A dramatic sunset over a city skyline. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a bright orange and yellow glow across the sky and silhouetting the buildings. The sky is filled with wispy clouds, and the overall atmosphere is one of intense heat and urgency.

**Warning:
This is (Not)
a Drill**

**Refuge
2017:
Heatwave**

Arts House

Arts House acknowledges that we meet, gather and work on what always was and always will be the territory of the Kulin nations, in particular the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung peoples. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and First Nations people globally.

Welcome

*Womin jeka booeegigat wilam,
welcome moongmoonggak.
Berring-takal woke-kirebangal-ith
djerring-bulok palreetith.
Wanganyinu nuringian biik wanganyinu
ngargkan-narranta biik.
Ganbu Kulin nuringianith biik
baambuth.
Onemdaal kyinandoo-djak djerring,
yiookgen,
Yurlendj-dji, booje, nganggak
nuringianeit.
Loggegerrebi ba nuringian-djak.
Ngoon Godjin.*

Welcome to Arts House, welcome to *Refuge*.
Our climate is changing due to human activity.
When we care for Country we understand Country.
First People have been caring for Country since the beginning of time.
Our most precious resource is each other, a plan,
what skills do you have, come inside listen carefully.
Take part and take care.
Thank you.

From the Wurundjeri Council and Aunty Gail Smith



Image: Bryony Jackson

Refuge 2016–20

Refuge examines different potential disasters that might occur in our city and across the world due to climate change, and maps how we might respond. With artists and emergency services as key collaborators, Arts House brings together thinkers, artists, first responders and cultural leaders to explore social and community resilience and creative approaches to preparedness.

Each annual *Refuge* cycle includes a laboratory, artist residencies, and a program of public events including an emergency exercise simulation.

The scenarios:



2016: FLOOD

King tides, rainfall upstream, storms and rising sea levels combine to cause a flooding event in the North Melbourne area. How will the community respond?



2017: HEATWAVE

A heatwave is predicted for the state – with six consecutive days of extreme heat over 40 degrees. Who is most vulnerable in the heat?



2018: PANDEMIC

Enforced social isolation, health alerts, with national hospitals and morgues at capacity. How is relief provided when the risk of contagion means no public gathering?



2019: DISPLACEMENT

The social and environmental impacts of climate change mean mass displacement of peoples from across our region, the Pacific Islands. How do we respond to mass arrivals and care for our regional neighbours?



2020: URBAN CAMP

The unmanageable city; an international convergence of people and knowledges, an urban camp, a conference and temporary shelter in public space. What complications and opportunities will arise?

Refuge: Heatwave

This is (Not) a Drill

From hurricanes to heatwaves, cities are ground zero for major climate change impacts, and are warming at about twice the rate of the planet as a whole.

How can we plan for and cope with the scale of extreme climate events, while acknowledging the inequities of impacts? How do we prepare in ways that are humane, dignified and adaptive? Such challenges require complex, multifaceted responses and the courage to think differently as we find new understandings and practices: the courage to play in the dark.

In 2017, Arts House undertook the second iteration of our five-year *Refuge* project – *Refuge: Heatwave*. *Refuge* explores social and community resilience and propels a growing cohort of artists as leading-edge innovators of creative preparedness, alongside scientists, first responders and cultural leaders in an imagined climate-change-impact scenario. In 2017 *Refuge* achieved this through the prism of a prolonged heatwave across Victoria, and the rehearsal of what an emergency relief centre could look like.

Each annual *Refuge* cycle includes a transdisciplinary knowledge-exchange lab, artist residencies and a public events program. This booklet offers a project overview, a compact insight into the artist

projects that unfolded over 24 hours in the Emergency Relief Centre, consideration of the impacts of a heatwave on ourselves and our city, and a summary of a longer evaluation by our partner, the University of Melbourne's Research Unit for Public Cultures.

Refuge takes place at the intersection of cultural responsibility and considered response to this long emergency. Through Vicki Couzens's and Emily Johnson's engagement with deep time in their durational work, *Redreaming*, we were invited to consider decolonising processes of mutual aid and healing, and to de-centre the anthropocentric experience of climate change.

Asha Bee Abraham created intimacy amidst chaos through her work *Contact*, inspired by the Red Cross Telecross system. By focusing on those who hadn't made it to the Emergency Relief Centre, the public was confronted with the intersectional layers that contribute to vulnerability, and the very personal edges of access to climate justice. Access to knowledge, resources and skills is critical in any disaster response – Jen



Rae addressed this in her work, *Future Proof*, through the idea of food sovereignty. Collective contributions to a survival guide, a radical barter economy, and practical demonstrations that saw us eating critters, waste and foraged foods showed the many connections it takes to feed a populace in an emergency; and proved the resilience of the system and the creativity needed to enact this.

Octogenarian and long-time North Melbourne resident, Lorna Hannan, enabled space for conversation-as-action, and YIRRAMBOI First Nations Arts Festival gave us permission to host the Elders' Lounge. Both were critical spaces to acknowledge intergenerational exchange and the simplicity of sharing a cuppa as a conduit for slowing down and understanding each other.

Many artists have been involved in the *Refuge* journey and their participation will continue to be critical over the coming years – including Latai Taumoepeau, Dave Jones, Punctum and Lee Shang Lun; along with our fantastic partners from the regional township of Natimuk, Red Cross Australia,

the SES, Emergency Management Victoria and Resilient Melbourne, among others.

This project is not a drill. Climate change is not a drill. By placing artists at the centre of a necessarily adaptive practice, *Refuge* asks for complex responses to complex problems. Combining empathy and action, the aesthetic and the transdisciplinary, *Refuge* articulates the value of adventure and exchange in imagining and enacting our collective futures. Thank you to all the artists, community members and partners for your rigour, your contributions and your integrity. We are honoured to work with you.

We hope to see you at *Refuge: Pandemic* in 2018.

— Josh Wright
Acting Artistic Director

Image: Bryony Jackson

The Refuge 2017 Scenario: Heatwave

The past week has been warm, but within the average for the city. Overnight temperatures have hovered around 18°C for a few nights. The Bureau of Meteorology has predicted six consecutive days of heat exceeding 40°C. The warning is accompanied by total fire bans and spot fires across the state. Your social media feeds flicker on Tuesday morning with warnings and advice. Air conditioners and fans are working overtime.

By Thursday, trains are running slowly and tarmac is softening. In hot pockets of the city, urban heat island effects are raising temperatures an added five to seven degrees, with impacts lasting well into the night. People are flocking to cool public spaces and beaches, seeking safety.

Tensions begin to escalate. With power supply unstable, you try to remember to keep your mobile phone charged. Hospitals and ambulance services prepare

themselves for unprecedented demand. Melbourne's public transport systems begin to experience cancellations.

In many neighbourhoods shops have closed and social divisions are emerging, as some areas have managed to escape blackouts while others are bearing the brunt. Police are called to disturbances across the city; fresh foods are less available in shops. In household refrigerators, food has become inedible.

You haven't been able to reach your family and friends. As you leave your apartment you wonder if you should take your dog with you. You wonder about your elderly neighbour. When you get outside you discover that ATMs are down and you have no cash.

Where do you go?
What do you do?
Who do you turn to?

How vulnerable is the area where you live?

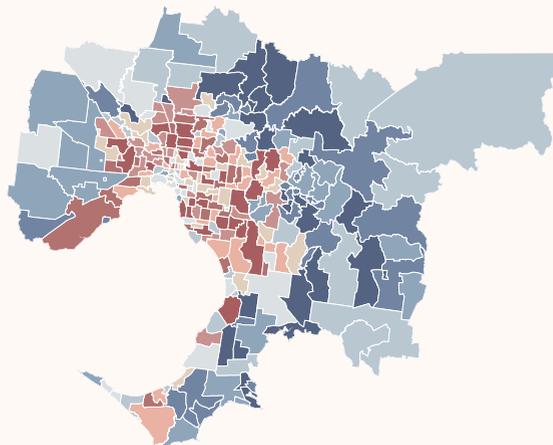


Image: Melbourne Vulnerability Map. Sourced from Loughnan, M. E., Tapper, N. J., Phan, T., Lynch, K. and McInnes, J. A., 2013, 'A spatial vulnerability analysis of urban populations during extreme heat events in Australian capital cities', National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Gold Coast.

LEGEND
Most Vulnerable ● ● ● ● ● ● Least Vulnerable

What is a Heatwave?

A string of hot days does not necessarily constitute a heatwave. The temperate Melbourne climate features hot summers and cooler evenings that offer relief. If both the minimum and maximum temperatures remain unusually high for consecutive days – when heat becomes life-threatening – this is a heatwave.

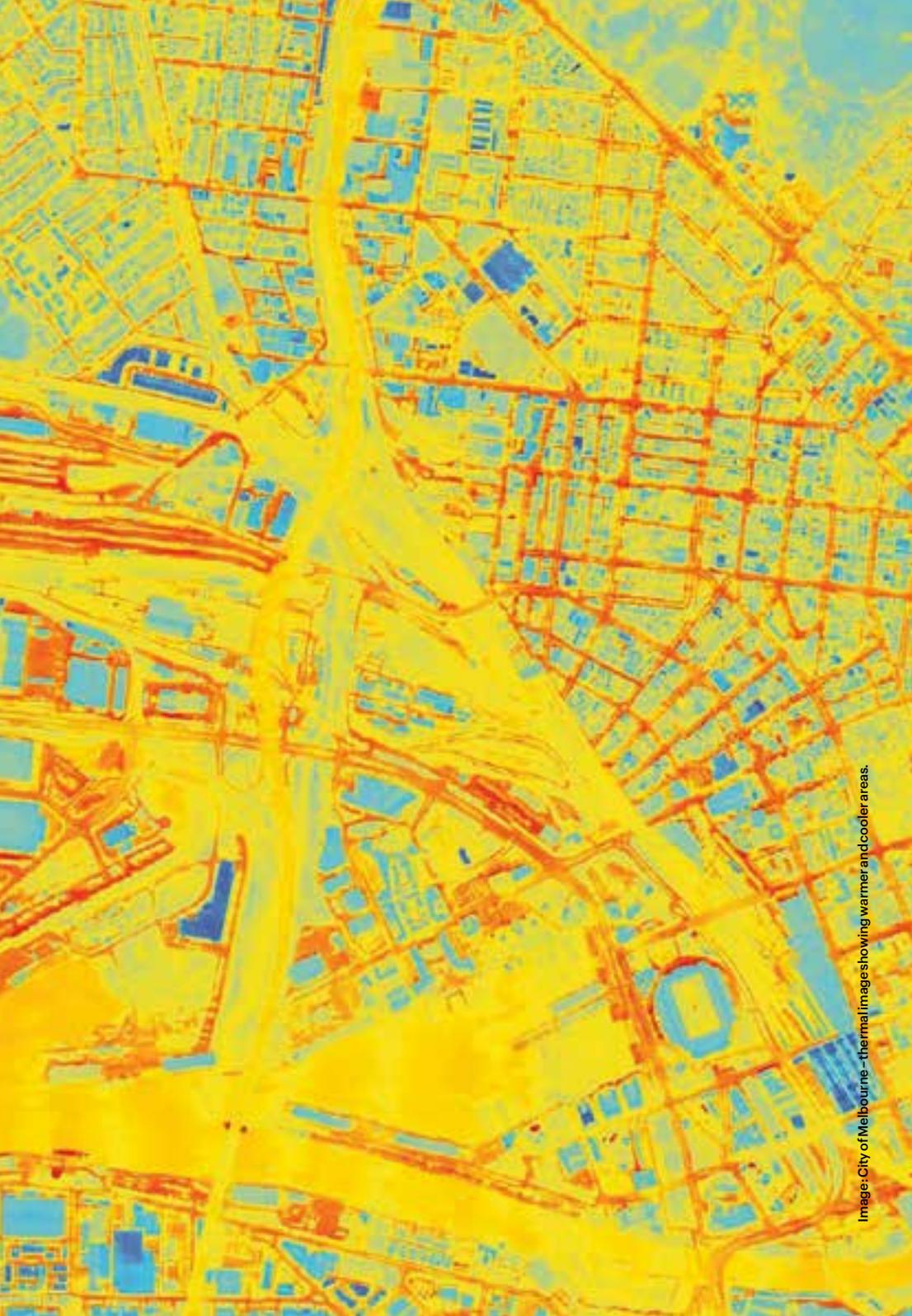
Every year, heatwaves kill more people in Australia than any other natural disaster.

What Can Happen in a Heatwave?

- Heavy demand on air conditioning can lead to unstable power supply or power cuts.
- Medical, hospital and ambulance services can be placed under pressure as people seek help for heat-related problems.
- Public transport services may be delayed or cancelled, restricting movement or isolating those without other transport options.
- Public infrastructure is placed under pressure as people leave their homes in search of cooler spaces.
- Pets or wildlife may become stressed or die in the heat.

What Should You Do in a Heatwave?

- **Drink water**
 - It is possible to sweat up to 15 litres per day.
 - Avoid sugary and caffeinated drinks.
- **Keep cool**
 - Peak heat is 11am–4pm.
 - Drape a wet towel around your neck or take a cool shower.
 - If your home is too warm, make use of cool public spaces like libraries.
- **Stay out of the sun**
 - Sunburn decreases your body's ability to cool itself.
 - Plan your errands to avoid the hottest part of the day.
 - Most heat-related illnesses are due to overexposure.
- **Who Is Most at Risk?**
 - Those aged over 65, especially those who live alone.
 - Young children.
 - Residents in high-rise apartments.
 - International students and visitors.
 - Outdoor workers.
 - People who have low income or are homeless.
 - People with disabilities or who are socially isolated.

A thermal map of Melbourne, Australia, showing temperature variations across the city. The map uses a color scale from blue (cooler) to red and yellow (warmer). The city's grid of streets and buildings is clearly visible, with warmer areas (red and yellow) concentrated in the central and eastern parts of the city, and cooler areas (blue) more prevalent in the western and southern parts. A large stadium, likely the Melbourne Cricket Ground, is visible in the lower right quadrant.

Refuge

(*noun*; the state of being safe or sheltered from pursuit, danger, or difficulty)

Image: City of Melbourne - thermal images showing warmer and cooler areas.

The *Refuge*: Heatwave artists each explored a different element of the Emergency Relief Centre: communication, wellbeing, food, community, light and warmth, and sleep.

Communication

Contact
Asha Bee Abraham



You've made it to the refuge. You've signed in, connected with friends and been offered a cup of iced tea. You're safe. But you wonder about those who haven't made it to Arts House. Many of those most vulnerable to extreme heat haven't made it to our refuge. Where are they all? Do they have electricity? Do they have access to safe food? Are they coping? You are invited to pick up the phone and follow the prompts to make contact.

Contact uses crisis as an opportunity to pause and connect with each other, and those who are most vulnerable during a heatwave. Script in hand, participants are invited to exchange snippets of their lives with a stranger.

In this instance, it's okay to talk about the weather.

"In times of extreme heat, check in on your grandparents, friends, neighbours, shopkeepers.

Ask if they are okay.
Ask if you can help.
Ask if they have food, medication, water, electricity and shelter.
Ask about their children, partners and pets.
Ask if they've felt this hot before.
Ask if this is what climate change feels like.
Ask how they feel about the future.
Ask what gives them hope.
Ask what we can do."

Asha Bee Abraham is a human ecologist and artist creating opportunities for people to share and examine their relational experiences of being human. Her participatory projects focus on the connections *between*: relationships with each other, with place, and with ourselves. For *Refuge*, she worked with Red Cross Australia, the Council to Homeless Persons and North Melbourne Language and Learning.

Image: James Henry

Wellbeing

Swelter
Dave Jones



Swelter is a tactile exploration of the urban heat island phenomenon. The centrepiece is a room-sized miniature city in the grip of a simulated heatwave. As the space heats up, what impact will this have on the residents? *Swelter* invited the public, hosted by the Scouts and a volunteer from the Bureau of Meteorology, to investigate how an urban heat island forms, its impacts, and the ways in which this might be mitigated through reforestation, design and planning.

"The impacts of a heatwave are compounded by the urban environment. City buildings and pavements absorb the sun's heat and exhaust fans push warm air onto the streets, raising ambient temperatures. Tall buildings and laneways trap this heat, creating 'urban heat islands'. With high-density living on the rise, Melbourne residents are unwittingly exposed to the life-threatening consequences of a heat event."

Image: Bryony Jackson

Dave Jones is based in Natimuk, a small town near Horsham in Western Victoria. The tactile and interactive experiences he creates invite members of the public to engage playfully with scientific knowledge, learning about critical global issues and exploring as they go. For *Refuge*, he worked with the 6th Melbourne Scout Group in Kensington, and Natimuk Primary School.

Arts House also worked in collaboration with Horsham Rural City Council and the regional community of Natimuk on the *Refuge* project, as part of the Nati Frinj Biennale 2017.

**Future Proof
by Fair Share Fare
Jen Rae**



Future Proof explores food in/security at a time of climate change. It is shaped around the shared understanding that food is labour, food is knowledge, food is technology and food is energy. This is not catering. Context is everything. Food is experienced and expectations are disrupted.

Future Proof asks: 'What do you know, that you don't know you know, that we all might need to know in a disaster?' In participatory activities, food is created and experienced, including through demonstrations that explore eating bugs and weeds, and collectively cultivating a 45-year-old yoghurt culture. All the food is sourced through local harvesting, foraging, bartering or trading, and/or is indigenous to the soil. *Future Proof* boosts collective know-how, uncovering alternative economies for nourishment and community.

"The Australian food chain only holds around 30 days' supply of non-perishable food and less than five days' supply of perishable

food. The average household generally holds less than a week's supply of food. In the event of a disaster, such low reserves compromise food security without taking into consideration potential gas shortages and/or electricity blackouts."

Jen Rae is a Melbourne-based artist, researcher and food futurist of Canadian Métis descent. She is Creative Lead of Fair Share Fare, and a Lecturer in Art and Performance at Deakin University. For *Refuge*, she worked with local North Melbourne businesses including Bakers Delight, Lulu's Café, Joe's Market Garden and Clever Polly's.

Image: James Henry

Future Proof included a food demonstration of edible insects from the Pavement Pantry – which are highly nutritious, more sustainable and more economical to farm than proteins such as meat and fish. Based on a Canadian First Nations recipe for pemmican (Cree: *pimihkân*), regarded as the first energy or survival bar, Jen Rae created delicious vim balls for the public to try.

Cricket & Grasshopper Vim Balls

Blend together crickets, grasshoppers with tahini, cacao, pepitas, goji berries, almond meal, dried nettle, puffed quinoa, honey and vanilla. Roll into balls. Roll balls into a mixture of desiccated coconut and black ants.*



Image: Fair Share Fare, Pavement Pantry, cricket and grasshopper vim balls. Photo by Emma Bynes.

* All insects used are FSANZ-approved human-grade dehydrated insects.



Nobody knows everything but everybody knows something.

Ruth Crow AM (1916–99) believed that when people came together over a cup of tea, they could go on to do great things. Community member Lorna Hannan convenes a panel of expert guests and provocateurs for conversation-as-action in *Crow's Corner*. Situated in the temperate cool of the Arts House basement, participants are invited to share thoughts and anecdotes on how heat affects individuals and the community, learn from local elders, and take some respite from the heat.

“I think a lot of the public conversation is in drastic terms, and that that is not useful. Because when it becomes drastic it becomes something you can't consider and see solutions for... You are either horrified and you run away, or you reject it and try to behave as if it isn't there at all, and neither of those reactions is useful.”

Lorna Hannan is a North Melbourne resident of over 50 years. An activist, storyteller and former Melbourne City Councillor, she remains deeply engaged with ideas of community connectedness, social inclusion and dissemination of learning. For *Refuge*, she worked with North Melbourne Language and Learning, Emergency Management Victoria, North Melbourne Library and the Hotham History Group, among others.

Image: Bryony Jackson

HEAT KILLS. STAY ALIVE

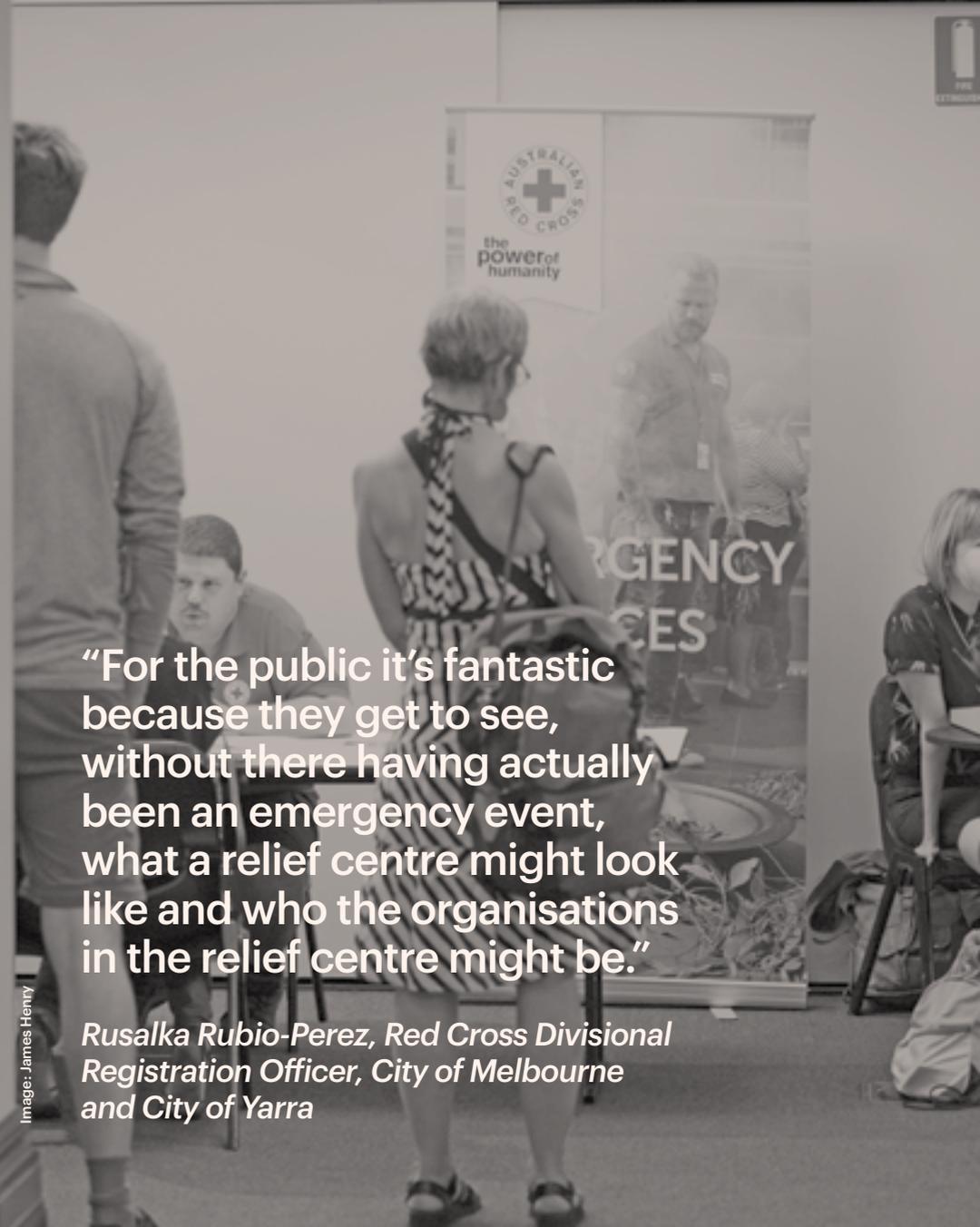


Image: James Henry

“For the public it's fantastic because they get to see, without there having actually been an emergency event, what a relief centre might look like and who the organisations in the relief centre might be.”

Rusalka Rubio-Perez, Red Cross Divisional Registration Officer, City of Melbourne and City of Yarra

Imagining the Unavoidable: Creating a Climate-Ready City

Hilary Bambrick

We need to assess vulnerability, resistance and adaptive capacity: to find out what's going on at community level as well as broader state or national level, and actually go into communities and conduct assessments. Because it's possibly going to be at that local level where adaptations actually take place. We need a way to actually evaluate these things, so that we can find out what is working, what isn't working, what's potentially translatable, what might be upscaled to other communities. We need also to understand and respond to climate extremes.

A lot of work has been done on [temperature] averages...but if we're talking about heat extremes, we don't know at what point systems are going to start being affected. We can look to past examples, such as what happened in Melbourne a few years ago with the heatwaves, where things happened such as train tracks buckling. Things were affected that we wouldn't normally have considered. But to really get a sense of the interconnectedness, and how those things affect human health, we need to know at what point this happens and how all these things work together.

It is very complex and without precedent. We don't know at what point we hit the tipping point where you can no longer say: 'Well, for every degree of maximum temperature you get this number of hospitalisations.' It might just be that there's a threshold point at which it skyrockets – so it's a matter of finding out what that is, and what to do. And that kind of thinking really does require imagination.

We talk about adaptation as managing the unavoidable. I would extend this: if we have new climate extremes, we really need to start imagining the unavoidable...getting people from different sectors together,

and really thinking about these things in a very different way from what we're used to. We need to imagine the unavoidable, so that we can avoid the unimaginable...

We need to find new and innovative ways to create environments that are suitable for people. And a climate-ready city is one that's actually comprehensively assessed its points of vulnerability – where we have got all those people in the room together and found out those points of vulnerability, those points of resilience and the interconnectedness between them.

Professor Hilary Bambrick is Head of School, Public Health and Social Work, Queensland University of Technology. Excerpted from a presentation at the Urbanism, Climate Adaptation and Health Symposium 2013, Australian National University.

Resilient Melbourne: Planning for a Hotter Future

Melbourne is getting warmer. The average annual temperature is projected to increase by around 2.6°C and the number of days over 35°C each year is expected to increase from nine to 26 by 2070. Research suggests that extreme weather patterns like heatwaves, droughts and floods will intensify and become more frequent.

The city will feel the brunt of these changes. The 'urban heat island' effect means that urban regions reach hotter temperatures – and remain hotter – than other areas. Peak temperatures in metropolitan areas are currently around seven degrees higher than those in surrounding rural areas. This is caused by the replacement of green areas with concrete and asphalt (which absorb and store heat from the sun instead of reflecting it) as well as exhaust created by air conditioners and other human contributions.

While the effects of these phenomena will be widespread, they disproportionately affect already vulnerable members of our communities: older residents, people who are unwell, and those who are financially disadvantaged.

Resilient Melbourne helps communities prepare for whatever the future may hold. It is part of a global movement acknowledging that our response to and recovery from sudden events can be compromised by chronic social stresses. Its flagship actions include a Metropolitan Urban Forest Strategy, an urban greening initiative that includes surveying and increasing municipal tree canopy citywide to help make Melbourne more resilient to climate change; and the state-wide Emergency Management Community Resilience Framework for Victoria, mapping and meeting community resilience challenges and empowering communities in awareness, responsibility and self-reliance.

Resilience is a process. It takes continual practice and rehearsal. Much like empathy, resilience needs to be constantly developed, if it is to exercise its characteristics of flexibility, readiness and preparedness.

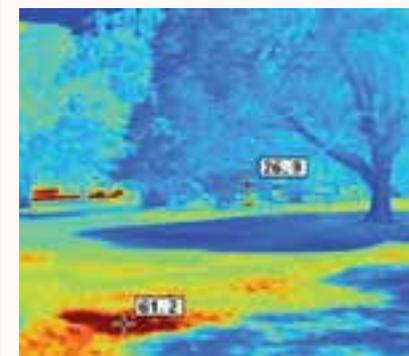


Image: City of Melbourne – daytime thermal image in one of Melbourne's parks. The temperature under trees can be less than half that of unshaded areas.

Working Together to Imagine the Future

For *Refuge 2017*, Arts House invited three experts from different fields to discuss how we need to adapt to meet the challenge of climate change. Alan March is Associate Professor in Urban Planning at the University of Melbourne; Alison McMillan is Deputy Director of the Emergency Management Branch of the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services; and Jen Rae is an artist and researcher working in the area of food security.

Here are some excerpts from their conversation.

How do you think climate change will affect us in the future?

Alison: It's not just warming anymore. Climate change brings extremes of weather we can't control – storms, bushfires, flooding. Frequency and severity will increase. We need to learn from recent events in Victoria and we need to not fail in imagining what might happen. For example, the thunderstorm asthma in November 2016 – we had failed to ever imagine something of that magnitude would affect our state.

Jen: Yes, it's important to understand that we are no longer experiencing 'once-in-a-hundred-year storms' or another 'freak weather event'. These events are becoming cumulative, more frequent and intense. So are we going to be prepared for multiples?

Alan: In Australia we've tended to be quite reliant on government to fix our problems. But will the fire crew come to the front of the house and put the fire out if the water stops? Will someone come to deliver

water to us all? If we rely heavily on brittle systems, the answer is no. So we need shared responsibility: we prepare our home, we look after our neighbour's, we have emergency kits, we have a plan that's well thought through and a range of people's advice.

How well placed are we to adapt?

Alison: I think Australia is a society that is very robust and adaptive, and we see that time and time again in disasters...often adversity brings out the best in us. [But] what if we didn't have electricity, what if the mobile phone network went down, how would our family and our community remain connected and adapt to that situation?

Jen: I think one of the challenges is to think about 'adapting' in itself. It's not about returning to the way things were before: it's about how we continually adapt to continually changing conditions. We also have to start thinking about empathy and compassion for strangers, and our relationships within the communities where we live and work. For instance, looking for

signs of heat distress in others on the street, or knowing the whereabouts of our elderly or other vulnerable community members.

What are people already doing to adapt?

Alan: One key aspect of disasters and emergencies is that humans live in places that they have, most of the time, constructed themselves, not always consciously aware of the risks that they face. Where we live: is the structure itself able to deal with a bushfire or a heat event, and indeed do people understand the capabilities of their structure or their road system or the nature of the event that might occur? ...A large city only changes 1% per year. We try to improve housing, work, schools. We are facing a range of questions. Power might go out; heat might coincide; there could be vulnerable people; water might go off. This sounds alarming but it can be dealt with with good shade, insulation, great networks to assist, and so on. Joining places and building systems with human systems.

Jen: People are looking at alternative ways of delivery, metaphor, analogy, imagination, to help others connect better. Finding ways of delivering these messages will be critical. We might not have iPhones; we might have to get messages out in a different way. For example in New York's Hurricane Sandy: at a community centre, able-bodied people ran food up to sky towers, and then used Post-it notes on windows because they couldn't use phones.

How can we think creatively about gaining the knowledge we'll need?

Alison: Our parents and grandparents didn't have air-conditioning; didn't have the things we have available to us today. Obviously domestic housing design was

different, but they knew and understood what helps keep cool when it's very hot. We need to re-remember lessons from the past, because it's been hot in this country for a very long time.

Jen: I see us as being a sort of translating generation. We have a lot of children right now who don't have these basic skills. We have elders that are still living that still have these memories. I think it's up to us to ask: 'How did you keep cool?' We need to get the diagrams and the stories, and find meaningful ways to pass it on to children.

Alan: Yes, and we need to keep moving with the times as circumstances of hazards and risks emerge, and to take responsibility ourselves. And to help facilitate others doing that at the same time, to develop strong communities that can change and adapt over time.

We Are Not in Isolation: Stories are *Refuge* Ellen van Neerven

Australia is a very diverse country, historically, geographically and culturally, and every area of Australia has its own unique environmental challenges. One thing is common throughout this continent and its islands: First Nations people's old and continual relationship to Country.

I am a young Mununjali person from the Yugambeh language group of South-East Queensland, recently moved to Melbourne to pursue an arts career, living here as a visitor acknowledging the traditional owners of this land, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, acknowledging Elders both past, present and future. Caring for Country and Indigenous climate knowledge are embedded in relationships; everything is connected, the local is deeply fixed to the global.

"When they cut trees down at Cummins (in WA), the rainfall fell or was reduced (in SA)," Uncle Lewis O'Brien, from the Kurna people of South Australia says, highlighting the continuing need for the Indigenous multi-nation cooperative approaches to climate. Movement of winds and clouds across Western Australia to South Australia is dependent on growing trees in certain places and lighting fires in certain times.

The places we live in revolve around, are created by and transformed by a cycle different from European seasons. What

we do environmentally and socially to part of the country is going to affect another part – we are not in isolation. Things do not stop where we are. First Nations mob have had to respond to extreme climate events for a long time, constantly finding ways to adapt and thrive, not just survive. Deep understanding and deep care for Country underpin decision-making.

Refuge 2017 looked specifically at how communities cope and care for one another in an urban heatwave scenario, especially if the 'systems' (power, communications, transport) are not working. Heatwaves affect our most vulnerable people more: those who may not have easy access to the 'systems'. We need to first achieve proper acknowledgement and rights. The concept of 'community' as applied by institutions can often be an appropriated and convenient interpretation of how *blakfellas* continuously relate through occupation, ancestry, culture, religion, language, and self- and collective identification. The opportunity to preserve sovereign rights and powers without external



interference is vital for groups of people who have a sense of belonging that may not necessarily equate with another group's experience of community.

We benefit from dedicating time in our day to art and storytelling; knowledge and narrative. Wurundjeri Elder Aunty Diane Kerr, Dark Emu author Uncle Bruce Pascoe and current Bruce McGuinness Fellow Uncle Tony Birch are just a few influencers I read and listen to.

Stories are Refuge.

In relation to this city's story, Uncle Tony Birch explains the message of Bunjil the Eagle*:

The story of Bunjil has vital meaning in contemporary Australia for Aboriginal people. The story also acts as a guiding point for the sustenance of all peoples and the environment. The Bunjil story within Koori (Aboriginal) communities in Victoria comes with a high level of responsibility. It is incumbent upon

adults and parents to care for our children. It is important that we provide them with education. That we nurture them both emotionally and intellectually. In return, we hope that when our children grow, they will accept the responsibility of caring for each other and the environment.

Education, including respect for the complexity and interconnectivity of Country, is key to surviving and responding to weather events.

Ellen van Neerven is the award-winning author of Heat and Light (UQP, 2014) and Comfort Food (UQP, 2016).

* See Ellen van Neerven's essay, 'The Country is Like a Body': <http://rightnow.org.au/essay/the-country-is-like-a-body/>

† For more about Bunjil the Eagle, see <http://globalweatherstations.com/?p=1489>



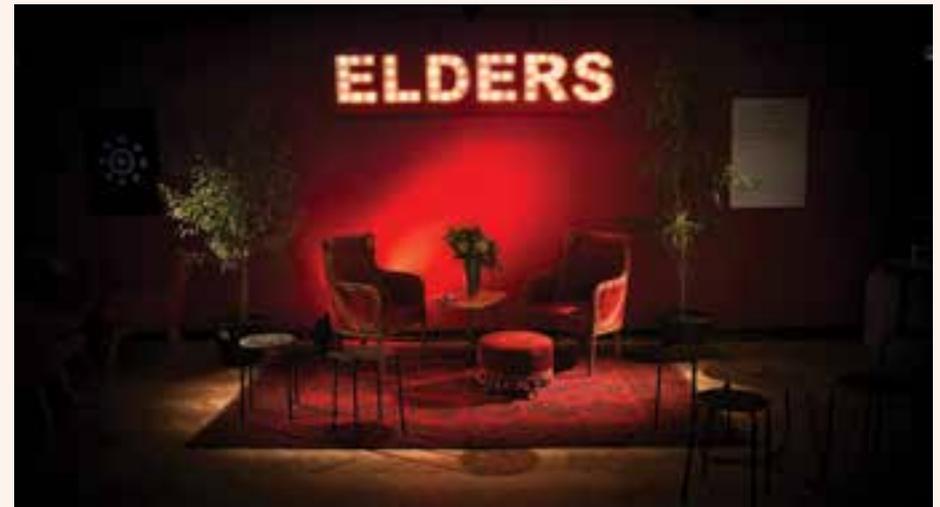
“We’re used to giving out information to people, and sometimes that’s printed brochures or part of a discussion – but to get them actively engaged and participating by doing, it engages them on a completely different, experiential level.”

Faye Bendrups, Controller,
SES Footscray Unit

Image: James Henry

The Elders’ Lounge

Presented by YIRRAMBOI
First Nations Arts Festival



Elders always come first.

The Elders’ Lounge is guided by Aboriginal values encouraging the sharing of knowledge, inter-generational exchange and respect for Elders and Seniors in our daily lives – and particularly in times of crisis. As part of *Refuge*, *The Elders’ Lounge* ensures the safety and comfort of all Elders and Senior members, from all walks of life and from all cultures.

Elders in our community are increasingly threatened by industrial production and the circumstances of climate change, whether it be heatwaves, floods or harsh winters. *The Elders’ Lounge* honours the special role Senior members of our communities play in guiding and guarding our respective cultures, and offers all Elders a sacred space for respite, conversation, information and nourishment.

Image: Bryony Jackson



Knowing that disasters divest communities of control, power and worth, perhaps you could assume that the fittest people in society carry a social responsibility in times of crisis. How can we consider the physical contributions and performance of humans in the face of environmental crisis? How might we mitigate the severity of disasters through collective service?

This exercise calls upon the Tongan concepts of *maāma* (light) and *māfana* (warmth) as a framework to enable participants to realise their capacity as individual constituents and as a collective body. *Hg57* evokes everyday rituals, physicalising a split-cycle air-conditioning system as a pseudo-fitness circuit that trains communities in immediate responses to specific heat-stress symptoms, empathy and compassion.

“There is an abundance of clinical evidence implicating dehydration as a common precipitant of acute confusion and delirium.”

Latai Taumoepeau is a Punake, body-centred performance artist. Her story is of her homelands, the Island Kingdom of Tonga, and her birthplace, the Eora Nation (Sydney). She cross-pollinates Indigenous philosophies and methodologies with contemporary sensibilities around race, class and the female body politic. For *Refuge*, she worked with North Melbourne sports teams and the SES Footscray Unit.

Image: Bryony Jackson



Roll up your sleeves, skirts and slacks, slip off your socks and step into the *Public Cooling Pools*. A domestic cooling pool can be used in any shaded area as a way of beating the heat. All you need is airflow.

Drawing from simple and ancient evaporative cooling techniques, the *Public Cooling Pools* came about through consideration of how we might contend with periods of extreme, prolonged heat, where an abundance of water has long gone and we're in the middle of a 'brown-out'. It's a uniquely desert approach to paddling.

Punctum's participatory and unpredictable performances are grown on Dja Dja Wurrung country, and reflect the potential catastrophes of the systems that influence our daily lives. Founded in 2004 by Jude Anderson and based in Castlemaine, Punctum is commissioned and presents works locally, nationally and internationally.

Image: Bryony Jackson

Sleep

Redreaming Emily Johnson & Vicki Couzens



How can the idea of preparedness for disasters interact with 60,000+ years of knowledge of place, Country and climate? How do we individually and collectively bring about the return of health, healing and wholeness to our Mother Earth and ourselves?

kanang yoowa, kanang toota kanang ngootyeeyt
deep sleep, deep rest, deep healing

Seat yourself by the billabong between ancient stones, and be guided away from a future of catastrophe, through healing, rest and eventually, sleep. A ritual setting-up of the sleep space is followed by a Wayapa Wuurrk experience, forming the overnight component of *Refuge*. In an immersive practice for mind, body and spirit, sleepers experience healing and collective consciousness redreaming, to an ancient *soffeggio*-frequency soundscape. These frequencies and resonances attune our mind, body and spirit towards the greater good and healing.

“Language is directly connected to place – through the mimicry of animals and nature in dance; the visual language in body art; motifs and symbols in stone etchings, sand

paintings and ceremonial ornaments; music, sound and vocalisation; the naming and relationship of all things – embodying the interconnectedness of our existence.”
— Vicki Couzens

Emily Johnson is a body-based artist, writer and choreographer of Yup'ik descent, working out of America. Interlacing distinctions between performance and daily life, she creates work that interacts with the architecture and history of places, and considers the spectatorship of watching performance. She is Artistic Director of Emily Johnson/Catalyst.

Vicki Couzens is an artist, writer and Gunditjmara Keerray Woorroong woman from the Western Districts of Victoria whose practice bridges contemporary art and cultural revival. With a focus on cultural affirmation and revival of the Gunditjmara and Kirrae Whurrung languages, her work is sustained by deep research with clan Elders and in museum archives.

For *Refuge*, the artists worked with Senior Possum skin cloak makers Aunty Esther Kirby and Aunty Rochelle Patten; and the Wayapa Wuurrk Aboriginal Wellness Foundation.

*marree
marree peeneeyt peeneeyt maleeyeeto
marree mana ngeeye meerreeng ngarraketoong
marree mana ngathoongan
maree nganto pay ngeeye leerpeen ba
ngeeye moorroop ngootyoongooyt*

*marree laka maar, wooka meetako yakeen teertpa leerpeen
wanyoo alam meen*

*marree ngootyoong
marree yoolooween*

Stones

The stones are strength, stability and longevity
Stones hold our Earth together
Stones hold and support us
Stones keep our stories and
our Spirits safe

Stones speak to each other, passing on messages
Whispering secrets of the Ancient Ones.

Stones are healing
Stones unseen.

V. L. Couzens © 2001

Translated into Keerray Wurrong by Vicki Couzens, 2007

Image: James Henry

Image: Bryony Jackson

Refuge 2017: An Evaluation

Research Unit in Public Cultures, the University of Melbourne

As part of its involvement in *Refuge*, the Research Unit in Public Cultures at the University of Melbourne is undertaking an evaluation of each annual iteration in the series. In 2017, evidence for the evaluation was gathered through detailed observation, interviews with artists and key stakeholders, and surveys given to attendees on the day of the 24-hour event.

The different spheres of knowledge brought together in *Refuge* – creative, scientific, governmental and logistical – are rarely given such pronounced liberty to interact with each other. It has become increasingly clear that this is one of the greatest values of the series: it serves as an exceptional site for the exchanges of ideas.

Responses to *Refuge* in 2017 painted a picture of a valuable cultural experience and an innovative experimental exercise in preparedness. Feedback from artists and stakeholders foregrounded the benefit of the growing sense of community and communication they experienced in the second iteration of the project; while attendees of the 24-hour event emphasised how the specific interactive artworks they experienced were helpful for acquiring new skills and practical information related to withstanding a heatwave. The art created for the event ranged from the highly dynamic and scientific, such as Latai Taumoepeau's energy-generating work located in the main hall of Arts House, to the more contemplative and conversational, like Lorna Hannan's installation in the basement of the building, which encouraged reflection through tea-drinking and poetry. Indigenous artists Vicki Couzens and Emily Johnson used their art-making to enact cultural welcome and explore "how we might practice potential crisis responses in different ways that bring actual healing, so that our actions shift and change the future".

The evaluation found a number of practical areas that could be improved, in line with the project's ambitious community engagement goals. These include giving greater attention to the public narratives and shaping visitor expectations of the event, and the need to enhance visitor flows around the many spaces of the Arts House venue, as well as considering greater access for visitors with disabilities. Nevertheless, *Refuge* 2017 was a remarkably inclusive, coherent and well-planned series of events. The changing contours of the disaster scenario, year by year (e.g., from a heatwave in 2017 to a pandemic in 2018), will significantly reshape the project and likely pose new challenges and possibilities.

While there was occasional confusion from the general public about the exact nature of the event – with some attendees unsure whether *Refuge* was a disaster simulation or an art experience – among stakeholders there was a remarkable consensus about the urgent need for experimentation, stronger community engagement and the reform of disaster preparedness approaches, including the conduct of relief centres. Reviewing the role of *Refuge* as a catalyst for change, Senior Operations Manager, Kevin White, from the Department of Justice, stated that "[f]rom an emergency management perspective, we are very traditional in the way that we manage exercises," but that this isn't a good approach when new ideas are required. "If you always do what you always did, then you always get what you always got."

A space to test ideas

Disaster simulations and exercises are more than simply the testing of logistical readiness: they engage local communities as active agents in possible emergency situations and allow the testing of new ideas

and/or the failure of systems, without catastrophic consequences. At *Refuge* 2017 we learnt that imagining the future is not easy for all of us: for some, the threat of disasters is already part of the present and is felt more keenly than for others. Individuals and groups for whom disasters have been a concrete reality often find it more challenging to abstractly rehearse and experiment with scenarios and simulations.

In considering the value of *Refuge* as an arts-led simulation, the question sometimes arose as to whether the artworks made for the event could be rolled out as resources in an actual crisis. This is one of several strands of *Refuge* that distinguish it as a unique conceptual inquiry. Several artists viewed their works as potentially viable facilities at a relief centre, such as Jen Rae, whose ongoing artwork Fair Share Fare provided the meals for the event and staged demonstrations of ethical, sustainable food consumption. Rae sees her art as a means of recuperating comfort in an environment of catastrophe: "The food delivered in disaster relief is ordinarily catered, they bring in caterers. It fulfils a need – combatting hunger. But it can do a lot more, it can provide comfort, distraction. Bringing people into a kitchen can provide a sense of community."

Reflecting on the preparation and delivery of food at *Refuge*, other artists were sceptical as to whether entirely ethical food consumption would be practical in an emergency situation. Participating artist Dave Jones, who has extended experience of living in a country environment prone to extreme heat and annual bushfires, noted: "I think in an actual disaster, it would be less holistic and there would be plastic thrown around more." What such debates highlight is that *Refuge* functions as a site of creative discussion, in which the artworks

can provoke without needing to be immediately practical.

The contribution of creative practice

In *Refuge*, creative practice encompasses a range of activities, from modes of aesthetic experimentation and investigation, social practice and performance strategies to cultural traditions and practices. *Refuge* was particularly successful at blending forms of logistical knowledge and planning with the social, affective, transcultural and Indigenous knowledges stimulated by artists. Arts House's experience as a commissioning agent for experimental performance and live art was critical in selecting and supporting artists who had the skills to collaborate with other fields of expertise. The experience of the 2017 *Refuge* Lab was also decisive, with extended conversations with scientists, policy-makers and artists creating what Catherine Jones, General Manager of Arts House, called "a genuine space of interdisciplinarity".

Urban preparedness and community resilience

Resilience has become a feature of disaster preparedness in scenarios of limited resources, in which communities must become key agents. *Refuge* artworks address the aesthetic, social and cultural dimensions of urban resilience, through imagined scenarios and simple skill-sharing, such as the demonstration of a Coolgardie safe, and information about how to counteract the stresses of extreme temperature in the works of Latai Taumoepeau and Dave Jones. Resilient Melbourne's Maree Grenfell saw this project as an accessible way of exploring and communicating some of the immense issues that affect society: "Resilience provides people with a language to deal

with something like climate change, which is otherwise too big, too hard to understand...”

Equity and justice

The activities of *Refuge* examined those community members first and most severely impacted by disasters; as well as how marginalised members of communities can be included in disaster planning and preparedness so that forms of exclusion, disadvantage or marginality are not amplified in urgent and life-threatening moments. As Catherine Jones noted, “a key objective of every iteration will be to go deeper into this area.” More broadly, *Refuge* aims to tackle issues related to cultural power imbalance and the continuing impact of colonialism in contemporary society. Angharad Wynne-Jones, who originally conceived of the *Refuge* project, argued:

[T]hat’s both the challenge and the opportunity with this project. To work more with community members who aren’t as visible or not as easy to reach by white institutions and white paradigms. I think, in a situation like *Refuge*, it becomes very evident.

Will McRostie, from Description Victoria, assisted people who were blind or had low vision around the event in 2017. This growing involvement of equity-centred organisations in *Refuge*, and the feedback and advice they provide, foregrounds the value of extending disability access facilities and technology in future years of the project.

Policy enhancements

The project is among the first in the world to engage artists and creative practice in preparedness and response in emergency

management, with leaders of key policy bodies attending *Refuge* events and bringing the project’s ideas into their planning, such as a disaster simulation held at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. A key feature of the projects has been the attendance and support of key leaders, such as Toby Kent, the Chief Resilience Officer and Christine Drummond, the Emergency Management Coordinator at the City of Melbourne. The recognition that highly centralised models for emergency management are increasingly redundant in a changing contemporary society and that new approaches are needed was also strongly emphasised by Lord Mayor, Robert Doyle, and Emergency Commissioner, Craig Lapsley, in their opening remarks at the 2017 exercise.

No single template

Refuge is a conceptually complex cultural undertaking, bridging many fields in an effort to establish fundamentally new approaches to the growing threats of climate change. Angharad Wynne-Jones saw this emphasis on genuine and productive conversation as a strength that continues to grow with each iteration of the event:

Developing language, synthesising information, proposing processes, these are all key values of *Refuge* – and I think that for me the engagement with First Nations artists feels very central to everything about *Refuge*... it opens up a confidence around the cultural practices and the enabling of so many different kinds of conversations and exchanges.

Related to this complexity, there is a crucial ambiguity at play that is both beneficial and, at times, detrimental to the event’s efficacy.



Namely, there is an uncertainty evident in feedback from some participants and attendees as to whether *Refuge* is a strategic relief centre simulation or a conceptual and theatrical art event. The answer is that it functions as both. As the series progresses in forthcoming years, it is not necessary that *Refuge* simplifies its conceptual underpinnings – of being simultaneously an art event and an emergency simulation – but that it streamlines the narrative experience on the day for the benefit of the public. However, climate change means a future that is complex and uncertain and *Refuge* should continue to work with and amplify these features.

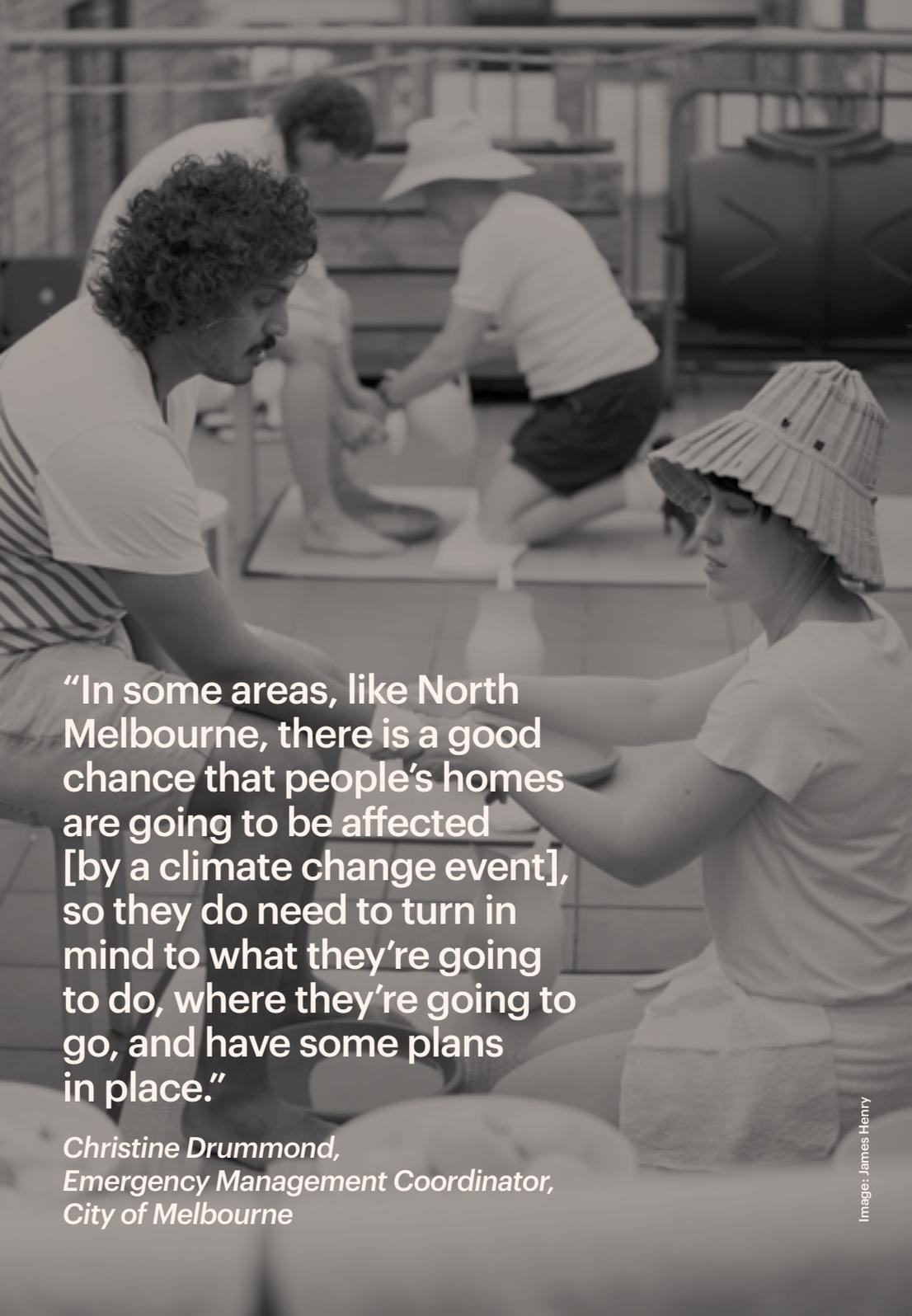
The outcomes and lessons from *Refuge* 2017 are necessarily complex, as they deal with the nexus of two complex systems: diverse communities in which spatial proximity does not map easily onto social relatedness; and extreme climate events, which are increasing in scale, frequency and duration. As Steve Cameron, from Emergency Management Victoria, argued, each disaster presents its own challenges:

Please do not create a template of how we did it last year [as this creates] structures and templates that won’t work [in new situations]: there are too many variables and challenges in any disaster.

Nevertheless, *Refuge* 2017 built strongly on the learnings, experience and relationships that were created in 2016, developing forms of technical, conceptual and social knowledge that will aid our preparedness for the near and far futures.

Lachlan MacDowall and Suzanne Fraser

Image: James Henry



“In some areas, like North Melbourne, there is a good chance that people’s homes are going to be affected [by a climate change event], so they do need to turn in mind to what they’re going to do, where they’re going to go, and have some plans in place.”

*Christine Drummond,
Emergency Management Coordinator,
City of Melbourne*

Image: James Henry

Project Supporters



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Refuge 2017 partners are Creative Recovery Network, Emergency Management Victoria, Red Cross Australia, Resilient Melbourne, SES Footscray Unit, St Joseph’s Flexible Learning Centre, Horsham Rural City Council and ACT Natimuk.

Supporting Partners

6th Melbourne Scout Group, Kensington
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Senior possum skin cloak makers Aunty Esther Kirby and Aunty Rochelle Patten
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Research Unit in Public Cultures, University of Melbourne

Resilient Melbourne

Rooftop Honey
Salvation Army
Save the Children
Scotia Monkivitch and the Creative Recovery Network
SES Footscray Unit
St John Ambulance
St Joseph’s Flexible Learning Centre
Urban Sustainability Branch, City of Melbourne
Victorian Eco Innovation Lab
Wayapa Wuurrk Aboriginal Wellness Foundation
Wurundjeri Council and Aunty Gail Smith
YIRRAMBOI First Nations Arts Festival

Refuge Artists

Asha Bee Abraham, Vicki Couzens, Hannah Donnelley, Lorna Hannan, Madeleine Flynn & Tim Humphrey, Dave Jones, Emily Johnson, Lee Shang Lun, Punctum Inc., Jen Rae, Kate Sulan, Latai Taumoepeau, Dawn Weleski

Other Participating Artists and Friends

Melinda Ballard, Sally Beattie, Sarah Berry, Emma Byrnes, Marco Cher-Gibard, Nirodha Dissanayake, Kelly Gillespie, Miyuki Jokiranta, Indie Ladan, Karleng Lim, Alan Marsh, Alison McMillan, Indira Narayan, Duyen Nguyen, Jillian Pearce, Fina Po, Greg Pritchard, Natasha Van Velzen, Amy Williams.

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Thank you also to all the Volunteers.

“Your relationship with the people you live amongst is really important. Now, that mightn’t sound straightaway like a good preparation for a disaster, but in fact in a disaster or a time of difficulty, who can you rely on? It might be a stranger who’s in the street beside you, or it might be your next door neighbour – but it is the people around you.”

— Lorna Hannan, North Melbourne Community Member and Refugee artist

About Arts House

Arts House, as a key program of the City of Melbourne, is Melbourne’s contemporary centre for performance and interactive art forms. We support innovative responses to the changing nature of our cities through creative interdisciplinary practice, curated through a balance of provocation, responsiveness and collaboration with artists, communities and audiences.

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