term-long after school workshops

240 Enrolled participants

53 Young people from language backgrounds other than English

60% Indigenous young people

8 Community partners

"The feedback from the kids was great, they loved it. The few who were unsure or who were only going to give it one week have all said they can't wait for next week. Some of our kids who are quite quiet were really animated on the way home talking about their stories - so lovely to hear!"

Liddy Mitchell,
caseworker, KARI



"You should see how much energy Sophie has this afternoon having received these reviews! She's a changed girl, in a very positive way. In her words, 'It's just amazing I feel so.....(squeals)', (imagine that with lots of flappy hands and arms and prancing and squealing). You get the idea."

Ann, mother of Sophie, Taree

After School Workshops

Not every kid wants to go from school to a writing class at the end of a day, particularly if writing is a struggle for them and they're not achieving in the classroom. But get them excited about the adventure stories that burst out of a box of treasures every week, or ask them to write a new story for colourful characters they've just invented, or give them licence to create the grossest recipes they can think of... and you would be amazed at what can happen. Most of the children who got writing with us after school this year were 13 or under. All of our after school workshops were run in collaboration with community partners, including Weave Kool Kids (from La Perouse), the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE) and KARI Aboriginal Resources. A highlight of the year was the partnership that saw us work with Weave, The Settlement, Amnesty International and local street artists to support 18 kids from Redfern/Waterloo to create a giant snake mural that's now a permanent feature at The Settlement Neighbourhood Centre in Darlington. So proud.



Pen Pal Program

Once you've got the writing bug it's hard to stop. Our Pen Pal Program offers young people who have participated in our workshops and want to keep writing, or those who can't attend our workshop programs, a chance to reach out for some guidance via email. We doubled the number of young people taking up this option this year, with 18 students submitting 30 pieces of writing for feedback. Volunteer tutors offered advice and encouragement and the writing continued to flow.



Sundays at the Story Factory

Sunday workshops are a great opportunity for young people hungry to write to really get stuck in. In parallel with each school term, we opened up the Martian Embassy for morning and afternoon workshop sessions every Sunday, offering seven or eight week programs where writers 6 to 15 could develop an extensive and polished piece of writing. These inclusive programs brought together young people from diverse backgrounds and from all across Sydney (from as far as Georges Hall and the Blue Mountains) to share their ideas and celebrate each other's talents. Students with support needs were made especially welcome and given every encouragement to succeed. And succeed they did. Given the chance to create their own adventures in Fear City, be led by the nose in Tales that Stink or learn all there is to know about Fantastic Beasts and How to Write Them, every one of our Sunday students produced original stories that they - and we - could be truly proud of.

"Everyone here is weird like me, so everyone can be as weird as they want."



Sunday Workshops

9 Term-long Sunday workshops

139 Enrolled participants

32 Young writers enrolled in more than one workshop

46% Young people from language backgrounds other than English

21% Young people with support needs

"Her classroom teacher commented on Chiara's improving writing skills. This is the first time in Chiara's primary school life (ie. for the past five and a half years), she is given a 'B' for her writing. This is quite an achievement for a girl who's only written two lines, to five lines, to a short paragraph to two short paragraphs... And now she's writing a full page story."

Selliana,
mother of Chiara



Holiday Workshops

15 School holiday workshops

238 Enrolled participants

34% Indigenous young people

15% Young people from language backgrounds other than English

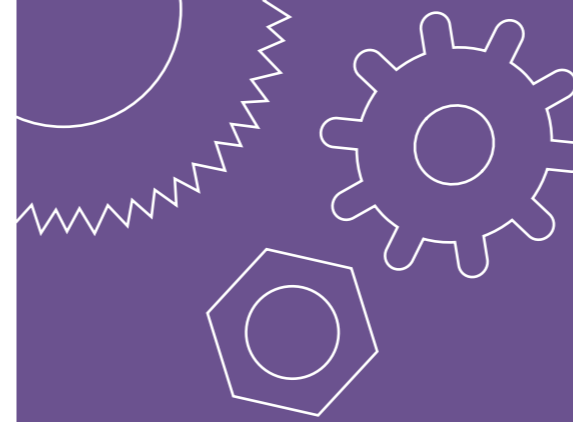
7 Community partners

School Holiday Workshops

The school holidays are a chance for us to work with new groups of young people we don't have opportunities to work with otherwise. This year we partnered with 7 community organisations to deliver 15 workshop programs during school holidays, either at our home base in Redfern, or at a place that suited them. Children supported by the Asylum Seekers Centre continued their Pen Pal adventures, writing to children at St Brigid's Catholic Primary School in Marrickville; we wrote aspirational newspapers with Indigenous teens attending a day-long focus session at the University of Sydney; and a very special group of children living with their mothers in emergency housing reinvented themselves in the film of their life.

"It gave me a chance to share things I liked about myself."

"I liked how the poems bring us together."



Meet Jeremiah



Jeremiah has been attending Sydney Story Factory workshops for some time, with Redfern Jarjum College, a school for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the heart of Redfern.

In Term One this year we saw a dramatic turn-around for Jeremiah. Over the course of eight weeks Jeremiah and his fellow Jarjum students really used their imaginations to create poetry, stories and comic strips of all kinds, and each week Jeremiah was right in the thick of things – really keen to read his poetry and short stories out to the group.

Storyteller John Blair has noticed a dramatic change in Jeremiah's attitude, both towards participating in workshops and being engaged with the writing tasks. He says Jeremiah is a completely different student from last year. "When we first started working with Jeremiah he was shy and tended to disengage. He wasn't really interested in writing or the group activities, his volunteer transcribed his stories for him and he certainly wouldn't read anything out loud."

These days, Jeremiah is 100% engaged in the creative process – including writing with the help of his tutor and illustrating his stories. "He really cares about his creativity and the story he is currently immersed in. He reads his work out loud and is proud of his work." We can understand why! The work Jeremiah produced was some of his best yet.

This term Jeremiah was supported by his volunteer writing tutor, Phillip, who scribed his stories and worked with him one-on-one each week. Jeremiah has come on in leaps and bounds this year because Phillip is so endlessly patient and interested in his creativity – the perfect writing tutor!

As John noted, "working with Phillip really helped [Jeremiah] come out of his shell, take pride in his work and enjoy writing."

What does Jeremiah think about his experience of writing at the Sydney Story Factory?

What was it like when you first came to the Story Factory?

I was shy. I thought I would fail at everything, but then we were just doing stories and pictures.

Did you like writing at first?

No. But when I started getting used to it, I did start to like it.

Do you like writing now?

Yes I do like writing.

Do you feel like the writing you do with us has changed you in any way?

Yes – it makes me feel happy.

What's your favourite character or piece of writing you've created at the Sydney Story Factory?

The dragon story – the adventure one with the dragon at Redfern Park.

What happened to that character or in that story that was so good?

There was a good dragon and a bad dragon and a bird who wanted a friend. My favourite was the good dragon because he made friends with the bird.

Anything else you want to tell us?

I do like some of the volunteers, and I do like writing stories and drawing with my stories. I do like the aliens at the Story Factory.

Journey for Hair Gel

by Grant

Nathaniel woke up in his Glen Alpine mansion with sunrise and a nice fragrance of passionfruit air freshener. He got out of bed and slipped on his grey tee and best black jeans. Nathaniel rushed down the stairs and stared at his giant pancakes which were drenched in maple syrup with a nice light spread of whipped butter and 12 delicious clusters of raspberry puree. Nathaniel ate pancakes.

On the way to school Nathaniel found a substance on the footpath. Nathaniel felt relaxed as he picked up the high tech box, but suddenly a holographic projection of a face appeared. It said to travel across the country to get the crystal hair gel or he'd get disintegrated. He called Lance, his best friend, and they started the journey but once more there was a dilemma. They needed a ride.

Again a projection appeared out of Lance's hand. The face said, "You got powers, bro, that you'll discover," then disappeared into thin air. Nathaniel decided instead of taking a shortcut they travel by foot. After nine hours getting through to the centre of Gundungurra, a gust of purple fog suddenly bloomed over the two friends. At this point a shadow of a python had been getting closer by the second. When it was in a visible distance Lance and Nathaniel could not believe their eyes. It was the mega mighty Krokaroo. It had a sick hairdo with spikes down his back and tail, a spear in his left hand, and a cool tat on his pouch saying, "Top Roo." He was also wearing sunnies, with a raised eyebrow.

"Let's fight," laughs the mega mighty Krokaroo. Burn, blast, laser beam, fast feet, KO. Nathaniel had been knocked out and left on the floor injured. Lance rushed to the scene to save Nathaniel. Lance managed to resuscitate him with snow but they had to move on. Nathaniel really had to push hard to keep going.

To be continued...



I Drove to Bankstown

By Alicia

Behind the dangerous exterior of
police sirens and fake Gucci hats
with trash on the streets
As I drove deeper into the town
I witnessed the real side of Bankstown
The side where different cultures mix together
and accept each other
The side where you can hear the laughter
and feel the contagious joy.
Bankstown.
Atmospheric.
Diverse.
Happy.
Bankstown's a wonderful place to be.

Emotions

By Matilda

The size of a light as large as electricity.
The colour of brightness like the sun.
The weight of a whale landing on a boat
The smell of air after my brother goes to the toilet
The worth of mum smiling at me
The taste of the wind at the beach
The feeling of sunlight on my skin
The sound of trains going past at the station
The texture of Lorena's gel pens when I write
The sensation of biting into a ham, pineapple and
cheese pizza
The opposite of sadness is happiness when I get
school right

Important findings from terribly scientific
research conducted via our State of Mind
writing project - sample size: 812 teenagers
from Bourke to Bonnyrigg:

Most Popular Foods

1. Pizza
2. Pasta
3. Fried Chicken
4. Burgers
5. Sushi

Best Sneakers

1. Nike
2. Adidas
3. Converse
4. Vans

Partnering with Community

A focus on community has been key to the success of Sydney Story Factory right from Day One. We know that the most effective programs, ones that drive meaningful change, are those that are community-led and strive to meet the needs that the community has identified as its priorities.

We respond to community calls for programs that will help children and young people overcome disadvantage, improve educational outcomes, and thrive. We also know that change takes time, so we're committed to the long haul, delivering programs on an ongoing basis in all of the communities we work in.

Partnering with community organisations allows us to join forces with trusted allies, who share common values and have the same aspirations as we do for the young people they support.

By working closely together, right down to tailoring programs for each group of kids we work with, sharing insights and information, and pooling resources, we can achieve real impacts even more effectively and efficiently than we could with each of us working in isolation.

In Redfern, we have been partnering with many of the same organisations for almost five years. Many of the children we've had the pleasure of working with through these partnerships have now let their imaginations loose with us in multiple workshop programs, and we've watched them grow and flourish. As we continue to expand, the list of organisations we work with only continues to grow. We look forward to witnessing the continuous blossoming of all their young writers over the years to come.

We were proud to deliver programs in partnership with 23 community organisations over the last year:

- * Amnesty International
- * Aspire
- * Asylum Seekers Centre
- * Australian Refugee Volunteers
- * Bankstown Youth Development Services
- * Brewongle Environmental Education Centre
- * CanTeen
- * Casula Powerhouse
- * CentaCare Bourke
- * Clontarf
- * Glebe Pathways
- * KARI Aboriginal Resources
- * Middle Ground Youth Services
- * National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy (NASCA)
- * National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE)
- * Redfern Jarjum College
- * Settlement Neighbourhood Centre Compass (University of Sydney)
- * Women's & Girls Emergency Centre (WAGEC)
- * Weave
- * Weave Kool Kids
- * Youth Off The Streets
- * Yurungai Barnardos Learning Centre



12 stalls hosted at
COMMUNITY
EVENTS
and activity
days

"Sydney Story Factory has, from the outset, formed strong partnerships and used a collaborative approach in all they do. Our trustees can clearly see the impact that SSF has on the students they work with at The Martian Embassy, giving them a voice and new skills in a setting that is supportive, inclusive and fun—and most of all empowering. In many cases these will be transformational moments in the lives of these young people. We are equally excited about the planned expansion to Western Sydney where there is also a great need for SSF's programs."

Paula McLean, Trustee, McLean Foundation

Special Projects & Programs

Every writing project we run, with every group of students, is special. Whether we get to write with them once, or for a whole term, or longer. But sometimes it makes sense to push the boat out and go big. This year we ran some fantastic special projects that saw us amp up the creativity and reach hundreds of young people we haven't had the chance to write with before.

WESTERN SYDNEY FOUNDATION PROGRAMS

Four major foundation programs will lay the groundwork for our expansion across Western Sydney over 2017 and 2018. Three of them commenced this year.

* Primary School Creative Writing Residencies

At the beginning of 2017 we started delivering in-depth workshop programs in Western Sydney primary schools. We were on-site one day a week for a full term delivering workshops with two class streams in two schools each term. We move on to four more schools in the second half of 2017 and in 2018 we'll go back to the same schools again to deepen impacts and reach new students. To kick things off in Terms One and Two we worked with 133 students from Ruse Public School, St Patricks Primary Guildford, Briar Road Public School, and Merrylands East Public School.

* Photo Faction

In Term Two we partnered with the Australian Centre for Photography and students in three Western Sydney high schools to explore visual and written storytelling. Fifty-six students swapped images and original texts in a constantly evolving storytelling process that wowed and amazed them as much as it did us. We're working with three more schools in Term Three and our students' interactive stories will be published later this year on the University of Sydney's A*STAR website. They'll be shown too in a colourful exhibition at the Parramasala Festival in March 2018.

* UnMapping: Charting New Paths to Creativity

In partnership with the Museum of Contemporary Art, we're helping young people explore the creative process. The program rolls out in six-month phases over two years with one primary school and one high school in each phase. The program launched with artist Ella Condon and 35 students (almost 80% of whom were Indigenous or from language backgrounds other than English) from Plunkett Street Public School and Canterbury Boys High School. During visits to the Sydney Story Factory and the MCA, Ella explained how she generates her ideas, then students responded in writing. Ella's interactive piece, Light Leaks, commissioned especially for the project, and the students' writing were then displayed together in our front window.



"I really like today learning because today learning was really fun."



State of Mind

This has been our biggest and most ambitious project to date. By the end of 2016 we'd travelled over 3,000 kilometres to work with 812 teenagers in 35 high schools. Our first statewide project took us from Bourke to Bonnyrigg, Maroubra to Mt Druitt, Gilgandra to Campbelltown. Young people from all walks of life worked with us to write original poetry and narrative non-fiction that was true to their own lived experience. By the end of it one thing was obvious: there is very definitely no such thing as an average teenage life in New South Wales. A selection of over 100 finished poems, stories and memoirs will be officially published in October 2017, to be launched with return visits to regional communities and a celebration event for Sydney schools.



Year of the Novella

In December we celebrated the launch of seven perfectly formed novellas written over the course of 2016 in our first year-long writing program. If you haven't yet read A-R-D-E-N by Bindi Mutiara, Silver Lights by Luka Bakota or the epic Shadows of a Thief by Lisa Choi, well you're in for a treat. Nine amazing teens saw the program through to the end, with two more novellas very near completion as well, a stellar achievement for all of them. The Year of the Novella is back in 2017 with 11 students powering into writing original novellas of their own. This year the program is being run at Bankstown Arts Centre, and all but two novella-ists are from Western Sydney.

High School Residencies

In 2016 we were invited to run a full year of programs at Matraville Sports High School, and in 2017 we came back for more. In term-long programs we get to know senior students in two year groups each term, 133 of them over 2016-17. And we're cheering as they create complex characters and vivid stories they never could have imagined themselves capable of.

In 2017, at the invitation of the Department of Education, we've also taken over a classroom at Canterbury Boys High School. We're delivering three streams of workshops, for years 8 to 12, on one full day every week. Workshop content and structure are carefully planned in close consultation with teachers to enhance classroom activities and curriculum objectives. In the first two terms of the year we worked with 150 boys who wrote a collaborative autobiography about the oldest person in history, poetry about being human, cli-fi stories, and fables about robot birds.



Youth At Risk

In early 2017, for the first time, we partnered with Youth Off the Streets' Bowen College to reach young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Seven teenagers, all very sceptical to begin with, became engrossed in writing protest poems, poems that gave them the freedom to say things they were burning to say. The poems they wrote impressed everyone around them, but not half as much as they impressed themselves. At the end of Term Two we also began a four month 'Storyweavers' writing project with Rivendell, a treatment centre for young people with mental illness.

"It was helpful and I felt like I was not judged."



Invaluable Volunteers

Where would we be without our volunteers? In the last year our volunteers gave us a staggering 7,954 hours of their time. They could have used those hours in any number of other ways but they chose to spend them with us, and the young people we work with, and we are deeply grateful they did.

It's because of them we are able to continue doing what we do, achieving transformational impacts for marginalised young people in every workshop we run. It's volunteers that make Sydney Story Factory's teaching model so powerful. As tutors they're the ones who are right there providing students with the one-on-one support that helps them push through the difficult stages and keep writing. They're coach and mentor and cheerleader and champion, the supportive adult who's there to listen with friendly, open care and respect, to bounce ideas off, to encourage brave creations, to help overcome challenges and to applaud success. Sometimes quietly; sometimes very loudly, and proudly, indeed.

It's our community of volunteers who make Sydney Story Factory unique, and what a wonderful community they are.

Freelancers and students, retirees and writers, parents and professionals they come from all over Sydney and from all walks of life. They share a love of writing and a desire to give back to the community - and give they do. Our Ambassadors of Ink - supernova volunteers who have given us more than 42 hours of their time - now total an amazing 128 wonderful individuals. Four of them were recognised with nominations for state-wide and national volunteering awards this year. Meanwhile, we're especially delighted to be able to now count 5 former students among our volunteers, all of them still under 20 but as passionate about sharing a love of writing as many others twice their age.

Of course, we continue to welcome new volunteers into our community too, the fresh new faces we need to keep bringing into our fold if we are to continue to grow. Each month this year we have run volunteer training and orientation days for up to 33 people at a time. In response to feedback, we've expanded the training so that our volunteers feel confident about stepping into a workshop straight away. We've also responded to requests for more insight and knowledge about some of the specific challenges our students face and offered 10 professional development sessions for volunteers keen to deepen their impacts with students even more.

Our volunteers shine as writing tutors, but they also represent us at community events, tackle the mammoth typing piles at the end of every term, meet and greet in the Martian Embassy, interview potential new tutors, tackle the running of major projects with us, and so much more.

For every hour, on every day, we say Thank You!

"I started volunteering with SSF because I write for a living, and thought I'd be able to give something back to kids who could use some help. What I didn't realise was how genuinely rewarding and fun it would be to get to spend time every week with an enthusiastic, imaginative, energetic kid who has a bunch of great ideas that can be turned into great stories. Volunteering at SSF is challenging, but in the best way - it requires patience, empathy, and thinking deeply about how to best support a kid in finding their voice. There is no better feeling than connecting with your student, and helping them produce work that is observant, crazy, hilarious, and smart."

Lane Sainty, volunteer

BY THE NUMBERS

1,770 Total volunteers trained

850 Volunteers workshop ready

305 New volunteers trained this year

76% New volunteers became active

7,954 Volunteer hours this year

1,405 TOTAL HOURS
of VOLUNTEERING by
AWESOME UMA
and **LOVELY LORENA**
ALONE!



Digital Storytelling

In May we delivered the first of three digital workshops through the Sydney Opera House's digital classroom. In six sessions, over just two days, we worked with over 700 young people from 15 primary schools across Sydney and NSW to create their own stories, inspired by an Opera House production.

Support Needs

Our progressive model where students with support needs, including autism spectrum disorders, receive individual private tutoring before moving into group workshops on Sundays continues. Sixteen young people have unleashed their creativity with us this way over the last 12 months. We also ran one-off workshops for class groups from Casuarina School and Rowland Hassall School, both schools dedicated to working with students with support needs.

The Grossest Restaurant in Redfern

In partnership with OzHarvest we devised a unique creative experience for 11 children attending after-school care at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE). In two workshops a week, over seven weeks, they engaged with the preparation and tasting of different foods and recipes, and used these food experiences as inspiration for writing. The resulting creative writing combined their investigations of the restaurant business, kitchen set up, healthy food, and cooking methods, with a generous serve of zombies, unicorns, messy chefs and murderous rats! The experience concluded with a one-of-a-kind pop-up celebration of food and writing, held in conjunction with an NCIE community evening, and the publication of the one-of-a-kind Grossest Recipes in Redfern. Needless to say, it was a universal hit.

Regional Reach

Following on from our State of Mind project, and because we were hungry for more, a team of three storytellers and two volunteers started Term Two by travelling down the South Coast to Warilla and delivering two full days of workshops with 196 teenagers in years 7, 8 and 12. We also travelled to Tamworth and Armidale and delivered workshops with 91 students alongside professional training for teachers.





Expertise Shared, Impacts Multiplied

Introduced in 2016, our Teacher Professional Development training program is very quickly gaining a life of its own.

This involves Storyteller-in-chief, Richard Short, sharing all that we have learned about creativity in the classroom in four programs approved and endorsed by the New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA). Teachers will soon be required to complete a minimum number of professional training hours per year and they come to us for training sessions at the Martian Embassy during the school holidays, or we travel to them on a day that suits. Training sessions are paid for from the school's Professional Development budget, sequestered for that purpose.

Through workshops focused on robot bird poetry, digital storytelling, community and the high school English curriculum subject of 'Discovery', Richard explores with teachers ways of introducing creative thinking into their classrooms and new ways to engage students in writing activities that feel meaningful to them. And they love it.

In feedback surveys participating teachers tell us that what they're learning has direct application for their classroom, and they mark it 10 out of 10.

In our first full year of the program 447 teachers have been equipped to take the best of our creative writing practice back to their classrooms. This includes teachers from Armidale and Tamworth, who had the benefit of working with Richard as he delivered 'Discovery' programs to students in their schools. It also includes 130 teachers who attended the Australian Literacy Educators' Association (ALEA) 2016 Annual Conference and leapt on the opportunity (who wouldn't!) to take part in training sessions there.

If every one of those 447 teachers has implemented what they learned with just one class of 25 students, that's 11,175 young people we have helped to unleash their creativity. That's more than our total enrolment numbers after five full years of workshops achieved in our first year alone of Teacher Professional Development programs!

Sharing our knowledge and expertise as active participants in the educational community also remains an important part of achieving our mission. To this end, this year we delivered papers and presentations at the ALEA 2016 Annual Conference, ETA (English Teachers' Association) 2016 Annual Conference, Positive Schools Conference, and the Brisbane Symposium on Literature and Writing Centres for Children, and to students in creativity and education at the University of Sydney.

3,242
WINGS, BEAKS, TAILS
and FEATHERED TORSOS
cut from paper
for the **ROBOT BIRD**
POETRY WORKSHOPS



From 'State of Mind'

I am the back of my nan's where the wattles grow
I am not doing anything productive
I am a polka-dotted skater skirt, strapped on with suspenders
I am petrol and wood
I am a devon and chips sandwich
I am the dripping sound of the tap that never got fixed
I am the rage when people hack my online games
I am the torch light shining on my favourite book
I am the shadow of a dance
I am my culture, my island, my family

"It was a part of my learning and I got to use my imagination."

1,264
'I AM'
POEMS
written

Specially Decorated Sundaes

Created for the Grossest Recipes in Redfern, by students at NCIE

For a Unicorn: A unicorn likes hay ice cream. It has lots of oats and five ripe red apples. The unicorn is like a beautiful horse with a horn on its head. It lives on ice cream. No one has ever ridden a unicorn. They are too proud.
Rhea

For a Monster: Monsters like many kids face on it. With sixteen maggots, seven frog's eyes, and every animal's poo on top and the bowl is mud.
EV

For a Pirate: Pirates always want ice cream with gold coins, a hook (it's in the recipe), and a full sized sword.
Naite

For a Vampire: This dessert has everything a vampire will DEVOUR!!! It has fresh human blood, teeth, and fierce beasts, like bats and owls.
Umu

For a Robot: Robot ice creams are covered in machines: nuts and bolts and screws. And all the parts of an engine.
Naite

820
ZINES
created

Dramatic Monologue

By Ali

The earth violently shakes and tremors, as birds fly, flustered out of the trees into the dark gloomy sky. As I stood on the hill a small distance away from the foot of the volcano, I watched as billows of smoke and ash floated into the air which hid the sun, casting a gloomy shadow on the land.

I start to quickly pack up my photography equipment, and as I do a small herd of wild horses frantically gallop past to escape the wild terror of the event that was going to unfold.

I followed suit, running towards my car, and dropping the equipment on the ground. I shoved my hand into my pocket to retrieve the car keys only to find they weren't there.

Panic and anxiety rose from somewhere inside and took complete control. I spun on my heels and ran back to the site. As soon as I got there I searched wildly for the keys. Combing through the grass and inspecting the abandoned rabbit holes I failed to find the keys. I glanced toward the volcano just as it burst open blowing bits of rock and lava everywhere. Lava poured down the side of the volcano, coating the mountain in thick, bright orange liquid.

The ground shook from beneath my feet and I fell, landing on my side in a clump of dry, dead bushes. In that moment I saw a flash of silver wide and huge. I can see everything from up there, the land spanning out until it stops at the horizon. Inside it feels the pressure and heat bubbling. It will destroy the scenery. It only ever awakens from its deep slumber when the great force of pressure builds up from inside it. Clouds of ash and smoke billow out from the top of its head.

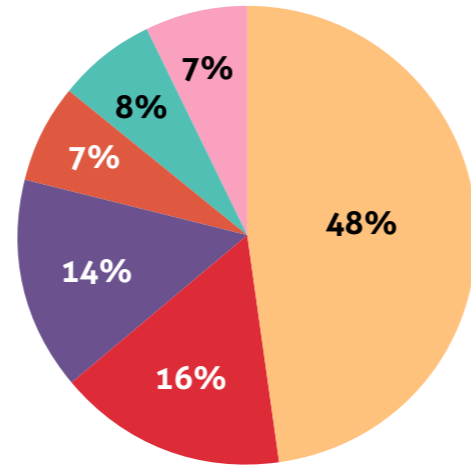
Financial Statements

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

REVENUE	2017 \$	2016 \$
Donations and contributions	1,202,083	731,878
Government grants	108,156	93,000
Donated consulting services	-	250,000
Event proceeds (Art Auction)	-	62,100
Shop sales	12,112	12,761
Workshop income	17,187	25,520
Venue hire income	10,363	5,301
Membership dues	273	209
Other income	63,705	35,639
Interest income	8,991	9,688
Total Revenue	1,422,869	1,226,096
Cost of Sales	-	(3,652)
Gross Profit	1,422,869	1,226,944
EXPENSES		
Employee expense	713,977	515,399
Property expense	70,327	72,718
Audit fee expense	6,000	6,000
Promotion and fundraising	11,088	6,895
Workshop expense	4,496	14,613
Home Project consulting fees	1,700	15,583
Insurance	8,045	9,732
Association administration	47,406	40,905
Depreciation	97,905	96,788
Evaluation expenses	4,500	19,912
Consulting services	-	250,000
Program Costs	110,674	-
Other expenses	21,803	56,992
Total Expenses	(1,097,918)	(1,105,537)
Surplus Before Income Tax	324,951	121,407
Surplus From Continuing Operations	324,951	121,407
Other Comprehensive Income For the Year,	-	-
Net of Tax	324,951	121,407
Total Comprehensive Income For the Year	324,951	121,407

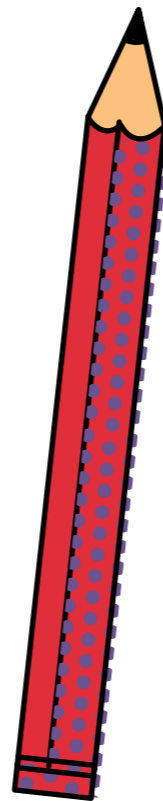
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017 (Summary)

	2017 \$	2016 \$
ASSETS	1,710,847	1,094,312
Total Current Assets	1,643,742	940,242
Total Non-Current Assets	67,105	154,070
Total Assets	1,710,847	1,094,312
Total Current Liabilities	360,000	-
Total Non-Current Liabilities	631,951	667,000
Total Liabilities	991,951	667,000
NET ASSETS	718,896	427,312



WHERE OUR REVENUE COMES FROM

- Government
- Trusts & Foundations
- Philanthropy & Major donors
- Corporates
- Individuals & fundraising
- Other income



The full Annual Financial Report 2016-2017 for Sydney Story Factory Inc is available on request.

Changing Young Lives

Sydney Story Factory workshops are vivid and colourful, they're full of action and drama, and packed with surprises.

But that's only part of the story.

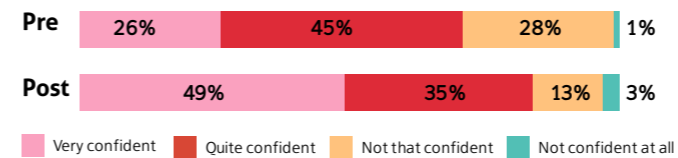
In every workshop we strive to make a difference. A real difference, in the real lives of the young people we work with. This year, we've again been awed by what our students have achieved and overwhelmed by the positive feedback they, their teachers, parents and caregivers have given us about the value and impacts of participating in our programs.

Since inception we've been committed to conducting rigorous long-term evaluations of the benefits of our programs for young people. A three-year evaluation conducted by academics from the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney, under the direction of Professor Robyn Ewing, concluded in 2016. Through the development of 10 rich case studies this evaluation demonstrated positive benefits for all case study students in the areas of improved writing skills, self-confidence, motivation to write and learn, and creativity.

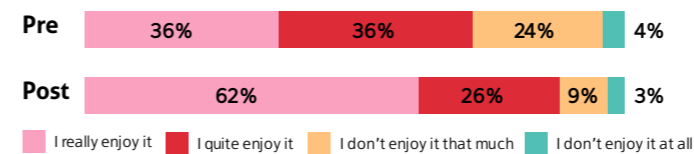
To complement this qualitative evaluation, a new independent quantitative evaluation commenced in early 2017. Over two years this will assess impacts in two long-term school programs – our year-long residency with Canterbury Boys High and our repeat, term-long creative writing residencies with Western Sydney primary schools.

Preliminary results are very positive - a majority of students are reporting increased confidence with writing and enjoyment of writing after just one term. What's more, teachers are reporting that workshops have positively impacted on students' school work in a number of ways, from increased confidence and improved collaboration skills, to clear improvements in academic achievement. One primary school teacher, for example, reported 'massive' improvements in academic results from her students. She felt this was attributable to the value of their development of story characters, which engaged them in a way that built their confidence to try new things and attempt challenging tasks in other subjects.

Confidence in Writing



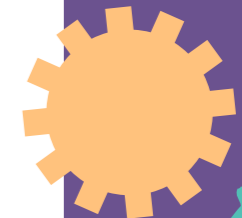
Enjoyment of Writing



In addition, a second evaluation program, commencing July 2017, will add a further level of depth to our understanding of the benefits and impacts of our programs. These rigorous, structured evaluations will form the benchmark for ongoing, informal evaluations of all our programs, ensuring that we continue to achieve quality and consistency across the board.



"Briana has travelled so far from where she was before she joined Story Factory. She is no longer depressed and displays happy outlook on her face all the time. She also feels very confident and her self-esteem improved dramatically. There is no word can express my gratitude." Carina, mother of Briana



"I could experience the other types of writing with other types of people."

Our Board

Michael Gonski President



Partner, Herbert Smith Freehills

Michael is a solicitor specialising in employment law. In 2014 he was awarded Philanthropy Australia's Young Philanthropist of the Year Award.

Dr Catherine Keenan Co-founder, Executive Director



Cath was formerly a journalist with The Sydney Morning Herald, working as an arts writer and as literary editor. She is 2016 Australian of the Year Local Hero.

Grant Lovett Treasurer



Head of Sales & Rates Product, ASX Derivative & OTC Markets, ASX Limited

Grant has a Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting) from the University of New South Wales and a Master of Applied Finance from Macquarie University. He is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Tim Dick Secretary



Co-Founder, Solicitor

Tim is a criminal lawyer. He was formerly a journalist with The Sydney Morning Herald.

Gail Hambly General Counsel/ Company Secretary Fairfax Media



Gail is responsible for the provision of legal, company secretarial, corporate governance and internal audit services across the Fairfax group.

Jonathan Barouch Internet Entrepreneur



Jonathan is CEO and founder of Sydney-based technology startup Local Measure.

Angus Stuart Managing Director, Adamantem Capital



Angus has extensive board experience as chairman or director of various businesses.

Leanne Townsend Chief Executive Officer, National Aboriginal Sporting Chance Academy (NASCA)



Leanne is a Chamber 3 Delegate for the National Congress for Australia's First Peoples and a founder of Flashpoint Labs. She proudly identifies as Anaiwan.

Paul Martin Executive Director, Quality Teaching, NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA)



Paul has played key roles in the implementation of the NSW Government's Great Teaching, Inspired Learning initiative with both BOSTES and NSW Institute of Teachers.

Benjamin Law Writer



Ben is a journalist, columnist, TV screenwriter and author of two books - The Family Law (2010) and Gaysia: Adventures in the Queer East (2012). The Family Law is now a major SBS TV series.

Gemma Salteri Executive Director, CAGES Foundation



Gemma is a director of The Funding Network and a founding member of Philanthropy Australia's New Generation of Giving program. In 2016 she was awarded Philanthropy Australia's Emerging Philanthropist Award.



Giving Generously

Each year we are amazed by the generosity of the community that supports us and 2016-17 was no exception. It's that generosity that powers everything we do, keeping the creativity pumping every single day. Such generosity from parents, and volunteers, in schools, and in workplaces, through donations that honour family members, and gifts in lieu of birthday presents, inspires us and drives us on. It's a wonderful thing knowing that we are surrounded by people who think a love of words, and storytelling, and writing, and the stories young people want to tell, are as important as we do. Thank you!

Pen to Paper Challenge

In September 2016 we piloted our first month-long fundraising event. This saw supporters of all ages commit to pushing through the procrastination to actually sit down to write, spurred on by donation pledges from family and friends. Jackie French, Larissa Behrendt, Benjamin Law, Zoya Patel, Patrick Lenton, Justine Clarke and others all accepted the challenge, and urged others to do the same. We brought it all to a close with a full day writing salon. Over 120 people took part in the Pen to Paper Challenge, raising just under \$41,000.

Teacher Professional Development Training

In its first full year our mission-focused enterprise not only reached 447 teachers who will take our creative practices back to their classrooms to change the lives of thousands more young people, it allowed us to earn \$27,500.

Corporate Volunteering

This year, five corporate teams of 10 volunteers at a time have been trained up and then gone straight into a workshop as writing tutors. This experience is now offered as a regular feature for staff looking for professional development opportunities in iCare's Learning Academy. We earned income of \$18,000 from corporate volunteering this year.

Fee-for-service workshops

Increasingly we are asked to partner with organisations to deliver bespoke workshops for a particular purpose. This year we delivered 11 such workshops, including with Barangaroo Delivery Authority, the University of Sydney and the Sydney Opera House, generating income of \$17,187.

1 Kia called **KEANU** getting us on the road thanks to **FLEETPLUS**

65 SYDNEY STORY FACTORY **INKWELLS** giving generously each **MONTH**

"I am delighted to support the Story Factory with a gift every month as I know my support goes towards creative writing workshops that benefit so many young people."

Judith Simpson, writer, volunteer and Sydney Story Factory Inkwell

Our Partners

The partnership of the generous corporates, businesses, philanthropic foundations and private foundations who have supported Sydney Story Factory over the last year is the bedrock upon which the organisation continues to grow and thrive.

As we push forward with our ambitious plans for expansion, we are delighted to have expanded that circle of support and welcomed a number of new partners into the Sydney Story Factory community.

Together we really are changing thousands of young lives, one story at a time. Thank you all!

SYDNEY STORY FACTORY REDFERN

Principal and Founding Partner



Primary Partners



Major Partners



Supporting Partners



Major Donors



In-Kind Partners



SYDNEY STORY FACTORY PARRAMATTA

Government Partners



Foundation Partners



Foundation Program Partners



Major Partners



Supporting Partners



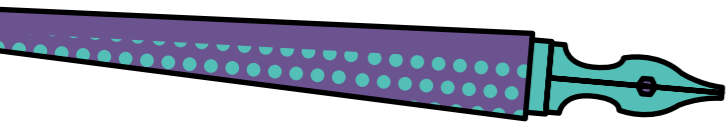
Major Donors



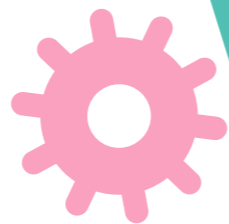
In-Kind & Fit-out Partners



Berents Project Management



"I loved the way you ran the workshop. You connected with us in a way that made us not look at the clock and wish the period was ending. That's a record achievement."



Our Staff

Sydney Story Factory is run by a hard-working team of committed creatives who love words and writing, but only half as much as they love the looks on the faces of kids who have just discovered they can WRITE!

Front Row

Richard Short
Storyteller-in-chief

Craig New
Volunteer Manager & Mission Control

Carol Quast
Storyteller

Helen Coolican
Storyteller

Jayne Wasmuth
Development Manager

Middle Row

Nikola Amanovic
Director for Parramatta

Bilal Hafda
Storyteller

Tammy Burnstock
Storyteller

Cath Keenan
Executive Director & Co-founder

John Blair
Storyteller

Back Row

Tony Britten
Storyteller

Bheki Mkwanzani
Administration Officer

Amber Dalrymple
Fundraising & Development Co-ordinator

Matt Roden
Creative Projects Manager

Find out more about who we are, and what exactly we all do all day, on our website.

Meet Caoimhe



As we celebrate the Sydney Story Factory's 5th birthday, we'd love you to meet Caoimhe, a student who has been with us since we began. Caoimhe was in our second ever workshop, after she heard about the first one from her best friend Jade. Both students went on to many workshops with us, both at their school, Our Lady of Mt Carmel in Waterloo, and in the Martian Embassy.

Although it's been five years since those first workshops, Caoimhe remembers them very fondly, especially the first pantomime she both wrote and starred in. "We wrote it in a separate term workshop and then performed it in the next one. Jade and I came up with the lead male character, Batty. I think that was the most fun, because it came to life in the next workshop and that was really cool."

"I remember the first ever lesson that we did in my school, and then hearing that there was a facility now that we could walk down to. I guess it was really cool because we were younger; we never did stuff where we walked places!"

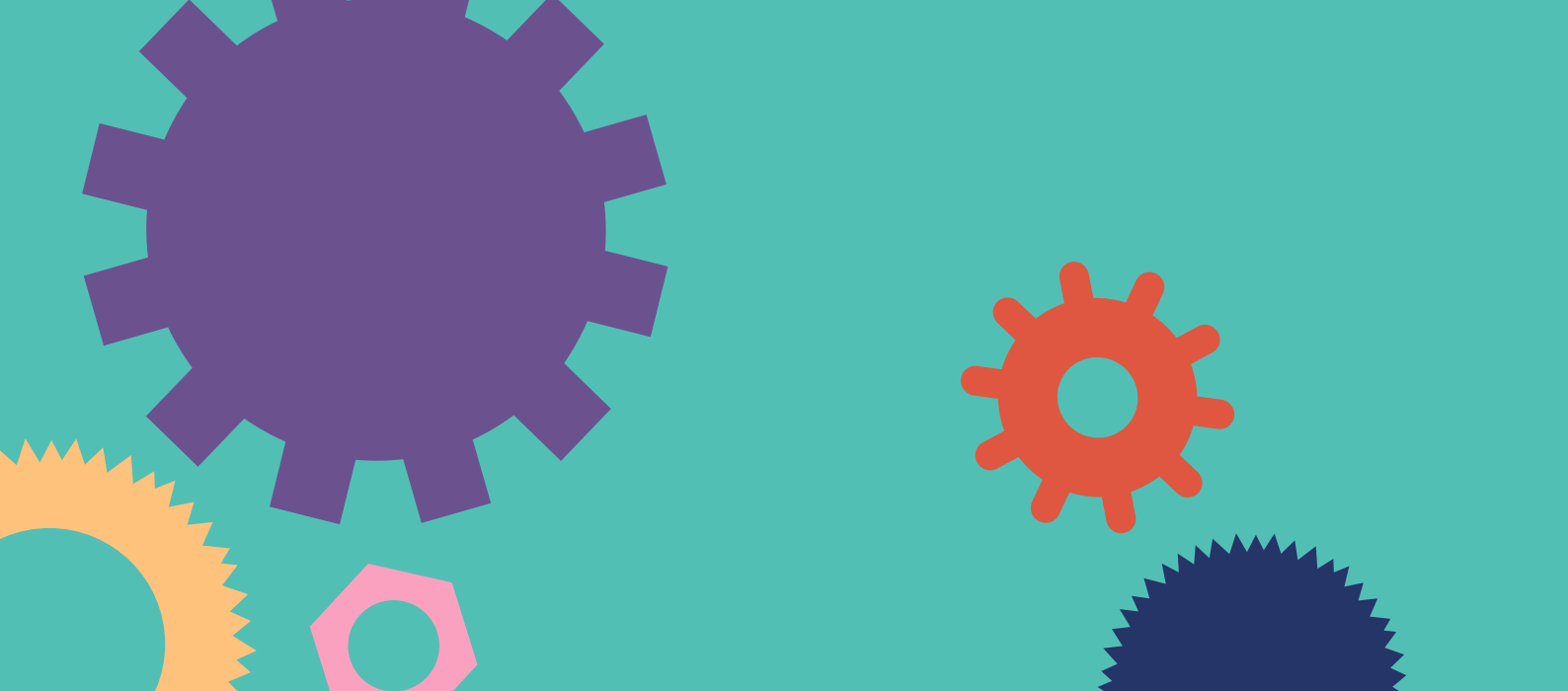
Although it was one of her first workshops, the play had a lasting effect. "I was one of the leads and that really built my confidence, and now I'm a drama student. I think I found my love for that through that play." **Other workshops also left their mark in different ways. "I think they helped my vocabulary and development of writing a lot. I always say this, but I think that my passion for English developed through the Sydney Story Factory workshops, with the nurturing of the tutors and whoever was leading. It always just really made it more of a future for me. I could see me doing it in my future life."**

These are not idle words. Now 15 years old, Caoimhe has started tutoring younger students in Sydney Story Factory workshops, and was inspired to do so by hearing about her younger sister's experiences.

"I came home from school one day and my sister had just come back from a Sydney Story Factory workshop. She said that she learned all these new things and she was telling me about this story she wrote and I was really excited and I thought, I could do that for other children. When I caught on that I could do this, that I could come back and tutor, I realised that I wanted to give back to the place that helped me so much with everything now – with school and life in general. I just wanted to give back in some way."

We couldn't resist asking Caoimhe as a tutor now, what advice would she give her ten-year-old self in a workshop? She answered, "I would tell my ten-year-old self to stay focused and determined on achieving overall success."

It certainly appears that Caoimhe took heed of this awesome advice.



Sydney Story FACTORY

behind The Martian Embassy
& Gift Shop

176 Redfern St, Redfern NSW

02 9699 6970

info@sydneystoryfactory.org.au

www.sydneystoryfactory.org.au

ABN 71 645 321 582

The Sydney Story Factory is an incorporated entity with DGR1 status. All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible. Thank you for your support.

say "Hi" and follow our story at

