

EDGE GreenWay
Program and Production review
March 2019



EDGE GreenWay had a rich and rounded program with something to offer most members of the community. Its curation achieved an effective balance between work that is exploratory, innovative and sometimes challenging and work that is accessible, lively and entertaining. Feedback from artists and participants almost universally recognised the significance of producing a diverse program that established a benchmark of quality at a first attempt.

– artist comment

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PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

*“the EDGE Greenway festival concept is an innovative and extremely bold move on the part of [the] council to create greater community awareness of the...
environmental, visual & performing arts in the Greenway locality.”*



1. Introduction and Background

The GreenWay is a historical rail, water and open space corridor located in the Inner West metropolitan area of Sydney. It extends for 5.8ms from Iron Cove in the north to the Cook River in the south and when fully realised will be a multi-purpose, urban green corridor of high civic amenity in an inner city region subject to increased urban density.

The GreenWay corridor contains many features of value to the community, including the Inner West Light Rail (utilising the disused Rozelle Goods Line), Hawthorne Canal, 16 urban bush care sites, a network of footpaths and cycleways, sports grounds, parks, playgrounds, numerous informal open space areas, cafes and a sprinkling of public art

The regeneration of the GreenWay will provide a valuable ecological, active transport and recreational facility for Inner West residents and visitors with a strong environmental, conservation and healthy lifestyle focus. Managed by the Inner West Council with a range of state agency partners and community stakeholders, its message is one of nurture and care, compassion and sustainability.

EDGE GreenWay is an outdoor festival at the northern end of the site (see map) that brings these themes together within a context of a celebration that explores environment, locality, community and creativity. The first EDGE GreenWay took place in March 2019 and can be seen a pilot for future events of a similar scale. Building on the success of the annual Art on the GreenWay program - a series of temporary public art works at the northern end of the GreenWay commissioned every year for the last 5 years - EDGE GreenWay sought to bring into focus the many local skills - cultural, civic and environmental - that gives the Inner West its distinct identity. EDGE GreenWay is a platform that integrates a range of messages into a clear agenda for a sustainable and imaginative future.



2. Methodologies:

- **Desktop research** of existing policy and planning context to include: policy statements around the role of the GreenWay, the wider purpose of the EDGE program, Inner West Council's approach to arts, sustainability and the environment, publicity and marketing materials, EDGE EOI registration, co curation with local creatives of content and program.
- **An independent review** at EDGE GreenWay and associated events and activities.
- A **3 hour workshop** for 30 creatives involved in EDGE at the Annandale Neighborhood Centre on the 3rd April designed to collect views and opinions about EDGE GreenWay 2019 from people and organisations involved.
- Design and circulation of an **online survey** to commissioned artists, arts organisations and community partners that enabled a more detailed understand of specific elements of EDGE GreenWay and its delivery.
- Analysis of an **audience survey** with audiences attending EDGE GreenWay.
- **Informal conversations** with artists and senior staff involved in development and delivery of the project, including Erla Ronan, Group Manager Community Services and Culture, Amanda Buckland, Manager Living Arts, Nick Chapman GreenWay Place Manager, and other key Inner West Council staff.
- **Interview** with recipient of Major Commission for a new work Josh Thomson, Artistic Director of Legs on the Wall.
- It should be noted that due to timing and funding constraints, this is not a full evaluation of EDGE Greenway – it is a review assembled from consultation together with the experience of the author. Its observations and conclusions are intended to provide a narrative and analysis of the achievements and challenges of EDGE GreenWay and recommend options to inform planning for EDGE GreenWay 2020 and other related projects in the future.

3. Strategic Purpose

3.1 Policy Context

Our Inner West 2036 - Community Strategic Plan

With an overarching ambition to work “in a way that is creative, caring and just” the Inner West places sustainability and creativity at the heart of its policies, expressed by the strategic principles of:

- Creative communities and a strong economy
- An ecologically sustainable Inner West
- Caring, happy, healthy communities
- Unique, liveable, networked neighbourhoods
- Progressive local leadership

Placing the role of culture and creativity at the heart of local authority policy-making is a strategic vision of the Inner West Council in response to its unique demographics (1 in 10 residents work in creative industries) and identity as a innovative local authority.

The GreenWay corridor presents a unique opportunity for council to implement these principles in an integrated way in one place and to showcase its achievements on the ground.

The GreenWay Master Plan (<https://www.greenway.org.au/publications>) adopted by Council in August 2018 provides the strategic context for a \$27 mil capital works delivery program, on-going implementation of the GreenWay Place Management Program and several specific activities such as EDGE GreenWay, the GreenWay bush care volunteer program, the annual GreenWay Art Exhibition (now in its 10th year) and a range of other community engagement programs and activities.

Futuring Inner West 2036 - the Fictions Group report of 2017 identified the risks of increased prosperity and gentrification for the Inner West’s cultural and creative businesses and the need for an infrastructure for arts and culture that is sustainable, localised and responsive and based on interaction, regular conversation and storytelling. EDGE GreenWay represents a bold and effective representation of this policy objective.

3.2 EDGE Inner West

EDGE Inner West is a new initiative designed to profile the unique qualities of the area, engage with local communities, emphasise the Inner West's cultural strengths and provide a showcase for the creative and cultural sector.

- Inner West Council describes the aims of the EDGE program as being to:
- Showcase local precincts, creative spaces and arts enterprises.
- Build community, arts and businesses partnerships
- Engage local artists and diverse communities to express local identity
- Profile the Inner West as the creative engine room of global Sydney

The EDGE program is delivered through a series of high-profile events over a 2 year pilot in 5 precincts: Sydenham, Ashfield, Newtown, Balmain and Leichhardt.

3.3 EDGE GreenWay

EDGE GreenWay aimed to:

- Reveal the unique features of the Greenway circuit (Iron Cove bay to Blackmore Oval)
- Engage local artists to Art meets Nature theme and the specific site
- Showcase cluster of 80+ creative industries in the precinct
- Promote environmental awareness of the flora and fauna of the Greenway
- Facilitate community connections and identity to place
- Commission new work by internationally renowned Legs on the Wall.

EDGE Greenway was developed within the context of a broad sustainable development agenda that includes:

- Identification of the GreenWay as the no. 1 priority Green Grid project in the Eastern City District Plan published by the State Government's Greater Sydney Commission in March 2018. Sydney's Green Grid is a metropolitan-wide, 20 year program to establish "a network of high-quality green space that connects town centres, public transport hubs, and major residential areas".
- <https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/projects/sydney-green-grid>
- Allocation by the state government, Inner West Council and City of Canterbury-Bankstown of a \$25m capital works program to implement Priority A projects outlined in the GreenWay Master Plan, adopted by Council in August 2018. The Masterplan outlines a suite of priority works and activities to realise the full potential of the GreenWay in four principle areas – ecology, active transport, recreation and culture. Whilst the majority of the Priority A funds are being spent on the 3.2km extension of the shared path from Parramatta Road to the Cooks River cycleway by 2022, it also includes an \$800,000 allocation to public art. It should be noted that this capital works component is separate from any EDGE GreenWay expenditure.

- Location of a state significant creative precinct housing major arts companies, art school and over 80 film businesses along Canal Road.
- A long-term GreenWay commitment to arts in the environment that has produced an annual program of commissions - Art on the Greenway - and the GreenWay Art Prize (now in its 10th year) which “celebrates the precious urban green corridor in Sydney’s Inner West and aims to capture the essence of the GreenWay through visual art”.
- Community engagement programs and activities involving the GreenWay community, with a focus on active transport, community culture, heritage and the environment, including urban bushcare, school educational visits and tours, cleanup events and healthy lifestyle events.

3.4 Regenerating the Inner West

The vision for a Cooks River to Iron Cove GreenWay was originally developed by the community and four local councils in 1998. In 2016, the state government merged the four councils into two new, larger ones, the Inner West Council and City of Canterbury Bankstown. The 20 year GreenWay program has injected new life into an ageing and dilapidated industrial rail and canal corridor winding through an inner city region subject to increased urban development.

The northern section of the GreenWay between Iron Cove and Lewisham is maturing into a multi-purpose urban green corridor offering a high level of civic amenity, which is well used by local people along its length. It has a symbolic value in that it represents the Inner West Council’s commitment to developing the sustainability of both environment and community, bringing together recreation, education, aesthetics and social capital into a major statement about urban development. Completion of the southern section of the GreenWay by 2022 will significantly enhance its function as a connected, vibrant and sustainable multi-purpose corridor of metropolitan significance.

EDGE GreenWay provided a platform for the areas many residents and visitors to reflect on the role of art in transforming environments and connecting communities. Using the tight focus of an afternoon and evening culminating in Earth Hour, EDGE GreenWay was designed to bring businesses, residents and community groups into a shared cultural experience that revealed the uniqueness of this place – its heritage, community, environment and engaged them in considering its future potential. EDGE offers a co curatorial model of place making to increase community connections, build partnerships and showcase contemporary site specific creativity.

3.5 The GreenWay creative precinct

The strategic intention of EDGE GreenWay was showcasing and engaging local artists and creative businesses. The northern section of the GreenWay is a unique creative precinct including:

- Canal Road Film Centre, a cluster of 66 film organisations and suppliers that provide essential services and facilities to the film industry of New South Wales and beyond with 1300 sq. m. of production facilities, 600 sq. m. of production offices, workshop and office areas.
- Legs on the Wall physical theatre company that runs the Red Box creative space, with managed facilities for performance, events and rehearsal, used by a wide range of creative organisations.
- The State Archive for the NSW Art Gallery photographic collection
- Scenery and set building and storage facilities for nationally significant performance companies including Sydney Theatre, Opera Australia and the Australian Ballet.
- Art EST, an established art school with a range of facilities, studios, workshops and classrooms at Lords Road

The Canal Road cluster of cultural and creative industry organisations is regarded as one of the Inner West's hidden gems and the area has been rezoned as SP1 (a special purpose zone detailed as an Arts Precinct) in the latest Local Environmental Plan (LEP).

3.6 Leadership and Collaboration

The Inner West is an area where one in ten residents work in creative industries and a majority highly value creative expression.

EDGE is a highly visible and public statement of the responsive policies of the Inner West Council and as such is inevitably a reflection of its overall tone, culture and capability. The Living Arts team developed EDGE to advance the cultural and creative opportunities and aspirations of the community and Council in an unprecedented way.

EDGE GreenWay was the most ambitious, large-scale EDGE event to date and its thematic complexity – arts, environment and community – promised to be challenging. It demanded a significant level of internal collaboration and the development of effective partnerships with external stakeholders large and small. EDGE GreenWay therefore became a barometer of possibility with significant political and operational resonance.

With such a range of partners and providers come significant logistics issues of communication and dissemination, planning and implementation. EDGE GreenWay was a project with no historical precedent: it was a new festival managed by a new team.

The site had not been used for a major festival before and the partners had little experience of working together on the delivery of such a large-scale project.

EDGE GreenWay was therefore a testbed for collaborative working that needed to take a program through from the ideas stage on to developmental planning and through to implementation. The Living Arts Team led this process but it was important to everyone that it was a shared enterprise from the very early stages.

PART TWO: MAKING IT HAPPEN

“EDGE GreenWay will raise awareness about this treasure of the Inner West highlighting the natural and creative ecosystems that enrich the surrounding communities and visitors.... EDGE GreenWay is all about people interacting, making, sharing and discovering the rich source of stories, talents, creatures and treasures of this site.”

EDGE GreenWay brief – November 2018



4. Showcasing the creativity of the Inner West

4.1 A Unique Location

The EDGE GreenWay chose a unique site with a canal, urban greenway, residential and business areas, film studios, performance base, urban bushland, a rugby league ground, a green “land bridge”, a tidal estuary of the Parramatta River and numerous open green spaces as the setting for activities. The entire site is rich in heritage and accessible from most directions. Its place in the heart of a residential area means that it can be easily accessed on foot or by public transport.

The northern section of the site is traversed by the Bay Run, a regionally significant and popular 7km circular shared path around Iron Cove. Super Sunday counts of active travel rates conducted by Bicycle Network for Inner West Council have monitored 3,000 pedestrians and cyclists along this section of the Bay Run on a Sunday morning.

Recommendation:

The unique choice of the GreenWay location adds to the distinctive identity of the festival emphasising its value as a community asset and confirm its role in achieving the overall aims of the EDGE program.

4.2 A co-curatorial model

With the benefit of a very special site that already had a history of arts programs there were opportunities for many distinctive kinds of creative engagement with a broad level of popular appeal across a range of artforms and activities. The program was drawn together through a process that was focused primarily on showcasing local artists’ response to the specific site. EDGE GreenWay invited Expressions of Interest in November 2018 that;

“will reflect the unique stories, physical and cultural landscape of the precinct....showcase innovative and cutting edge creative innovations driven by local creatives [and] projects that inspire and involve or engage the local community, visitors and audiences in project development / presentation, or both.”

The Expression of Interest provided for a curated layer of content that could be more time-based, performative and interactive and which:

- Enabled learning opportunities about the GreenWay’s flora and fauna
- Enhanced sustainable practice that reduces footprint and pollution
- Engage in creative activities talks, workshops, tours and programs with artists, activists, storytellers, residents and filmmakers
- Discover the local industrial sites and creative spaces for artists
- Experience the stories, talents, and treasures unique to the GreenWay in interactive and inspiring ways.

Approximately 40 EOI applications for work on all scales and across art forms were considered from artists and arts organisations, of which nearly 50% were successful. In addition, the Living Arts Team sought out work that they considered particularly relevant to EDGE GreenWay. The Living Arts team aimed to curate a program that was relevant and appropriate for Inner West residents and local creative and community businesses to embed a shared sense of ownership into the event.

EDGE GreenWay's co-curatorial processes were significant in achieving the EDGE aim of engaging local artists. Final selection of works to be included in the program was achieved through extensive dialogue with each participating individual or organisation to develop more fully the ideas that had been pitched. In a number of cases the original proposal was modified, either for budgetary reasons or to make it more suitable for the site and/or audience.

This approach is exemplified by the development of Waters Edge. Legs On The Wall and the Living Arts Team worked closely over the course of several months to shape the project. As the largest commission of the festival, Waters Edge needed to fulfill artistic expectations in ways that celebrated the Inner West's cultural ecology. A collaborative approach between the company and Council enabled the project to profile EDGE as a showcase for the area and its businesses and to demonstrate the shared values of the Inner West Council and Legs On The Wall.

"We were always very committed to EDGE – it represents what Legs On The Wall stands for"

Joshua Thomson, Artistic Director

Recommendations

The Expression of Interest process is effective and inclusive with a co-curatorial model that engaged local creatives and communities to generate site-specific work and showcase their diverse talents.

4.3 The EDGE GreenWay Program

Key elements of the final program included:

- **Public Art commissions** including Through the Magnifying Glass by *Bunkwaa* – featuring local native animals, *Crank Zappa* a giant illuminated Jellyfish made from plastic bottles by community working with Amigo and Amigo and John Platt's film set photographic works.
- **Participatory and interactive experiences** with many family friendly activities, including lantern making workshops with *Ikara*, puppetry and storytelling by *Rockabilly Bandicoot*, the Cycle Circle's art bikes, a program of talks and tours that covered local environmental history, the GreenWay story and the work of the commissioned artists.
- **Site-specific areas** that activated underused areas beneath or on top of bridges. The Kids Camp featured a range of participatory work from *Milk Crate Events* and *Deep Sea Astronauts*, the Regeneration Lab was an immersive science area hosted by *The Agar Dish* and elsewhere could be found *Trolley'd* hosts serving mocktails in a Pop-Up party in a vintage plane on Lilyfield Bridge.

- **Local community initiatives** that took place throughout the day including SES programs, Leichhardt Men's Shed DIY wind turbine and the *Sydney Heritage Bus* tours
- **Procession and Performance** including the Lantern Parade, Water's Edge, the Canal Road Film Centre Stage, Deep Sea Astronauts, Rockabilly Wombats and the Landing Site Pop-Up Plane Party.
- **Community celebrations** such as the Italian Picnic and Heritage launch event near le Montage, the waterhole fundraising for the *Leichhardt Wanderers Clubhouse* and the *Canal Road Film Centre* showcase including guided tours of sets and studios.

Recommendations

The strands of EDGE GreenWay commissions should continue on the journey of artistic ambition and aspiration. Program development time in 2018-19 was limited but an extraordinary amount was achieved. With more time (and resources) the festival could expand its options and build a portfolio of work with even greater coherence than in 2019.

4.4 Art on the GreenWay

Art on the GreenWay commissions were selected by a curatorial panel following a call- out in November-December 2018. The criteria were broad with a primary consideration that the proposed works fitted within a definition of 'environmental art' that acts "as a mechanism to invoke discussion, educate, energize and enliven community." 10 commissions were selected, each worth \$2,500 with automatic entry to the Environmental Art Award (won by Sally Kibble for Portable Containment) and the People's Choice Award (won by Aaron James McGarry for BIG Little Things).

Recommendations

Art on the GreenWay site-specific environmental art trail could be given the opportunity to build upon the success of EDGE to consolidate its reputation as a significant visual arts event in Sydney'.

4.4 A distinct identity

A priority for EDGE GreenWay was distinctiveness. The program avoided ready-made product that would have created a generic festival that paid no attention to place and community. Particular priorities of the program as it was developed were:

- High levels of new work, mostly seen for the first time
- Opportunities for engagement and participation
- Messages of sustainability, place and environment embodied in the commissions
- Opportunities for the participating individuals and organisations to respond to a very specific geography and environment
- Highlighting the skills, talents and hotspots of local creativity and enterprise
- The value placed upon the work of local artists and arts organisations and their place within the community fabric of the Inner West

EDGE GreenWay had a rich and rounded program with something to offer most members of the

community. Its curation achieved an effective balance between work that is exploratory, innovative and sometimes challenging and work that is accessible, lively and entertaining. Feedback from artists and participants almost universally recognised the significance of producing a diverse program that established a benchmark of quality at a first attempt.

A thorough review of EDGE GreenWay's curatorial processes will establish its reputation as a major event in the regional cultural calendar, building from the strong position established in its inaugural year.

Recommendations

Distinct creative elements are the emergent brand identities of EDGE GreenWay. They are the building blocks of a festival that has the potential to become an important part of the cultural and community ecology of the Inner West and to take its place in the Sydney festival environment.

4.6 Working with artists

The timescale for refining the program and making it deliverable was very tight: in less than four months the Living Arts team had to manage both the commissions and the logistics of the project to ensure all would go well on the day. This represented a significant challenge - even a temporary delay could derail the project planning process.

Overall, there is little evidence of this creating a stressful environment between the commissioned artists and the Living Arts team. When asked how they felt about the development of their project and communication with the team, artists who responded to the circulated survey were consistently positive:

- 77% thought their project development with the Living Arts Team was good or very good
- 82% thought that event planning and scheduling was good or very good
- 78% thought that site information was good or very good
- 78% thought that information about the overall program was good or very good.

Whilst survey numbers were small, it is evident that there was a high degree of satisfaction from the commissioned artists and the levels of ongoing support prior to the event were considered to be of a professional standard.

'the Living Arts Team were always supportive & available when needed'

'Excellent communication and organisation between the council... and myself'

'It was fantastic in the lead up. Emails not dense or too many - timely contact about optional things (filming) they came up being forwarded and responsive immediately around that.'

The written responses (as opposed to numerical scores) consistently identified the challenges

presented by a new project delivered by a new team:

“I understand this was a first from a newly formed team. It takes a while to get things rolling smoothly”

“I received inconsistent information on event times, scheduling and logistics from different coordinators of EDGE. I understand that this was a new event and there were many stakeholders to consider, however, consistency of information from the Inner West Council could definitely be improved for next time”

“Contacted about the same or similar things by 4 different members of the Edge team... it seems excessive communication. But also I do realise this is probably due to new council staff arrangements for this inaugural event”

The tight timescale of the project also had ramifications for participation:

“If we had more time we could have had more involvement, particularly by the participants at the event itself - participation at weekend events for some people with disabilities requires additional time and resources ... which is not available on weekends”

Recommendations

Artists highly rated their experience with Living Arts in the co curation of EDGE GreenWay and are keen to build on this goodwill. Regular artists’ gatherings and formal establishment of an artists’ network could support further growth of the relationship. Continuous evaluation and review should become part of the post EDGE processes in order to maximise the benefit for future iterations of EDGE.



5. Partnerships and Stakeholders

5.1 Diverse Partnerships

EDGE GreenWay was conceived of as a partnership project that drew individuals, organisations and public sector bodies together in shared enterprise. Whilst the Living Arts Team were responsible for developing much of the rationale, logistics and structure of the event, delivery was a distributed process that drew together a range of people with an investment in the GreenWay. These included:

- Public Sector, including the Inner West Council - Living Arts, Planning, Environment, Community Welfare, Parks and Recreation Teams, Roads and Maritime Authority, Ashfield-Leichhardt State Emergency Services
- Creative and Cultural enterprises: Canal Road Film Centre, Red Box - home of Legs on the Wall, 336 commissioned artists and creative sector organisations
- Local businesses: Le Montage, Banks Events, Six productions, local food services and technical suppliers
- The Education Sector: Kegworth Public School and Dobroyd Point Public School
- Environmental groups: GreenWay Bushcare Groups, including the Inner West Environment Group, Green Living Centre
- Community Groups: Leichhardt Men's Shed, Inner West Womens Shed, Roomies, Co As IT, Greenway Volunteers, Leichhardt Wanderers (Rugby League), BUGS, Friends of the GreenWay and others

Together these form an ecology that meets the EDGE aim of “building community, arts and business partnerships” and to “engage local artists and diverse communities to express local identity”.

Recommendations

The feedback received reinforces the success of EDGE GreenWay in building partnerships with public sector, creative and cultural enterprises, local business, education sector, environmental and community groups. The partners involved in 2019 provide a strong foundation upon which to build.

5.2 The Cultural Sector

One of the stand-out elements of EDGE GreenWay was the involvement of key local cultural players, particularly Legs on the Wall and Canal Road Film Centre. Whilst Legs on the Wall premises - the Red Box - was not part of the festival site it is a major cultural asset for the Inner West and there may be more that could be made of it in future years.

The number of cultural sector businesses, sole traders and artists involved in EDGE GreenWay 2019 was significant (336), and the majority of them were local. Whilst it is clear from the consultation process that the profile of the cultural sector was an important part of EDGE GreenWay, it is not clear how evident this was with the general public.

Whilst an analysis of the Inner West economy is beyond the scope of this report, the very visible

presence of many independent niche traders of many kinds in the Inner West presents an opportunity for EDGE GreenWay. A street market environment that enables the work of local makers and designers, jewelers and painters and groups that can identify (in some way) with the creative industries could be a welcome addition to the festival.

EDGE GreenWay presents opportunities for industry discussion about the kinds of work that brings together art, environment and the community in joint enterprise. A number of UK festivals (Freedom in Hull, Greenwich and Docklands Festival in London, X Trax in Manchester) use the festival format as a means of sharing creative practice and supporting the development of the outdoor arts sector. This could be done at EDGE GreenWay through seminars, Q&A sessions, expert presentations and the like.

Recommendations

A review of the ways in which the cultural businesses of the Inner West are (and could be) integral to future of EDGE GreenWay will present opportunities to sharpen the image and messages of the festival. A small trader street market that includes bespoke food outlets should be considered in this context.

An audit of the local cultural sector could reveal new opportunities for partnerships and collaborations and the Futuring Inner West Arts and Culture report may serve as a useful starting point for this.



5.3 Community Engagement

The communities of the Inner West - particularly the neighbourhood hyper-local communities - are the heart of EDGE GreenWay, evidenced by their attendance on the day (which was extraordinary for a first event in unsympathetic weather conditions) and their role in the creation of the event itself. This could be found in the lantern making workshops and the lantern parade, performances on the stage by local bands and the support of local artists.

The contribution of local schools in the lantern making workshops in the run-up to the festival and their presence on the day made a strong statement about the value of local engagement. It should be noted that a collaboration proposed by Kegworth Public School to establish recyclable beverage bins on site to fund improvements to the school canteen was at the last moment deemed impractical by site organisers on WH&S grounds, which was a major disappointment to the school and should be addressed more positively in the future.

The attendance and participation of local community groups are essential factors in the success of EDGE GreenWay and contributed to its (emerging) unique identity.

The enthusiasm of the Men's Shed for future activities may indicate that there are other local non-arts community groups that could have a presence at the festival. It is an excellent starting point from which to build a healthy strand of community engagement that has a wider level of impact and which meets the strategic priorities of the Inner West.

The involvement of the Wanderers also provided a major bonus to the festival, and the extra trade in the clubhouse was undoubtedly welcome. The particular strength of the Wanderers participation was the message of inclusivity - it provided an invitation into engage and participate in the activities on offer that was generous and uncluttered by notions of a cultural experience that is for the few not the many. Further engagement with the Wanderers in future festivals could build on this, possibly with the ambition to make greater use of the Blackmore Oval, should such a large space be required for headline events.

Recommendations

Build on partnerships with schools, other community groups and the voluntary sector to enrich the program further through presentations and performances by local amateur choirs and other music groups, opportunities for installations and events devised and developed locally.

Explore the potential to establish links with creative, media and performing arts departments in secondary schools (eg Sydney Secondary College) and higher education institutions in both creative and research capacities.

5.4 Volunteering

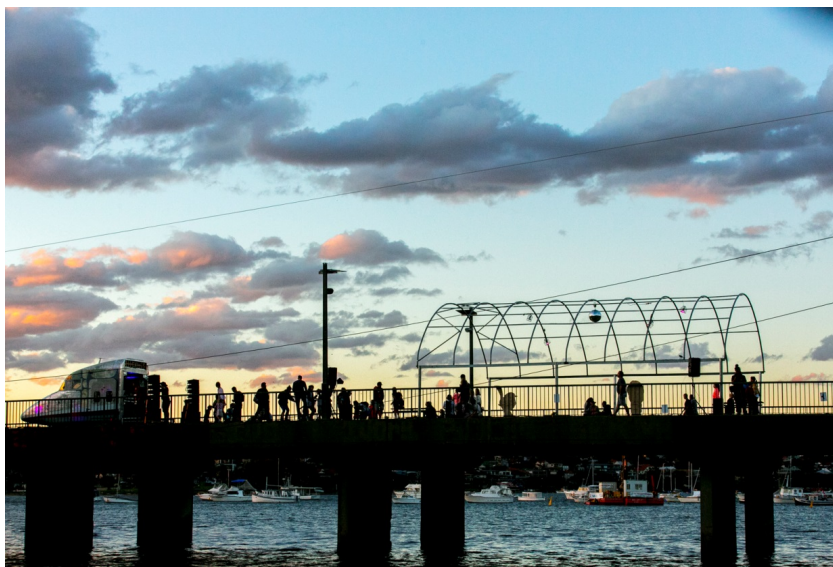
The need for more volunteers onsite was noted by a number of people. The existing GreenWay volunteers are small in number, are often over-committed on other aspects of the GreenWay and do not currently have significant events experience or interest. Volunteering has become the cornerstone of many festivals and feeds into a sense of local pride and cultural ownership that promotes optimistic engagement and a very genuine sense of place.

Volunteering works because it:

- Can be tailored to suit individual capability and availability
- Does not ask the volunteer to be a 'culture buff'
- Is a team activity
- Does not require prior experience
- Provides access to events and activities
- Can involve marginalised and excluded communities
- Has tangible wellbeing benefits
- Promotes self-worth
- Is a visible demonstration of commitment

Recommendations

EDGE GreenWay has a gap in provision and support that could be met by a team of trained volunteers. Committed volunteers could become a year-round resource for events and activities of many kinds. Their engagement would then become a visible demonstration of partnership between Council and local communities.



6. Program delivery

The program was designed around a structure for the six and a half hours of the event, beginning with soft launch at 3pm followed by a buildup of events and activities punctuated by scheduled specific moments (storytelling, workshops, talks and walks etc.) throughout the afternoon. The lantern parade at 7pm was the starting point for the finale to the festival. A procession involving over 200 people, many carrying lanterns, passed over the footbridge and along the western side of the canal side up the steps to the Lilyfield Road Bridge, followed by welcome speeches and presentations at 7.40pm. The evening concluded with Legs on the Wall performance of Water's Edge and the Earth Hour switch off. This structure enabled, for the most part, a very relaxed and comfortable atmosphere, with a buildup of momentum throughout the afternoon and into the evening.

6.1 A Special Place

The program was designed to make it possible for the visitor to create a bespoke festival experience. The many locations across the festival site enabled a journey of discovery on a circular route that crossed the Hawthorne Canal, found shady trees, explored a gritty underpass and a green bridge, provided views across Iron Cove from Le Montage, took in wetlands and meandered back past the Red Box, Hawthorne Clubhouse and the film studios.

The consultation responses reinforced the significance of the EDGE Greenway's emphasis upon locality:

"Always remember to keep it locally-centric. The small players (as opposed to big star /largely paid performers) can make for brilliant, innovative and real site/people connected worksAs a local artist working in isolation in a home-studio this is essential for strong community connections and also for my own well being."

"the EDGE Greenway festival concept is an innovative and extremely bold move on the part of [the] council to create greater community awareness of the environmental, visual & performing arts in the Greenway locality."

Recommendations

The unique qualities of the site make an unambiguous statement about the personality of the Inner West. It has great potential, and the learning from the first EDGE GreenWay will undoubtedly inform planning for future events.

6.2 Profile creative industries cluster

An unexpected surprise of the festival was the success of the Canal Road Film Centre visits. The four tours originally planned had to be expanded to ten with a consequent surge in visitor numbers, after a major story in the Sydney Morning Herald. The enthusiasm of the public to visit a working film

environment and support locally based creatives is evident and offers opportunities for a greater range of activities with the tenants of the studios Design, animation, short films, props and costume, performance and technical skills all featured in this showcase of creative businesses. There is also potential for outdoor film screening.

Recommendations

Build on enthusiasm for Canal Road Film Centre demonstrated during the festival to profile the creative industries cluster in Canal Road. The value of the creative businesses in the area as employers, and contributors to the local economy could be explored through a partnership approach. Legs On The Wall have reported that EDGE GreenWay enabled more contact with the Canal Road Film Centre and future years could expand to Art EST as EDGE GreenWay grows.

A consortium body of Canal Road creative businesses could be established to strengthen the shared cultural offer and develop stronger links and partnerships across the Inner West.

6.3 The Lantern Parade

Organisation of the Lantern Parade came in for particular comment, and it was very noticeable on the day that the absence of stewards was potentially hazardous (see 6.5 above). The unique nature of the site presents a number of higher than usual risks and these will need to be clearly mitigated in the future. A full assessment of the stewarding and organisational requirements of the festival should be a priority.

“There was a level of miscommunication with regards to overall parade coordination that led to some level of confusion at the start. However, the overall support was very good.”

The timing of the lantern parade may have been an issue for some. Families with very small children attended the lantern making workshops and were then faced with the dilemma of waiting until dusk for the parade or not participating at all. From the numbers involved in the lantern parade many chose the former, but there could have been a late afternoon event for those families not able to stay into the evening. A common highlight in family focused festivals is a dedicated workshop space for young children to make masks, costumes and hats, have their face painted etc. This leads to a children’s parade that takes place in the late afternoon.

Recommendations

A full assessment of the stewarding and organisational requirements of the festival parade should be a priority. In particular this should focus on streamlining the making, distribution and lighting of lanterns prior to the parade start-time, to avoid unnecessary delays and confusion, which can be exacerbated in the dark.

It could include consideration of a secondary procession around the site early in the afternoon targeted at family groups with young children, and could include processional elements with items

made by children, music, adult walkabout acts etc..

6.4 Legs on the Wall

The highlight of EDGE GreenWay 2019 was Legs on the Wall's production of a new site specific work Water's Edge, a compelling and watery exploration of the fragile balance between the natural and the man-made which "compels us to do better". The event attracted a large and appreciative audience who were clearly entranced by the performance and were sympathetic to its themes.

The production illustrated the imaginative ways in which the EDGE GreenWay site can be used by artists to make a statement about significant social issues in their particular locality – their home base. This is an area that has potential. The company has a history of working in the local community and their involvement could feature in future events.

For many audience members Water's Edge will have been their first encounter with Legs on the Wall and will have served to demonstrate the value of high quality, innovative creativity in a community setting.

The pressure of time and resources was significant for the company and considerable adaptations to the original proposals were required. Rehearsal time was significantly compressed due to budgetary and site constraints. An unfortunate injury two days before the performance required re-rehearsal of a new performer (Joshua Johnson, the Artistic Director) which resulted in some reworking of the event.

For Legs On The Wall, Water's Edge was a statement of commitment by the company to the Inner West. It enabled the company to bring issues of sustainability into its work and share these with a local audience. It gave the company an opportunity to be artistically bold by working on, over and in the water for the first time, and the scale of the production was a statement of ambition in itself. This has already paid dividends for the company through approaches to create similar work in other places.

Legs on the Wall sees its involvement in EDGE GreenWay as the beginning of a new kind of relationship with the Inner West that will bring artists and communities together in common cause.

Recommendations

Commissioning new works from local arts companies is an innovative Council initiative particularly significant in the current arts funding environment. It aligns to the brand of the Inner West as the cultural laboratory of Global Sydney. Continue to develop site specific new work with major local companies as this has mutual benefits in promoting the Inner West and its local talent.

7. Operational Matters

7.1 Staff Capacity

Delivery of a multi-location multi-event festival is a complex process and the challenges this must have presented to the Living Arts team should not be underestimated. A festival on the scale of EDGE Greenway requires a sizeable production team, with clear roles and responsibilities.

Observations on the day indicated that the festival was at times understaffed, with Living Arts Team members performing multiple roles. There seemed to be limited separation between managerial and operational responsibilities in a situation where the demands of production were often testing. This presents a number of long and short term risks which require mitigation. The most effective way to do this would be to recruit a professional Production Manager and a small team who lead on site management.

Recommendations

The delivery of EDGE Greenway 2019 was a major achievement by the Living Arts team. Ongoing capacity may, however, be a longer-term issue. The Living Arts Team delivered a highly creative content and innovative perspective to this activation but may become overstretched with production and operational requirements. Note that a full-time Site, Risk and Production Coordinator is a mandatory role currently funded through the Talent Pool.

7.2 Supporting Artists

Operational issues did not seem to impact significantly upon the artists working on the project, who generally appreciated the overall levels of organisation and production. They gave good/very good survey scores for support with installation/bump in (72%); access to production team members (83%); support from marshals/stewards (67%); suitability of the event/activity location for your event/activity (83%) and overall organisation of EDGE GreenWay on the day (89%).

These positive responses were balanced by a general recognition that more people on the ground would have benefited the overall production of the festival.

“As it was so busy it was sometimes difficult to know how and who to contact for support. Dressing/change areas and facilities were quite small and at times challenging when many performers needed to be in them at the same time. [We] needed a system for obtaining assistance (other than mobile phones which sometimes went unanswered)”

Recommendations

Artist survey rated overall organisation of EDGE GreenWay on the day very highly (89%). An assessment of the need for additional production support should be undertaken and where necessary appropriately skilled and qualified professional event staff recruited.

The needs of visiting artists should be fully assessed and resourced and an effective communications system established for the site.

7.3 Other Site Considerations

Risk assessments of the wind speed predicted prior to the day meant the organisers chose to eliminate decorative and installation elements on the bridge for public safety. The adverse weather conditions kept audiences off the Lilyfield Bridge for much of the time, but for those that ventured onto it, there was no great reason to remain. The creation of a sense of bustle through the inclusion of (for instance) market stalls and local crafts, food opportunities and more participatory activities could provide greater focus on the bridge.

The closing sections of the festival suffered from the wind impacts which caused potential cancellation of shows and unanticipated performer delays. The schedule began to slip after dusk, delays in the Aboriginal performances affected the start of the lantern parade. Longer than anticipated speeches on the bridge and a lack of clear seating plan for parade participants impacted on the audience experiences. Audience members who had settled down on the water's edge to watch Legs on the Wall, had to wait for some time, listening to a remote PA.

The Water's Edge finale was effective and held its audience, despite plummeting temperatures. To be even more effective, the event should have been a seamless concluding moment of a process that had started with the lantern parade. The interruption of speeches and presentations was unnecessary. These could have been scheduled for an earlier time in a way that was more public, less rushed and did not detract from the art that is the driver of EDGE GreenWay.

Recommendations

Consider the best use of Lilyfield Bridge and its place in any finale events in future festivals.

Review the structure and design of any future closing event program, in order to maximise the audience experience and the overall artistic impact. Ensure civic formalities are sensitive to the creative arc of the finale and complement its processional and performative elements, rather than detract from them.



7.4 A Bigger Footprint

A second EDGE Greenway will almost certainly attract a larger audience and given that at times the area around the Canal Road Studios was crowded, a larger footprint for the festival site should be considered a necessity. Extension of the site into Blackmore Oval or further down the GreenWay, possibly as far as Bones café, would seem to be a viable option.

A number of consultees suggested expanding the festival to cover two days. Whilst this would inevitably place demands on the festival finances and add to the overall workload, there is much merit in such a suggestion. Navigating the site and the program in six short hours was not easy. Inevitably timescales shifted, some events overlapped and others started late, making the audience experience at times pressured. Presumably the events team were similarly pressured.

A two-day program would allow for a growth in momentum, with potentially a low-key start that could incorporate activities that were more contemplative, learning based and which enabled creative dialogue. The work of schools could be profiled on the first day and events for very small children and their families scheduled. Workshop programs would be less pressured (particularly lantern making) and a greater sense of exploration and discovery would become possible.

Recommendations

Extend the geographic footprint of the festival in order to accommodate the likelihood of greater visitor numbers. Explore the options for a two-day festival and consider the thematic approaches and opportunities that may arise as a consequence.

7.5 Sustainability

The linkage of EDGE GreenWay with Earth Hour sent out a strong environmental message, which chimes with the Inner West's commitment to increasing local sustainability. The large number of events and activities with similar themes reinforced the ways in which arts, communities and businesses can work together in an environmental compact. This was clearly demonstrated by the visibility of Sydney Water Authority's water stations around the site.

With such a strong audience turnout and with people staying for an extended time period, there was an inevitable demand for food and a late cancellation of two food trucks. The limited number of food outlets resulted in long queues and in some cases frustration. Additional food options, with possibly the creation of a food court or street market, would be advisable in the future.

As a festival that places such a high value on the environment and sustainability, reusable cups were made available as were a number of recycling stations. Audiences were asked to bring reusable cups and water bottles and all food providers requested to use recyclable plates and utensils. A picnic environment does however attract diverse waste and strategies to manage waste messaging will give EDGE Greenway considerable cachet and leadership.

Recommendations

Strengthen the sustainability messages of the festival and continue to develop a culture of zero waste, carbon neutrality where possible, the use of renewables and recyclables.

Significantly enhance food truck/kiosk offering (quantity, quality and variety), with a view to using local providers that are committed to low impact, eco-friendly use of natural resources.



8. The Audience Experience

With no historical precedent, the likely size of the audience at EDGE GreenWay was somewhat of an unknown and the poor weather conditions made it likely that turnout would be subdued. However, we estimate over 5,000 people - and possibly many more - attended over the six plus hours. This implies a churn of approximately 1,000 people an hour, which would fit well into subjective on-the-ground observations.

8.1 The Visitor Profile

A small visitor survey was undertaken on the day, which confirmed the assumption that the majority of attenders (61%) were local to the Inner West and half of those from the GreenWay neighbourhoods. A majority were older and associated with a family group of some kind.

50% of those surveyed had driven all or part of the way. This leaves an impressive 50% who had walked (23%), cycled (4%) or used some combination of public transport, walking or rideshare.

A significant proportion of those attending had come for opportunities to engage with activities for children and families. This was reflected in the popularity of child-focused activities: storytelling under the casuarina tree, the Kids Camp and the Regeneration Zone, which never seemed to have a quiet moment.

- *Information*

The majority of those surveyed recognised that EDGE GreenWay was themed around art and the environment, and a significant proportion cited this as their reason for attending. 55% had found out about the event by word of mouth or leaflet drop and 16% by social media. The remainder had encountered the festival through posters, print media and other sources. Significantly, 55% had found out about the event by word of mouth or leaflet drop and 16% by social media.

- *Visitor Survey*

It is worth noting that audience feedback from an unticketed festival environment is notoriously difficult to manage. To achieve a statistically significant level of feedback should involve a survey of around 5% of the audience. This would equate to about 250 responses for EDGE GreenWay, assuming an attendance of 5,000.

The survey used for 2019 was 2 pages tickbox format but still quite detailed. This automatically skews the results away from a representative sample. People in groups and with small children will be deterred from responding if they think it will take more than a minute or two. A very simple questionnaire with one or two key questions that will inform future planning should be the aim. The point at which people are surveyed is also significant, with those who are leaving the site being the most productive.

More detailed responses could be elicited by setting up a creative activity area, staffed by artists, that allows for imaginative feedback about the current festival and suggestions for the future.

Recommendations

Simplify the audience survey and questionnaire to focus on two or three key areas. Introduce an exit survey and train volunteers in survey skills. Allow for more imaginative feedback via an interactive consultation space.

8.2 Expanding the Demographic

The overall picture that emerges from observations on the day, survey responses and feedback from participating individuals and organisations is that EDGE GreenWay was highly successful in mobilising and engaging with a broad demographic of the Inner West and beyond.

Workshop feedback noted that there was limited attendance from the 15 -25 age group. Whilst this is not unusual, the site presents considerable opportunities to attract a younger audience later in the day - particularly the site under the bridge pylons which have a very club-like atmosphere.

Recommendations

Build upon this strong audience base and find ways of motivating those less disposed to attend - the people who may think it's not for them. EDGE GreenWay could seek out the less motivated, the isolated, the less mobile and those who are economically challenged.

9. Reaching the Audience

9.1 In Advance

A common observation from the surveys and general feedback was that there was a lack of clarity around communicating what EDGE GreenWay was about beforehand and what would be happening on the day. Whilst the audience survey may give some comfort in this area, thought should be given as to the ways in which the many different strands of EDGE GreenWay can be communicated more effectively.

From the consultation feedback there was a definite sense that the marketing hadn't started early enough and that some of the messaging was mixed, with specific observations that:

- The arts community could have been targeted more clearly
- There could have been more city-wide publicity
- There could have been more physical signage
- More could be done with "Gen Y-ers"

Ideally marketing should be a developmental process, one which embeds the key messages of the festival - particularly to its core audiences - over time. Elements of this could include:

- Earlier use of social media, with strong storylines, a consistent twitter presence, key people tweeting to develop an army of community supporters and followers and training where necessary.
- Teaser posters on the GreenWay and around the Inner West - EDGE is Coming! - or similar

- At least one launch event that will attract local media attention
- Headline announcements closer to the event.
- Co-branding with other activities being promoted under the GreenWay banner via www.greenway.org.au, GreenWay facebook page, use of GreenWay Gleaf logo in EDGE publicity, co-location of posters with permanent GreenWay signs etc.

9.2 Onsite Information

On the day, the audience needs information that allows them to structure their visit in ways which are appropriate and bespoke. To facilitate this the site should have:

- A simple piece of print available on the day giving details of what is on and where.
- Very clear signage throughout the site.
- A central point for all information (including lost children etc).
- Trained volunteers and/or a welcome team able to help out whenever needed

The key messages at the event should reflect the ethos of EDGE – its commitment to the art and the environment, to community and to the cultural businesses that have made it possible – together with a consistency of brand image.

The printed program was difficult to navigate due to the absence of an ‘at a glance’ guide to what was on, when and where. None of these issues would have been a problem to the majority of visitors - many didn’t have a program and were content to explore and discover. In future years however, a more structured approach to time limited events and greater access to the schedule could benefit the visitor experience significantly.

Recommendations

Develop a robust marketing strategy that reflects these priorities, the festival’s programming decisions and its strategic direction.

These should include:

- A simple piece of print available on the day giving details of what is on and where.
- Very clear signage throughout the site.
- A central point for all information (including lost children etc).
- Trained volunteers and/or a welcome team able to help out whenever needed

Findings Summary

Aim 1: Showcase local precincts, creative spaces and arts enterprises.

EDGE GreenWay achieved a significant transformation in the perception of the GreenWay as a viable space for arts and cultural activity. The participation of the Canal Road creative sector businesses and the engagement of over 300 artists in the program initiated a change of perception. For many, EDGE GreenWay will have been the first time they had been asked to consider this part of the Inner West as a focus for cultural and creative activity.

The festival was a high-profile demonstration of possibility – it brought together a wide range of local people in common enterprise with great effect. And it was to some extent transformative. People saw the GreenWay in a new light; a proportion of the audience was new to the GreenWay; hidden spaces became visible and artists were to be seen working throughout the site. This normalised and made the role of culture more part of the everyday fabric of the Inner West. EDGE GreenWay has the potential to leverage this cultural capital to develop out-of-festival arts and activation opportunities that will strengthen the profile and attraction of the Inner West.

Capitalising upon the success of EDGE GreenWay will require continued support for, and investment in, the imaginations of the artists and cultural businesses that are seen to have a commitment to the locality and civic realm of the Inner West.

Aim 2: Build community, arts and businesses partnerships

EDGE GreenWay was an exercise in partnership building and this was a significant achievement of the festival. The fact that so many individuals and organisations came together in shared enterprise and made something special has laid a strong foundation for the future.

Festivals create opportunities for meetings, conversations and chance encounters. EDGE GreenWay was undoubtedly a fertile environment for communities and artists to find common ground. The feedback from participants is clear about the benefits of using the lens of a festival to look at things differently and to work in different ways, but to be sustainable they must be able to exist beyond a weekend.

The networks, partnerships and collaborations that could develop from EDGE GreenWay are possible, but they are currently only a potential. To realise enduring community, arts and business partnerships will involve a longer-term approach that should look at new ways of working and the structures that can support them. This requires agency and political will that is enabling, developmental and not capricious. The ambition of Our Inner West 2036 must be felt at the local level and by the individuals and organisations that manage cultural development on a daily basis.

The role of the Inner West Authority is critical in this regard. It can be the catalyst to foster cross departmental and external partnerships and collaboration. The potential for Living Arts working,

Urban Ecology, GreenWay Place Management, IWC Events, Corporate, Communications and others to work within a shared cultural framework is significant.

The GreenWay is a unifying project for the Inner West and EDGE GreenWay can be an expression of that and play an important role in developing stronger, more effective partnerships across the organisation.

Aim 3: Engage local artists and diverse communities to express local identity

EDGE GreenWay managed not only to bring out the well-known aspects of this part of the Inner West but also to shine a light on its less well-known parts. Canal Road has been a hidden gem in the area – superficially it appears to be home to a collection of sheds but EDGE GreenWay has been able to show the extraordinary number of creative businesses that operate in relative anonymity.

There is much more to be explored in this area. The unveiling of the Italian community’s heritage story boards and the Men’s Shed wind turbine were both examples of the secret stories of the Inner West.

Over the last 20 years The GreenWay has developed as a result of significant and consistent lobbying and physical involvement by residents and community champions. EDGE GreenWay is a unique opportunity to celebrate this shared community and council achievement and expand the tradition. The “early pioneers” and current GreenWay champions should be part of this process to secure their continued buy in and involvement in EDGE GreenWay 2020 and beyond.

With opportunity and encouragement there is much more that can be revealed, both through EDGE GreenWay and as part of a much broader commitment to the diverse people and places of the Inner West.

“I thought the Edge has an inclusive, creative and wonderland atmosphere which felt like it could develop further over time as artists and local communities get thinking about what they could do next time.”

Aim 4: Profile the Inner West as the creative engine room of global Sydney

This is the most aspirational of the EDGE aims, and the hardest to achieve. To become a significant player on a regional stage is a major task and is not managed in months.

Comparisons between EDGE and Vivid were made on numerous occasions and in the main these are not productive – there is a significant disparity in resources, audiences and reach that make them meaningless.

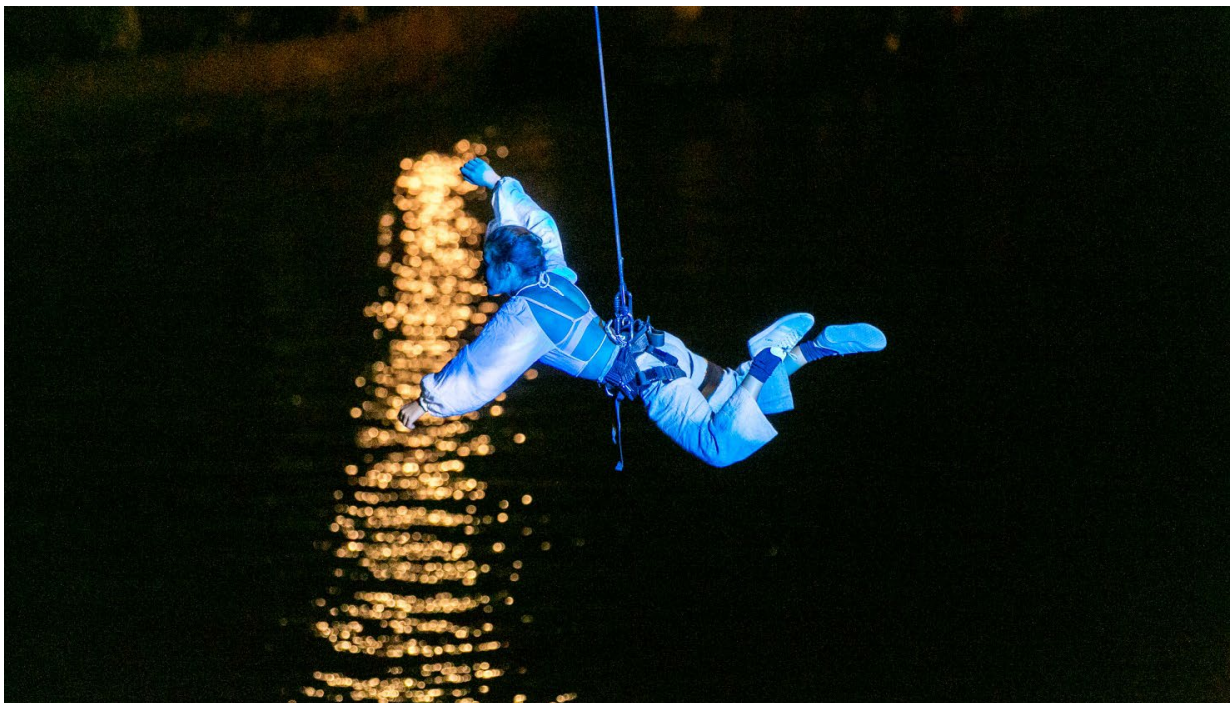
EDGE needs to explore the unique qualities of the Inner West and then build upon them. There is undoubtedly a thriving creative industries ecology in the Inner West, but maintaining and expanding this requires the muscle of economic investment, high end research and a program of incentivisation, including EDGE as one profile element of a comprehensive strategic planning and policy context.

Afterword

This review of EDGE GreenWay has found much to comment upon. As so many of the consultees have observed, for a first attempt it was a remarkable success. It has laid the foundations for future festivals and set the bar high enough for EDGE GreenWay to become a NSW festival of significant standing. It is important, however, to recognise that much was achieved on limited resources, tight timeframes and staffing.

This first successful EDGE GreenWay event is an opportunity to leverage additional political and institutional support and to nurture the ambition, imagination and drive of our creative arts community in the Inner West. With a shared set of values this could attract additional funding in the long term to capitalise and grow what's been achieved in the first 18 months. Engaging and connecting with new commissioning partners and funding bodies will grow EDGE into a regionally significant and unique inner city arts event.

Now that the potential of the festival has been understood, it is time to go back to first principles, to ask who and what EDGE Greenway is for, how can it be done better and what will make it sustainable in the longer term. This review does not pretend to provide the answers to such big questions, but hopefully it provides some pointers for a festival that could make such an essential contribution to the well-being and cultural health of the Inner West and its many communities in the coming years.



Appendix One: Summary of Findings

4. Showcasing the creativity of the Inner West

4.1 A unique location

The unique choice of the GreenWay location adds to the distinctive identity of the festival, emphasises its value as a community asset and confirm its role in achieving the overall aims of the EDGE program.

4.2 A co-curatorial model

The Expression of Interest process is effective and inclusive with a co curatorial model that engaged local creatives and communities to generate site-specific work and showcase their diverse talents.

4.3 EDGE GreenWay program

The diverse program strands of EDGE GreenWay commissions should continue on the journey of artistic ambition and aspiration. Program development time in 2018-19 was limited but an extraordinary amount was achieved. With more time (and resources) the festival could expand its options and build a portfolio of work with even greater coherence than in 2019.

4.4 Art on the GreenWay

Site specific environmental art trail could be given the opportunity to build upon the success of EDGE to consolidate its reputation as a significant visual arts event in Sydney.

4.5 A distinct identity

Distinct creative elements are the emergent brand identities of EDGE GreenWay. They are the building blocks of a festival that has the potential to become an important part of the cultural and community ecology of the Inner West and to take its place in the Sydney festival environment.

4.6 Working with artists

Artists highly rated their experience with Living Arts in the co curation of EDGE GreenWay and are keen to build on this goodwill. Regular artists' gatherings and formal establishment of an artists' network could support further growth of the relationship.

Continuous evaluation and review should become part of the post EDGE processes in order to maximise the benefit for future iterations of EDGE.

5. Partnerships and Stakeholders

5.1 Diverse partnerships

The feedback received reinforces the success of EDGE GreenWay in building partnerships with public sector, creative and cultural enterprises, , local business, education sector, environmental and community groups. The partners involved in 2019 provide a strong foundation upon which to build.

5.2 The cultural sector

336 people from cultural sector businesses, sole traders and artists participated in EDGE GreenWay 2019 and the majority of them were local. A review of the ways in which the cultural businesses of

the Inner West are integral to future of EDGE GreenWay will present opportunities to sharpen the image and messages of the festival. A small trader street market that includes bespoke food outlets should be considered in this context. An audit of the local cultural sector could reveal new opportunities for partnerships and collaborations and the *Futuring Inner West Arts and Culture* report may serve as a useful starting point for this.

5.3 Community engagement

Build on partnerships with schools, other community groups and the voluntary sector to enrich the program further through presentations and performances by local amateur choirs and other music groups, opportunities for installations and events devised and developed locally.

Explore the potential to establish links with creative, media and performing arts departments in secondary schools (e.g. Sydney Secondary College) and higher education institutions in both creative and research capacities.

5.4 Volunteering

EDGE GreenWay has a gap in provision and support that could be met by a team of trained volunteers. Committed volunteers could become a year-round resource for events and activities of many kinds. Their engagement would then become a visible demonstration of partnership between Council and local communities.

6. Program Delivery

6.1 A Special Place

The unique qualities of the site make an unambiguous statement about the personality of the Inner West. It has great potential, and the learning from the first EDGE GreenWay will undoubtedly inform planning for future events.

6.2 Profile Creative industries cluster

Build on enthusiasm for Canal Road Film Centre demonstrated during the festival to profile the creative industries cluster in Canal Road. The value of the creative businesses in the area as employers, and contributors to the local economy could be explored through a partnership approach. A consortium body of Canal Road creative businesses could be established to strengthen the shared cultural offer and develop stronger links and partnerships across the Inner West.

6.3 The Lantern Parade

A full assessment of the stewarding and organisational requirements of the festival parade should be a priority. In particular this should focus on streamlining the making, distribution and lighting of lanterns prior to the parade start-time, to avoid unnecessary delays and confusion, which can be exacerbated in the dark.

It could include consideration of a secondary procession around the site early in the afternoon targeted at family groups with young children, and could include processional elements with items made by children, music, adult walkabout acts etc.

6.4 Legs on the Wall

Commissioning new works from local arts companies is a innovative Council initiative particularly

significant in the current arts funding environment. It aligns to the brand of the Inner West as the cultural laboratory of Global Sydney.

Continue to develop site-specific new work with major local companies as this has mutual benefits in promoting the Inner West and its local talent.

Enter into negotiations with any finale provider earlier in order to allow more development time and to ensure the presentation aligns with the values of EDGE.

7. Operational Matters

7.1 Staff capacity

The delivery of EDGE Greenway 2019 was a major achievement by the Living Arts team. Ongoing capacity may, however, be a longer-term issue. The Living Arts Team delivered a highly creative content and innovative perspective to this activation but may become overstretched with production and operational requirements.

Note that a full-time *Site, Risk and Production Coordinator* is a mandatory role currently funded through the Talent Pool.

7.2 Supporting Artists

Artists surveyed rated overall organisation of EDGE GreenWay on the day very highly (89%). An assessment of the need for additional production support should be undertaken and where necessary appropriately skilled and qualified professional event staff recruited.

The needs of visiting artists should be fully assessed and resourced and an effective communications system established for the site.

7.3 Other site considerations

Consider the best use of Lilyfield Bridge and its place in any finale events in future festivals.

Review the structure and design of any future closing event program, in order to maximise the audience experience and the overall artistic impact. Ensure civic formalities are sensitive to the creative arc of the finale and compliment its processional and performative elements, rather than detract from them.

7.4 A Bigger Footprint

Extend the geographic footprint of the festival in order to accommodate the likelihood of greater visitor numbers.

Explore the options for a two-day festival and consider the thematic approaches and opportunities that may arise as a consequence.

7.5 Sustainability

Strengthen the sustainability messages of the festival and continue to develop a culture of zero waste, carbon neutrality where possible, the use of renewables and recyclables.

Significantly enhance food truck/kiosk offering (quantity, quality and variety), with a view to using local providers that are committed to low impact, eco-friendly use of natural resources.

8. Audience Experience

8.1 Visitor Profile

Simplify the audience survey and questionnaire to focus on two or three key areas. Introduce an exit survey and train volunteers in survey skills.

Allow for more imaginative feedback via an interactive consultation space.

8.2 Expand the demographic

Build upon this strong audience base and find ways of motivating those less disposed to attend – the people who may think it's not for them. EDGE GreenWay could seek out the less motivated, the isolated, the less mobile and those who are economically challenged.

9. Reaching the Audience

9.1 Marketing

Develop a robust marketing strategy that reflects these priorities, the festival's programming decisions and its strategic direction. These should include:

- A simple piece of print available on the day giving details of what is on and where.
- Very clear signage throughout the site.
- A central point for all information (including lost children etc.).
- Trained volunteers and/or a welcome team able to help out whenever needed

Appendix Two: Marketing and Communications Review

The Approach:

- Primary target market: families
- Secondary market: art-interested 25-35
- Geographic focus on Inner West: Promote EDGE GreenWay: Art meets nature. EDGE GreenWay on the waterfront is perfect to enjoy with family and friends.
- Extending into CBD
- Digital and print media
- Promote the EDGE message as an immersive arts experience, Inner West's new arts and cultural program that shines a spotlight on the cultural laboratory of global Sydney

Campaign Highlights

Marketing highlights:

Concrete Playground advertising, eDM and native content delivered:

- 672 clicks
- 600 people
- Read Time Out native content

Publicity highlights:

- Herald Sun: 17 March, page 20
- Best Weekend, 23 March, page 14
- Inner West Courier: 19 March, page 6

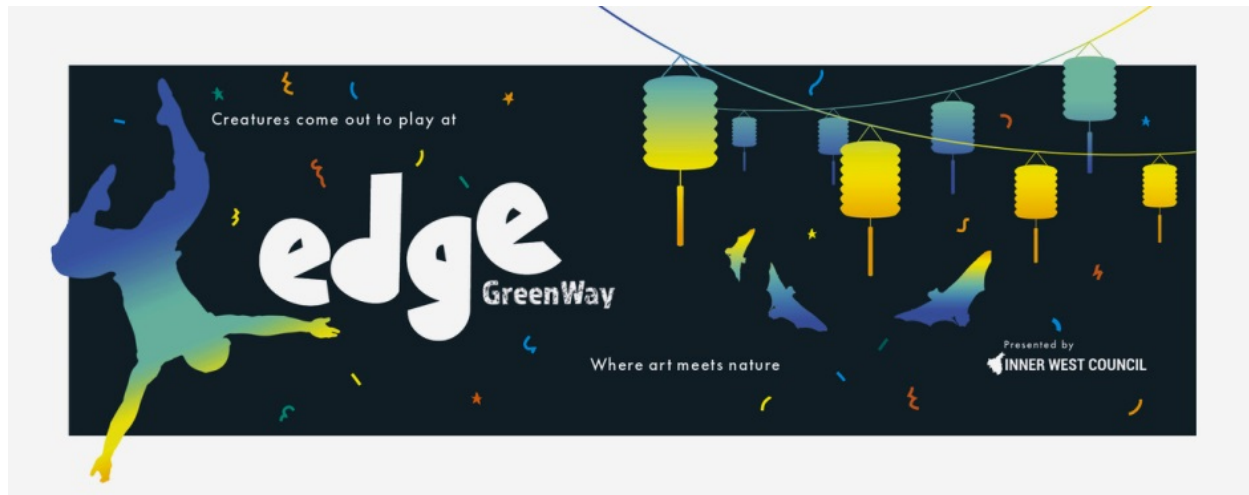
Social media highlights:

- Top three posts reached 34,487 people & generated 2,167 clicks

Website highlights:

- 9,088 page views for March (ranked 7th)
 - Spiked at 2,117 views on the day
 - 40% organic source, ie, 'EDGE Greenway' search
 - 27% direct, ie, entered www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/edge
 - 21% social (95% FB + 5% Insta/Twitter/Meet Up)
 - 11% referral, ie, from another website
 - 66% accessed from a mobile device
- Referral traffic:
 - 165 from Herald story
 - 37 from Things to do Sydney
 - 45 from Destination Sydney
 - 38 from IWC Intranet
- Program schedule & map was downloaded from the IWC website **3,283 times**.
- 5th highest downloaded across our website

Appendix Three: Participant and Staff Feedback



EDGE GreenWay Participant and Staff Feedback

This evaluation is based on both qualitative and quantitative data:

- public mentions of EDGE GreenWay on social media by attendees
- written surveys completed by 49 attendees during EDGE GreenWay
- discussion themes that emerged from a debrief meeting with Council staff
- feedback from a workshop with 20 artists, creatives and other partner organisations

wanted more free events like this

The connection to the community at many levels is something that was outstanding

Absolutely loved the whole day and can't wait for the next one

That was such an epic event

I really enjoyed the diversity of materials & intriguing installations - uplifting and inspiring!

Loved the strong environmental theme and the strongly reinforced message that the Inner West is the home of creative practice and artistic expression in Sydney

Even the little ones were rockin it at EDGE Greenway

A great event; thank you for organising it! My little girl enjoyed the craft activities. The set ups were quite small though and did lead to queues

The event itself had such interesting and fun offerings – and getting the crowds there was such an achievement. I think it goes to show as well what a demand there is for quality arts offerings for families

I spent nearly 3 hours at the Edge GreenWay last Saturday and was blown away! The energy and excitement was wonderful and yet balanced by some quite, thoughtful locales.

It was such an honour to be surrounded by so many talented local artists, proving that even though the State government chooses to put the shackles on creativity, inventiveness blossoms through hardship

This was a great event. I look forward to it growing from strength to strength in coming years! Main concern this year was lack of food options

-Attendee

Despite the crazy weather the EDGE GreenWay last weekend was a lot of fun

It was a great success and cool in so many ways

It was great!! Really good use of the area's nooks and crannies. But next year more food please!!!!

This was a fantastic event...A+ to the organizers, I hope it becomes an annual outing for the Inner west

Today we took our boys to the EDGE GreenWay exhibition at Lilyfield. It was awesome! A 2km loop around the canal to see local creatives showcase their artwork

Survey findings

Attendees

- 5,000 attended, in spite of the sharp winds and associated chill
- 1800 people visited Canal Road Film Centre
- 270 people joined 9 Film Centre tours
- 500 people participated in the Earth Hour lantern parade
- 400 attended the Italian Picnic (12 years in the making)
- 61% lived in the Inner West; half from suburbs immediately neighbouring the GreenWay
- Majority were 30-40 year olds and 40-50 year olds
- 59% were first-time visitors to the GreenWay

How they travelled

- 60 people cycled to the event, including 35 from cycling groups that Council engaged with
- 44% drove to EDGE GreenWay, and an impressive 23% walked

How they found out

- Word of mouth and the letterbox drop were the most popular marketing channels

What they felt

- The art, kids activities and performers/musicians were the main reason to attend
- they were fairly to significantly engaged, captivated or inspired by the artworks and artists on show
- on a 1-5 scale, a majority of the survey audience rated EDGE GreenWay as a great or excellent experience
- The consensus was that there were significant benefits to Inner West residents

The EDGE arts approach

Showcasing Local Artists

Over **236** artists, creatives and performers were paid \$160,000 for their involvement in EDGE GreenWay.

A further **100** artists, creatives and performers were supported via being given a free platform for exposure via EDGE Town hall activations. **38** local businesses worked with Council on EDGE GreenWay and **25** studios were open during EDGE Creative Trails.

Facilitating collaboration

The authenticity of Council's interactions with artists was not missed. In an evaluation meeting following EDGE GreenWay, artists and creatives shared their appreciation that Council recognising the value of their practice. They felt EDGE GreenWay communicated that "we artists have something valuable to contribute". The production of culture and bringing creativity to life, others added, is something that must be paid for – dollars are investment and compensation for "invaluable work".

“EDGE GreenWay communicated that we artists have something valuable to contribute”

Creating New Local Product

Council’s partnership with Legs on the Wall facilitated a new and complex creative work. This site-specific collaborative approach was extended to the entire EDGE program – with artists invited to respond and then together sparking new experiments that both showcase and extend local creatives. This is a genuine commitment by Council to build relationships with artists in the Inner West.

There was a strong sense of the value in showcasing the cultural and creative economy –

“EDGE lifted the lid – so much happens yet so little is celebrated”. For artists and creatives, accessibility to an audience is critical. One commented “artists are very keen for opportunity to be part of events and be able to collaborate and share”.

Strengths

Connecting the community

Amongst artists, creatives and partners of EDGE GreenWay, there was a strong consensus that the event met or exceeded their expectations. 19 of 23 representatives felt this way, commenting *“it was a great way of connecting to the community”*.

- They were impressed by the large crowds, were pleased by the grassroots spirit of the event, the diversity of art forms and scale of performances, the commitment by multiple stakeholders, and the joy of discovering activities to participate in.
- Collaborators on EDGE GreenWay gave overwhelming praise to EDGE for building community, and what it reflected about the Inner West community: “community is an important factor to locals”, The “GreenWay is for them”, “the right events done the right way can bond community” and the community is “passionate about environment and artistic expression and collaboration”.

“Fabulous partnerships are collaboration! Great expression of inner west culture”

Artistic content

Overall there was consensus that EDGE GreenWay had strong artistic content, collaborators were pleased with the variety and format on show. These are represented by their comments:

- “Eclectic, site-specific, engaging, contemporary”
- “a lot of variety, and different qualities”
- “art was bold”
- “high-level experimental, thoughtful and at times courageous”

Audience engagement

Collaborators generally marveled at the crowd size. They were happy with the engagement – how interested people were and their interaction with art works – with attendee responses including: wonder, connection, enjoying the place. Artists and organisations really appreciated interacting with the public and the chance to work with organisations located near them in the Inner West.

Interesting Location

The location was highly suitable to EDGE, especially with the ready access to the natural environment. The location-specificity of the works and engagements/activities was also regarded as a strength.

In terms of specific offerings, artists, creatives and partners nominated their favourites:

- Lantern Parade
- Legs on the Wall
- Under Bridge/ Regen Lab, Deep Sea Astronauts

Vision communicated

- Environmentally-themed: sustainability, environment in crisis
- Creative: edgy, pushing boundaries, an experiment
- Community: linking people, inclusiveness, serving the community, give individuals a sense that they have creativity and valuable skills
- Upholding Council's responsibility: the event as a showcase of creativity – by artists and local organisations, protecting artists

“Don't compare to other festivals or events, allow it to grow organically without expectations”

Building partnership with creative economy

Collaborators universally found EDGE GreenWay communicated support for the cultural and creative economy and showcased it well, putting it “on the map”.

Environment and sustainability

It was widely agreed that EDGE did well in highlighting the urban ecology, and reflected the community's interest in the environment. The art works and activities were strongly linked to this.

“A bold effort to be refined and improved; has heart”

Overall comments

- Continue what was begun with collaboration this year
- Use the natural environment
- Don't lose the ground-up spirit
- Allow attendees to use their own creativity
- Build on the energy towards something – could be a campaign or a real-life environmental activity
- Use the event as a platform – could launch a permanent sculpture

- “translate ‘the art prize’ into an art subsidy for expression of interest phase so one artist gets to develop a larger work”

Recommendations

Improve the visitor experience

- Artists: more artists, more works, more music acts, more creative activities (especially more lantern workshops)
- Food and drink: offerings could offer a wider range of choices, and having more outlets would reduce queues
Rethink the ‘bring a picnic’ idea given the lack of suitable spaces/attractions to encourage it
- Activities:
 - use the focal point of water and bridges
 - Keep building relationships
 - Keep the works site-specific
 - Bring activity closer together
 - Make the site and artworks more accessible: “make it more inclusive. everybody means everyone”
 - Lighting on bridge was too harsh
 - Italian Picnic: this part of the program could take the form of a ticketed lunch
- Signage and communications: Clearly explain the program, communicate how to get around, how to reach the site from public transport connections – these could be addressed with on-site signage and announcements,
 - Program running order boards
 - Roving staff/volunteers to guide people to various attractions and provide info
- Weather – understanding that this is beyond Council’s control, a few suggested equipment to better cope with weather: shelter areas to provide attendees some respite from wind

Encourage more diverse audiences

When asked who did NOT attend, respondents said:

- Local artists, and more of physical performance
- Local businesses having the chance to sell their products
- Teenagers, young adults and 20-30 year olds without children
- Ethnically diverse sections of the community
- Decision-makers – politicians and those who organise similar events

Extend Programming

- A greater diversity in the activities offered, scheduling such that events do not overlap or very few activities run at the same time, that the artworks relate better to the festival zone they were placed in
- Longer event: a series of events, satellite events in the lead up and after, a weekend program

More communication and marketing

- Reaching niche creatives could be done better
- Media coverage – could have been in a variety of publications and more of them

- Coverage should build up to the event
- Could have more signage around the LGA
- Struggled to reach Gen Y
- Official messages about the event could have more coherence – “promote event consistently”
- Communications on the day at EDGE could have promoted other Council programs

Increase resources for the lantern parade

- ‘Get any lantern’ policy – allow 45 mins marshalling
- Allow 30 mins to finish workshop and start parade
- More lantern-making book times for workshops
- more crowd control and quicker making process
- Teachers need to be paid to help organise lantern-giving to kids; encourage schools to play a role in coordination – manage this by paying teachers
- head torches for marshals during the parade
- More volunteers to assist
- Cars exiting canal road should be told to wait until 9pm

Cycling zone and environmental initiatives

- Having signage to mention the free bike mechanic service + bike decorating
- Connect to waste education team
- Opportunity for GreenWay Place Manager to work with schools more closely
- Weighting for reusable bins, many blew away

Increase security

- for specific elements and overnight - Art on GreenWay, Italian Picnic infrastructure was vulnerable in the wind

Staff Resourcing

- Edge is an arts program that seeks to engage participants rather than an event that provides passive entertainment; Council’s role being to empower the community, not do things for them
- To deliver an event well at this scale, perhaps differentiation of internal Council team supporting the event: Living Arts team produce and manage, Events team to operate infrastructure

Involve Access and Inclusion

- Engage council team early with respect to mapping, art curation and site management. Engage this team to address the relevant access and/or inclusion considerations,
- Build in accessibility requirements at the start during the EOI stage: ask artists how they will incorporate accessibility concerns and offer the support of the Access and Inclusion team to artists.



All images courtesy of Brett Boardman © 2019

Tuesday, 26 March 2019

EDGE GreenWay- art meets nature



Join in an immersive arts experience that shines a spotlight on the Inner West.

Head down to the water for this FREE community event:

Free botanical mocktails, grooves from local DJs, outdoor sculpture and art installations, live performance and music, kids workshops and entertainment and a gravity defying finale performance by Legs on the Wall.

Plan your afternoon with more information [here](#)

Corner Lilyfield Road and Canal Road, Lilyfield.

Saturday, 30 March 2019, 3-9pm.

Kids at EDGE:
Animals, art, puppets and play



Entertainment at EDGE: sweet DJ grooves and live performances



Exclusive at EDGE: Legs on the Wall perform 'The Water's Edge'



Art at EDGE: Installations, performances, sculpture and more



Appendix 5: EDGE Greenway Program & Map