

Shootin' the Bin in the Great South West

Take an eager Regional Arts Board, some great local partnerships, a one-man-band-film-making dynamo with a workshop and a film festival to run, mix it with eight communities over a month and you get Shootin' the Bin in the Great South West — the south west regional tour of 'In The Bin' Short Film Festival.

by JULIA STEPHENSON & NINA O'BRIEN-HEHIR

In a nutshell, the 'In the Bin' Short Film Festival experience involves film-maker Jed Cahill and his trusty van, chock-full of equipment, landing in a school or youth community for three days and creating four short films, from go to whoah, with about twenty young people. At the end of that time, participants host a screening of short films created during the workshops as well as a bunch of other nationally sourced shorts.

In March, South West Arts worked in partnership with Local Government, Country Energy, several schools and community organisations in presenting 'In The Bin' in Hillston, Balranald, Hay, Coleambally, Finley, Tooleybuc, Moama and Jerilderie. That's an area roughly 400km up and down and 350km across. Proving a roaring success in each of the eight small, isolated communities, the festival introduced more than 1,200 audience members to short film, whilst providing an opportunity for 120 young people to take part in the educational program.

It's fair to say that the South West region has little to no physical cultural infrastructure, and even less sustained youth cultural activity. The 'In The Bin' Festival had been run annually over the last two years in Deniliquin by the local arts council and film society, and had met with great success. South West Arts saw this as a golden opportunity to expand this into a regional event given the common cultural need across the region together with the ease of technical logistics provided by 'In The Bin'.

Why would a regional arts board think that working seven days a week, daily driving across our ten shires for a whole month was a good idea?

Philosophically, South West Arts is serious about its role as a true 'regional' based organisation. Cultivating opportunities like this to achieve lasting cultural development outcomes through our existing networks and relationships — albeit 'intense' in the delivery — is our core business.

Artistically, short filmmaking provides a highly accessible and immediate way to tell stories, convey issues and have fun within a short and affordable time frame.

The risk we ran in delivering 'In The Bin' across eight towns was providing a 'one size does not fit all' opportunity. A significant amount of staff time and energy was invested in the months leading up to the tour, developing local community involvement. Each stop on the tour was tweaked in format, to make it work locally.

It proved a sound example of several bodies bringing attributes to a table to just make it happen 'on the ground'. In most cases, Local Government undertook the role of financial presenter with the supplementary funding from Country Energy acting as a sweetener to conservative fiscal oriented managers who are rarely familiar with benefits of cultural development. In some locations, National Youth Week and local sponsorship was utilised also.

September

28 – 30 September

 **COROWA** Festival of Dance
Everything from belly dancing to the Jimpy Jive, the midnight tango to the New Vogue Quick Step Tel 02 6929 3329.

28 – 30 September

 Great Southern Blues & Rockabilly Festival **NAROOMA** A great line-up of international, national and local artists performing over the long weekend.
Tel 02 4476 2550

28 September – 1 October

 *Bush Traditions Gathering at the Brewery* A weekend of music, dance, song and spoken word celebrating an Australian tradition. **GOULBURN** Tel 02 4821 6071

29 September – 1 October

 3rd **MANILLA** Arts and Music Festival Weekend art show includes portraits, abstract, watercolours, and Indigenous art and sculptures
www.manillacountrynews.com.au



The festival screening at Colleambally. Photo: Jed Cahill

South West Arts staff coordinated and assisted each of the organizing committees in providing and delivering information packs that included checklists, media releases, flyers as well as liaising between community, festival staff and local government.

The festival in Coleambally was a perfect example of the strong community driven aspect translating into audience and workshop success. A dedicated local councillor led the organizing committee in partnership with teachers from the school, encouraging students to promote the festival themselves by painting banners and putting up posters. This translated to an overwhelming amount of participants from the Central School, not to mention the audience of 220 (44% of town population!)

Most schools participating in the 'In The Bin' tour were small, isolated rural schools, with 60% not having access to any regular creative subjects within their school, let alone film-making.

The Balranald school community is currently brokering discussions with council about the viability of purchasing film making equipment for the long term.

It's not funding acquittal waffle when we say that these programs make real differences. When you work 'in the sticks' it's all about these small wins.

As gluttons for punishment, and thanks to financial travel assistance from Arts NSW, South West Arts hosted a grand finale regional film

showcase in Deniliquin called, 'Shootin' The Bin in the Great South West' at the end of the tour.

Jed Cahill, the 'In The Bin' dynamo, called in some favours and sourced an AVID software editing package (worth around \$2,500). With 300 students from Coleambally to Moama and everywhere in between, the regional screening day was a unique opportunity for all short film makers from across the region to meet, network, and see some great peer films. Finley High School took the prize for best short film *Six ways to win a girl*, whilst Deniliquin High School placed runners up for their film *Stella*.

Overall, the festival was a huge achievement — logistically, culturally and financially. It was a great example of how community involvement is vital to event success, whilst exposing isolated and rural communities to high quality arts and cultural product. In country towns, particularly 'tin-pot outposts,' as some of the south west towns are probably described from time to time, young people get very few opportunities to shine on the big screen. 'In The Bid' provided this and so much more. ■

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September – October

29 September – 7 October

📍 Leura Garden Festival 10 gardens open to the public; Art in The Gardens painting competition; live music; and Leura Village Fair **LEURA** Tel 02 4757 2539

29 September

📍 Sydney Welch Choir in Concert A varied program of Welsh songs, musical comedy, folk songs and monologue. St Brigid's Catholic Church **DUBBO** Tel 02 6845 3562

30 September

📍 Irish Woolfest Celebrate the town's heritage with a street parade, Irish singers and dancers, pipe bands and hot air ballooning **BOOROWA** Tel 02 6385 3962

30 September

📍 Berrigan Show Agricultural and horticultural show. Local cooking, sewing, photography, vegetables, arts and craft. **BERRIGAN** Tel 03 5885 2668