Voices of the Wheatbelt:
What Beats
INTRODUCTION
FROM PILAR

Welcome to the third phase of the Voices of the Wheatbelt project – *Voices of the Wheatbelt: Wheat Beats*. Over three years, CAN WA has engaged communities of the Wheatbelt in the artistic skills of photography and filmmaking, producing some stunning publications and films that tell the stories of people and place. This project has been about giving the community the opportunity to express their collective voice through the arts.

The third phase of this community arts project focused on young people from Kellerberrin, Quairading, Brookton and Narrogin learning the skills of Australian hip-hop – particularly how hip-hop can express feelings about community life, culture and growing up in the Wheatbelt.

Right from the start, the young participants dove enthusiastically into the workshops – learning new skills such as song writing, DJing and scratching as well as dancing and acting to create their own Australian hip-hop songs and music videos.

Voices of the Wheatbelt: Wheat Beats allowed the young people involved to learn and participate in all aspects of the project, providing them with a range of creative mediums to express their interests and most importantly to have fun!

The result of this phase of Voices of the Wheatbelt is a DVD and CD set that is the voice of young people of the Wheatbelt. The songs and music videos created show the love that the young people involved have for their place. Encouraging people to establish deep connections in their community is what builds community resilience and fosters wellbeing – this is what is possible when communities are given the opportunity to creatively engage with the arts to express what matters to them.

I invite you to listen and enjoy the creativity that has emerged from the voices of young people living in the Wheatbelt.

Pilar Kasat
Managing Director
Community Arts Network WA
Voices of the Wheatbelt: Wheat Beats is the latest phase in an exciting three and a half year project, expressing the voice of communities in the Wheatbelt through photography, music, and digital media.

Produced by the Community Arts Network WA (CAN WA), phase one of the project brought photography and song-writing workshops to towns in the Eastern Wheatbelt, where kids and adults from each community were taught how to express their sense of place and belonging through music and the camera’s lens.

Phase two saw photography and filmmaking workshops offered to towns in the Southern Wheatbelt, again inviting people of all ages to learn camera skills as a way to tell the story of their lives within their communities.

The third phase in this project, Voices of the Wheatbelt: Wheat Beats bridges the two previous phases by focusing on young people in both Eastern and Southern Wheatbelt towns. During 2010, CAN WA offered skills development in hip-hop music and dance, traditional Aboriginal dance, filmmaking and photography. Workshops for young people aged 11 to 15 took place at Kellerberrin District High School, Quairading District High School, Brookton District High School and in Narrogin.

Lyrics: "This is our life, This is the country that's how we live, a little bit of take and a little bit of give."

Quairading District High School
CAN WA invited three facilitators to lead the workshops, each well-known and successful in their fields. Scott Griffiths (AKA Optamus) from acclaimed local hip-hop act Downsyde, Mat de Koning, an award winning young filmmaker, and Olman Walley, a highly regarded and respected Aboriginal dancer, worked with the participants throughout the project. Hip-hop choreographer Nelle Hokianga and acting coach Eve Kermack also came on board for one session each. The facilitators’ interaction with the kids, along with their amazing abilities and experience in their art forms, developed the project beyond simple song-writing workshops. The enthusiasm and passion of all facilitators saw high levels of engagement and participation from the young people.

Each six-part workshop series taught participants the history of Australian hip-hop along with stories from local Aboriginal culture. This knowledge was then used to write their own hip-hop song, recording and mixing it with music production software, while also choreographing a dance performance using hip-hop and Aboriginal dance. Developing skills in scratching and MCing, rhyming and freestyling; each group created an original song that told of their unique experiences living in the Wheatbelt. Through filmmaking workshops, the kids also directed their own music video clips to go with their songs.

CAN WA’s ‘Voices of the Wheatbelt: Wheat Beats’ project resulted in the creation of four unique music clips and songs—each of which reflect the contemporary voices of young people in the Western Australian Wheatbelt towns of Kellerberrin, Quairading, Brookton and Narrogin.

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G’DAY WE’D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THE COUNTRY YOU BETTER PRICK UP YOUR EARS COS IT’S KINDA FUNKY

Lyrics–BRING THE RAIN Kellerberrin District High School
SCOTT GRIFFITHS

Hip-hop Music Facilitator

Growing up in the Southern Wheatbelt, Olman started traditional dancing with his father and uncles at the age of five, as part of the Middar Theatre Group. At just nine years old he set up the Noongar dance group The Doorum Dancers with relatives, performing at hundreds of schools to promote Noongar culture. By age 18, Olman was teaching about the history, language, art forms, social structures and the way of life of the Noongar people and their culture in WA schools.

After appearing on national television performing for the opening of the National Aboriginal Islander Sports Awards in 1997, he then toured over sixteen different countries, including Mexico, Venezuela, South Korea, Mauritius, South Africa, Kenya and England performing and promoting Australia and the Noongar culture.

Joining the Black Swan Theatre Company in 1999, Olman appeared as a cast member of the successful Australian stage play of Bran Nue Dae, before moving to Sydney to perform and play didgeridoo with the Belvoir Street Theatre. Olman is now a regular performer and workshop facilitator at the Yirra Yaakin Noongar Theatre, while still being actively involved with The Doorum Dancers and the Binjareb Middar Dance Troupe.

OLMAN WALLEY

Aboriginal Dance Facilitator

Scott Griffiths (AKA Optamus) founded local hip-hop group Downsyde with a fellow Craigie High School classmate in 1996. After forming, the tight-knit MC group (which has now grown to a six-piece fully fledged band) built up a strong buzz in Western Australia’s underground hip-hop circuit. By the time of their first official release, 2000’s classic Epinonimous, the word had spread around the country and through heavy support from community radio, Downsyde’s debut became one of the highest selling albums of the year, in the genre.

As well as being a skilled MC with numerous Australian Dance Music Awards and WAMi Awards to his name, Scott is a producer working with Australian acts such as Hunter, Drapht, and Bias B. He also runs his own local independent label, Opt Shop Records, and conducts workshops for regional and disadvantaged young people.
NELLE HOKIANGA
Hip-hop Dance Facilitator

Dancing professionally since 1992, Nelle has performed at various venues including Telethon, Perth Christmas Pageants, and Dance Week Festivals. In 2008 she started working for the David Wirrpanda Foundation as a mentor for metro and regional Aboriginal young people, teaching hip-hop and contemporary/jazz dance. In 2010 Nelle was offered a role at Balga Senior High School teaching dance to Noongar students while also undertaking the role of Events Coordinator for the David Wirrpanda Foundation and continuing her work teaching Mooditj Health and Dance with Urban Youth Effect, an organisation founded by her mother.

Now a wife and mother of two, Nelle attributes the success and development of her career to the support of her own mother Rusty Hazel, a prominent figure in the Noongar community, at Swan Nyungar Sports Education Program, West Coasters Netball Club and Urban Youth Effect.

EVE KERMACK
Acting Facilitator

Eve has recently returned to her hometown of Perth after spending the past eighteen years travelling and living in different parts of Australia, UK, Europe and US. She was involved in nuanced performances told through the means of poetry, story, dance and music, contributing as a writer, performing and facilitating performance workshops.

Living in Melbourne for five years, Eve studied acting for film and stage at the Victorian College of the Arts, Verve Studios and The Actors Playhouse. She was actively involved in independent film and theatre, appearing in various commercials and as a voice-over artist.

Now part of the Perth Playback Theatre team, Eve believes that theatre is an effective means for transformation—socially, emotionally and politically and is compelled to explore other means to bring this into our communities.

MAT DE KONING
Filmmaking Facilitator

For the past ten years, Mat de Koning has been creating DIY no-budget films that eloquently capture and reflect upon his surroundings. From the talented skateboarders documented in Good Times Four Wheels to his exploratory examination of homelessness in People’s Faces, Mat sensitively harnesses and represents minority subcultures, often working in starkly shot black and white Super 8.

Mat’s work has received nine nominations at the WA Screen Awards, including six nominations and a win for ‘Best Music Video’, as well as a special mention for ‘Best Director’. He has won six awards at the Revelation Film Festival, and has screened on ABC TV’s Rage numerous times. He has been an artist in residence at the 2008 Awesome Arts Festival and recently completed a collaborative residency in India. His 2010 film Then She Was Gone has now screened at over 22 national and international festivals and has won awards at the Sydney Underground, Katoomba and Angry Film Festival.
READY TO FIGHT
STAND FOR WHAT I BELIEVE
COS I AM WHAT I AM
AND ALL I CAN BE

Lyrics – BROOKTON (WE REPRESENT) Brookton District High School
EAST TO THE WEST
NORTH TO THE SOUTH
'bout to show the crowd
what I'm all about

Lyrics–TRU DAT *Narrogin*
GROUP PROFILE

KELLERBERRIN

Rapping/MCing

Alamay Gillham
Jarrad Hunt
Montana Nicholls
Olivia Nyoni
Dylan Parkhouse
Rory Steber

Participants

Joel Barker
Telariah Boundry
Alex Brindley-Cavanagh
Jared Brindley-Cavanagh
Andrew Broadhead
Victor Chadd
Abbey Collins
Kelsey Cox
Danielle Ferguson
Katelyn Ferguson
Madison Fitzgerald-McIntosh
Harrison Gardiner
Rex Glass
Daniel Hancock
John Hannan
Sophie Hannan
Ida Hayden
Dale Hayden
Lewis Lawrence
Angus Lavery
Campbell Luers
Amelie Marques

Jake McClelland
Caleb McDonald
Bailey McDonnell
Liam McLennan
Jamieson Mitchell-Smith
Keeley O’Neill
Neve Paterson
Luke Reid
Jazmin Reid
Trae Reiling
Marika Riley
Ashleigh Silver
Lachlan Steber
Thomas Steber
Lawrence Taylor
Leekesha Taylor
Tegan Taylor
Reuben Thurbon
Jasmine Walsh
Tristan Walsh
Brittany Were
Austin Whitehouse
There's lots of freedom - lots of space when I'm livin' in this place.

Keller Town is what we're all about.
Living in Keller is so much fun
There's lots to do for everyone
There's a pool manager–and a lunch lady too
They're all here just to help you

The country's fine–the country's great
There's lots to do with all my mates
Running in the country–running everywhere
I can feel the country wind blowing through my hair

There's lots of freedom–lots of space
When I'm livin' in this place
We go to school–we swim in the pool
We have lots of fun–to keep us cool

Sometimes it's hard there's family riots
Most of the time it's nice and quiet
When there's drought farmers still believe in
Getting more rain–we enjoy the freedom

Even when the times get hard
We still believe in our big backyard
Keller town is what we're all about
Bring the rain–no more drought
Voices of the Wheatbelt:

Even when the times get hard
We still believe in our big backyard

Lyrics–BRING THE RAIN Kellerberrin District High School

END
Voices of the Wheatbelt: What Begets

RAPPING/MCING

Karlee Barr
Thomas Hadlow

CHORUS

Megan-Jayne Amiss
Courtney Bartlett
Jadee Blackley
Tyler Blackley
Jennifer Chivers
Beatrice Colbung
Taj Constantini
Tyron Decamp
Tayla Duff
Ethan Gors
Karla Gors
Danielle Hayden
Braden Hayes
Ricky Henry
Milan Jovanovic
Darren Marnham
Naomi Mills
Caleb Passmore
Ryan Powell
Neil Slater
Solomon Slater
Black and white - dance and sing
Cos we live in Quairading

Having fun with friends - our day never ends
Sitting as one watching the sun set
VERSE 1

This is our life
Watch out when me and my mates come through
It's all about us and that's the truth
This is the story I tell
From the Wheatbelt
So buckle up your seatbelt because this is how we felt
Noongar's and wadjela's is who we be
Livin' in da country is the life for me
Black and white–dance and sing
Cos we live in Quairading
It's a small place I know everybody's face
Somewhere to go get away and escape
News travels fast but it doesn't really last
Cos it's just rumours in the past
This town is really quiet
Except the Youth Centre on a Friday night
That's our life, sometimes boring
That's just Quairading, our life story
This is our life

VERSE 2

My life here, swimming in the weir
With the sun in the sky–it's great atmosphere
Having fun with friends–our day never ends
Sitting as one watching the sun set
Helping out each other like a sister or a brother
We're on our way–on the road to discover
Another way to have fun in the sun
The best of our times have just begun
Open space is just amazing
It is something that is worth craving
The sheep are finally in the paddock
Thank god our tractor is automatic
Harvest is done and now complete
So now we have to go and feed the sheep
This is the country–that's how we live
A little bit of take and a little bit of give
This is our life
NOONGARS AND WADJELAS
IS WHO WE BE
LIVIN’ IN DA COUNTRY IS
THE LIFE FOR ME

Lyrics–THIS IS OUR LIFE Quairading District High School
GROUP PROFILE
BROOKTON

First Verse
Kyle Bowen-Zoccoli
Beau Anderson
Tom Murray
Delace Ugle
Agnes Ugle

Second Verse
Daniel Watkins

Third Verse
Amy Blechynden
Jade Bowron
Gillian Forward
Sheridan Jefferson
Venitia Macinnes
Odie Nikola
Hayley Simmons
Jessica Sweeney
Rachel Walters

Music Production Crew / Chorus
Kyle Hankinson
Nicholas ‘Nic’ Mills
Jarrod ‘Sawfy’ Sawford
Brayden Taylor
Daniel Watkins

Dancers / Chorus
Tyrone Bennell
Toby Blechynden
Benjamin Cousins
Austin Graham
Courtney Hoskin
Aaron Kerr
Pia Love
Tate Lunn
Shayne McDiarmid
Savannah McGuire
Louis Nikola
Ryan Watkins

Rapping / MCing
AND THAT'S OUR LIFE THAT'S HOW WE LIVE
HERE IN BROOKTON THAT'S HOW IT IS...

REPRESENTING BROOKTON IS A WAY OF LIFE
FROM THE FARM TO THE TOWN TO THE
DAY TO THE NIGHT
I see my pops walking in the shops
To get a pack of chops and some Coco Pops
I got smelly socks mum don’t wanna wash
Came to get my jocks and she got lost
In my messy room, made me get a broom
I found cups and plates and dessert spoons
Mum was bright as the moon cause I made my bed
She was so surprised she nearly dropped dead
Next day I caught up with my mates
Waiting for the girls cos they’re always running late
Yeah we’re running late but hey that’s okay
It’s not like we’re on a date it’s just another day
Now it’s Saturday night feelin’ alright
Wanna have a good time and not see a fight
And that’s our life that’s how we live
Here in Brookton that’s how it is....

Brookton we represent, we represent
Brookton we represent, we represent
Farming in the east–riding in the west
Yeah that’s how we roll cos you know we’re the best

Representing Brookton is a way of life
From the farm to the town to the day to the night
Ready to fight–stand for what I believe
Cos I am what I am–and all I can be
I pity the fool cos he thinks he’s better
But the truth is–you should never say never
Cos I farm in the east–ride in the west
Yeah that’s how we do it, cos Brookton represents
Brookton we represent, we represent
Brookton we represent, we represent
Farming in the east–riding in the west
Yeah that’s how we roll cos you know we’re the best

Yesterday I was on the farm chilling at home
Then I heard my ringtone on the phone
Found out I was on my own for the day
Cause my friend was crook like she’s in the sickbay
So I rang my cuz to see what’s up
And we walked to the pool but it was shut
We were down so we headed to the farm
We got a bit’a tucker and then we had a yarn
Some of us are out east where we have sheep
Some horses some dogs and grow wheat
A lot of us leave at the start of year eight
Or year ten depends on what the folks say
But we’re all friends just going away
And we’ll be back in Brookton some day....

Brookton we represent, we represent
Brookton we represent, we represent
Farming in the east–riding in the west
Yeah that’s how we roll cos you know we’re the best
BUT WE’RE ALL FRIENDS
JUST GOING AWAY
AND WE’LL BE BACK IN
BROOKTON SOME DAY...

Lyrics–BROOKTON (WE REPRESENT) Brookton District High School
Voices of the Wheatbelt: Wheat Belt

GROUP PROFILE
NARROGIN

Rapping/MCing
Raymond Storey
Juwian Storey

Dancers
(feat. the Part Time Royalz)
Robert Bunce
Elijah Coleman
Rhys Height
Eli Kickett
Michael Kirk
Trevor Mead
Marshall Nelson
Zxavier Peters
Riley Spark
Jacob Turner
Brodie Young

Backing Vocals
Chiara Bolton
Shinea Bruckner
Hope Turvey
Megan Turvey
I’m bringing it loud, so you hear my voice.

I’ll tell you a story about how to be stronger
If you’ve been good you’ll live longer.
TRU DAT

VERSE I

I’m back, who’s back with a new track, tru dat
New Balance with a new rap
I’m back, who’s back with a new track, tru dat
New Balance with a new rap
Oh oh oh, we’re back, we’re back
Oh oh oh, we’re back, we’re back
Raymond’s back with a new rhyme
To tell you all he’s got something on his mind
I’m rapping on fire, cos rhyming’s my desire
As long as I live I will never retire
I’m moving forward–never looking back
Putting it down–cooking up tracks
Stack and stacks you know the rest
You wanna catch my flow you’ll hear the best
East to the west–north to the south
‘Bout to show the crowd what I’m all about
I’m bringing it loud so you can hear my voice
Even though it’s just me it’s for the New Balance boys

VERSE II

To all the wadjelas and the black fellas
Have a good time and don’t be jealous
I’ll tell ya a story about how to be stronger
If you’ve been good you’ll live longer
This is a song that’s about a young man
From New Balance and he walks this land
It ain’t just me, it’s the one two three
Nathan Ugle and Isiah Chong Wee
Guess who’s back with a brand new track
Our plan of attack is a brand new rap
So everybody clap or tap to the beat
There’s no surrender–no defeat
I got my clan–I got my peeps
To help me out and get me back on my feet
I’m back, who’s back with a new track, tru dat
New Balance with a new rap
I’m back, who’s back with a new track, tru dat
New Balance with a new rap
I’m back, who’s back with a new track, tru dat
New Balance with a new rap
I’m back, who’s back with a new track, tru dat
New Balance with a new rap
Oh oh oh, we’re back, we’re back
Oh oh oh, we’re back, we’re back
Oh oh oh....
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Scott Griffiths—Hip-hop music facilitator
Mat de Koning—Filmmaking facilitator
Olman Walley—Aboriginal dance facilitator
Nelle Hokianga—Hip-hop dance facilitator
Eve Kermack—Acting facilitator

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PARTICIPANTS
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Quairading District High School
Brookton District High School
Narrogin Senior High School

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Community Arts Network WA

Community Arts Network Western Australia Ltd. is the peak body for community arts and cultural development in Western Australia. Our vision is for a future where culture, creativity and the arts are known to be essential for community wellbeing and are at the core of a just, diverse and resilient society. We are inspired by the values of cultural diversity and creativity, respect of all people, culture and the environment, social justice, creativity and resilience.

Our role is to

**inspire and mobilise** Western Australian communities to explore, express and grow their unique and local culture

**facilitate and promote** participation and engagement in community arts and cultural development for community wellbeing

**actively engage** in partnership development to facilitate and support community-determined arts and culture activities

**promote the value** of cultural diversity and creativity

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