

SUZANNE OLB

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CAREER PROFILE

A highly experienced, resourceful, interpersonal and innovative arts and culture leader; proven record of initiating, planning, developing and managing high-impact festivals, events, activities and programs.

"Wow, mighty fine event [Glen Eira Storytelling Festival] you have here. Giving the MWF [Melbourne Writers Festival] a run for their money." Danny Katz, Columnist & Author, 2017

"Congratulations on your [Glen Eira Storytelling] Festival's success (and breadth), and looking at the Council's website on being part of a vibrant arts program." Chris Mead, Literary Director, MTC, 2019

ARTS CURATION SKILLS

Interdisciplinary Programs (incl. Multi Activities & Artforms) – Audience-Focused Events (incl. Outdoor & Digital) – Benchmark Performances (incl. International & Emerging Artists) – Arts & Culture Networks (incl. Key Influencers) – Commissioning of Artworks & Talent (incl. Interactive) – Key Program Deliverables (incl. Budgets & Deadlines)

OTHER KEY SKILLS & OFFERINGS

Financial Acumen (incl. Grants) – Strong Communications (incl. Writing & Editing) – Key Stakeholder Relations

CAREER SUMMARY

DATES	POSITION	ORGANISATION
Productions & Promotions		
2023 to present	Arts & Culture Programs Lead	Glen Eira City Council (part-time)
2016 to mid 2023	Programming & Events Coordinator	Incl. Director Glen Eira Storytelling Festival
2020 (6 months)	Creative Producer – Victorian Seniors	Victorian Government/ SO Creative Projects
2015 to present	Founder & Creative Producer	SO Creative Projects
1993 to 2015	Co-founder & Director	Explosivemedia (see LinkedIn for archive)
1995 to 1996	Arts/Theatre Publicist	Arts Centre Melbourne
1995 (6 months)	Publicity Consultant	Mietta's
1992 to 1995	Communications Manager	Victorian Arts Council
Journalism & Publishing		
1988 to 2007	Writer & Editor*	Various arts & culture publications (incl. New Theatre, Arts Hub, Oz Arts & Vive Magazines)
Teaching & Research		
1986 to 1997	Tutor, Lecturer & Snr Research Assistant+	Various institutions (incl. University of Melbourne & Victorian College of the Arts)

*One of the youngest in Australia to be appointed to role of Deputy Editor (of New Theatre publication)

+Delivered Australia's first research-based review of dramaturgy, plus internationally recognised dramaturgical interpretation of live-performance

Professional references, relevant referees and/or further detail incl. on early career provided on request

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY – PRODUCTIONS & PROMOTIONS

ARTS & CULTURE PROGRAMS LEAD etc., GLEN EIRA CITY COUNCIL

2016 to 2024

Reported to: Team Leader – Arts & Culture / Manager – Libraries, Arts & Culture

Primary focus: Lead – program/curate/manage arts & culture programs (incl. major festivals & creative events)

Stakeholder relations: celebrities, artists & other talent – government agencies – key influencers – museums – not-for-profit – council departments – program/event team members

Key contributions

- **Developed and enriched audience-focused programs**, building on established festivals via diversified talent (e.g. TV personalities and award-winning authors) and features (e.g. First Nations' *Matriarch* play and London-streamed panel), while initiating new events such as a public arts program in a transparent Cube.
- **Leveraged and expanded stakeholder relations/networks**, involving NFPs such as Writers Victoria as well as cultural associations such as the Immigration Museum and Melbourne Holocaust Museum in festivals and events, while securing performances by emerging and alternative artists (e.g. Triple-J-recognised Mia Wray).
- **Recognised as an innovative, organised and committed arts and culture leader**, including via the Mayor who highlighted "the best programming personally seen in 30 years", and based on the GREAT Award 2018+ nominations from the Council for my ability to work in partnerships and maintain a customer focus.

Key Programs & Events

Glen Eira Storytelling Festival (annual)

- *Snapshot of Artists/Talent:* Myf Warhurst, Clare Bowditch, Sami Shah, Damian Callinan, Cal Wilson, Alex Skovron, Leah Kaminsky, Niraj Lal, Annie Louey, Peter Wilson, Libbi Gorr, Yuri Worontschak, Evelyn Krape, Freydi Mrocki, Lorraine Brigdale, Pluginhuman, Danny Katz, Melanie Cheng, Christos Tsiolkas, Tony Birch
- *Artforms:* Music, theatre, comedy, film, live discussion & open mic sessions, talks, tours (incl. historical), poetry & book readings, installations (incl. immersive lighting/sound/video technology). Moved to Libraries in 2024
- *Value-add:* Led & managed diversification of arts & culture content (incl. multidisciplinary & First Nations) Partnership with flagship Melbourne Theatre Company (disrupted by COVID)

Carols in the Gardens, Rippon Lea Estate / Hodgson Reserve (annual) – drew on producing Dendy Park Carols

- *Artists/Talent:* Rob Mills and Lucy Durack (hosts), Mike Bishop (Santa)
- *Artforms:* Music, dancing, theatre • *Value-add:* Songs in First Nations language (a first), Auslan interpreter Teeny Tiny Stevies "non-suit" children's rock music act and Shauntai to sing in language (2024)

Groove and Graze, various parks & gardens in Glen Eira (annual) – drew on 6-years of Twilight Rhythms

- *Artists/Talent:* Sourced & led guest curator with long-term involvement with The Push
- *Artforms:* Emerging local musicians, outdoor games • *Value-add:* Engaged local audio supplier

Under the Stars, various parks & gardens in Glen Eira (annual) – drew on 10+ years producing Melbourne's NYE

- *Snapshot of Artists/Talent:* Archie Roach, You Am I, Tex Perkins, Melbourne Ska Orchestra, Mia Wray
- *Artforms:* Music • *Value-add:* Emerging local artists (incl. Triple-J favourites and Seniors choral group)

Lunar New Year (2023/2024) – drew on programming Springvale Lunar New Year celebrations

- *Artists/Talent:* Double Lucky Lion Dance, Melbourne Hanfu Association, Serena Yang, Rachel Hu, Alice Zhao
- *Artforms:* Music, dance, fashion runway, exhibitions, photo wall. Community showcase 2024
- *Value-add:* Musicians playing traditional Chinese instruments (e.g. Guzheng and Pipa)

International Women's Day (2023/2024) – drew on producing IWD for State Government

- *Artists/Talent:* Sunanda Loves Britney (LGBTQIA+) 2023; Geraldine Quinn in BROAD 2024
- *Artforms:* Comedy • *Value Add:* Unknown act straight from Fringe achieved good attendance

Junkyard Beats Takes Over Glen Eira 2023 / JUNKLANDIA 2024

- *Artists/Talent:* Junkyard Beats
- *Artforms:* Music, dance, comedy, circus via ordinary household items (2023). JUNKLANDIA show/jam (2024)
- *Value-add:* Generated mass excitement. Booked out 100-strong children's workshops, 500-strong shows...

Lil Robots Premiere 2023

- *Artists/Talent:* A Blanck Canvas
- *Artforms:* Immersive industrial soundscapes, video and lighting plus 40 individually decorated "robots"
- *Value-add:* Highly engaging personalised eco-friendly "robots" made from Roomba vacuum cleaners

Diwali Festival of Lights, Booran Reserve (2022/2023)

- *Artists/Talent:* Richi Madan (MC/DJ) & Dhol drummer, Bolly Dazzler dancers, Chandralaya dance school, Ignite Bollywood (also Sindu Bhairavi classical Indian dance & Sangathamizh Kalaiyagam Parai drums 2023)
- *Artforms:* Music, dancing, feature lighting, face & body painting, Mehendi (henna art), photo booth
- *Value-add:* 30-year strong relationship with Australia's pioneer of Bollywood and Bhangra

The Cube: Illuminating Arts Experiences Premiere, Carnegie Community Space 2022

- *Artists/Talent:* Born in a Taxi, Street Artists Live, Alice Will Caroline, L2R Dance
- *Artforms:* Immersive art (in transparent Cube venue), music, dance, visual arts, sustainable eco-art practice
- *Value-add:* Unique multi-sensory creation (incl. Butterfly House; street art, hip hop & community dance jam)

Gardens of the Galapagos, Hodgson Reserve (2022)

- *Artists/Talent:* A Blanck Canvas, puppetry master Peter Wilson – director, Graeme Base – bestselling author
- *Artforms:* Interactive giant puppetry based on a section of Graeme Base's much loved *The Waterhole*

The Trust Makers' Market, Rippon Lea Estate (2021)

- *Artists/Talent:* Tamara Kuldin, Stiletto Sisters, Alma Zygier, Isaiah Firebrace, Nicky Bomba, Born in a Taxi
- *Artforms:* Music showcasing cultural diversity, handmade art & design, physical theatre

CREATIVE PRODUCER – VICTORIAN SENIORS, VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT 2020 (6 MONTH CONTRACT)

Reported to: Executive Director – Victorian Seniors Festival

Primary focus: Consulted on audience-focused programs (incl. new/proposed productions)

Stakeholder relations: Built trust and rapport with artists & other targeted talent (incl. First Nations authors) – government agencies – key influencers – program/event team members & key contributor to creative

Key contributions

- **Secured targeted talent to enrich and reimagine the festival**, such as playwright Patricia Cornelius, authors Melanie Cheng and Tony Birch, director Evelyn Krape, and oral historian Dr Vivienne Nicholson.
- **Championed a multidisciplinary programming strategy**, initiating segments by cross-cultural authors (incl. Australian-Chinese and First Nations), as well as interview broadcasts by industry specialists.

CO-FOUNDER & DIRECTOR, EXPLOSIVEMEDIA

1993 to 2015

Primary focus: Consulted on & produced various arts & culture events/programs (also writing & editing)

Stakeholder relations: celebrities, artists & other talent – government agencies & councils – key influencers – commercial clients (incl. arts & culture) – not-for-profit – program/event team members

Key Programs & Events

Melbourne Festival (2014)

- *Key Artists/Talent:* *Carrousel des Moutons* (international producing of Belgian/French act)

- *Artforms*: Original music, comedy, circus featuring flying piano
- *Value-add*: Inspired Australian circus community attending nat. conference plus unknown act a sell-out

Arts Centre Melbourne (2013)

- *Key Artists/Talent*: *Oh Suivant!* (strategic international producing)
- *Artforms*: Interactive theatre style unknown in Australia
- *Value-add*: Achieved 90% capacity across 18 performances

Sustainable Travel – Love Living Local, Reservoir (2009) & Drive with Your Heart pilot (2012)

- *Key Artists/Talent*: Amanda King, Edvardo, Kristina Diaz, Lilikoï
- *Artforms*: Music, dancing, activities & competitions, interactive performers, house & street parties
- *Value-add*: Led community connectedness, instigated additional programs (e.g. Drive with Your Heart)

Kew Court House (2011)

- *Key Artists/Talent*: Disabled artist group, Deborah Conway & Willy Zygier, Jailhouse Rock
- *Artforms*: Music (incl. opera, jazz & cabaret), dance (incl. ballet), theatre (incl. acrobatic), magic, talks, exhibitions (incl. historical & visual arts), sound installations, roving artists, interactive activities
- *Value-add*: Created, produced & managed 11-day opening program to great acclaim

Bright n Sandy Food & Wine Festival (2008–2011)

- *Key Artists/Talent*: Kylie Auldist & The Bamboos, Allan Campion, Junior MasterChefs
- *Artforms*: Music, activities (from sporty games to literature), roving performances, cooking, installations
- *Value-add*: Record attendance (17K in 2011) & partnership take-up, 96% positive survey responses (2010)

City of Melbourne Summer Fun in the City & Parks incl. Docklands (2002–2008)

- *Key Artists/Talent*: Flying trapeze artists
- *Artforms*: Music, interactive dance, circus, ice skating, theatre, visual arts, activities, installations
- *Value-add*: Led 50+ programs, grew audiences, commissioned to create three vibrant sister city festivals
By NYE 2002, City of Melbourne led New Year's Eve celebrations on the Yarra in collaboration with **explosivemedia** – we had pioneered, led and built audiences to 100,000+ at Southgate

Melbourne Commonwealth Games, Tribal Expressions (2006)

- *Key Artists/Talent*: First Nations theatre makers and entertainers (incl. Dan Sultan, Lisa Maza & Wesley Enoch)
- *Artforms*: Music, dance, theatre, cabaret, visual arts & craft, documented in 112pp catalogue
- *Value-add*: Led & supervised first major Indigenous suite of events in Melbourne's CBD
Now, I firmly believe in self-determination for First Nations Peoples

Melbourne Commonwealth Games, The Beach at the Arts Centre (2006)

- *Key Artists/Talent*: Bomba, Nick Barker, The Stiff Gins, Inge King, Jamie Durie, Pop-Eyed, Big Rory, Impro King
- *Artforms*: Music, dance, circus, comedy, design, sculpture, films, games, roving performers, activities
- *Value-add*: Iconic cultural hub for Melbourne

EDUCATION

Master of Publishing & Communications H1, University of Melbourne

Bachelor of Arts w. Honours – English Literature, University of Melbourne

PERSONAL DETAILS

Australian Citizen living in Elwood, Victoria, with recent Police Check and Working with Children Check