



**STORYBOX**

**STORYBOX PARRAMATTA  
PILOT REPORT**

**JANUARY 2021**

**[STORYBOX.CO/PARRAMATTA](https://storybox.co/parramatta)**

# STORYBOX PARRAMATTA PILOT

## FINAL REPORT

**This document summarises key learnings and outcomes from the 2020 STORYBOX Parramatta Pilot.**

We'd like to thank our partners and supporters for working with us on the launch of STORYBOX Parramatta.

As a new public space media platform, we're constantly learning and trying out new ideas. We hope this report provides useful reflections and insights for future project collaborations.

Author: Dr. Sarah Barns, ESEM Projects

Date: 18 January 2021

*Distributed to: City of Parramatta Council; ABC Content Ideas Lab; Western Sydney University; Story Factory; FORM Dance Projects; Sam I Am; Curious Works.*

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# I. ABOUT STORYBOX

## ADVANCING PLACE-BASED PARTNERSHIPS FOR PUBLIC SPACE MEDIA

**Designed for public spaces, STORYBOX brings unique stories, perspectives, and intelligence about people and place into city precincts.**

Created by media and design practice ESEM Projects, the STORYBOX™ is a two-metre squared clean energy structure, featuring outdoor-rated LED panels on two sides, offset by solar panels that deliver 50 per cent of power needs.

**STORYBOX offers a different approach to digital programming in public space.**

STORYBOX creates a platform for 'portals into place' that feature dynamic, hyper-local programming through curated video, photography, visual art, data-driven animation and selected community contributions.

Programming runs from 7am to 12pm daily and is supported by cloud-based digital signage software.

**STORYBOX creates a platform for curated community stories and insights to be showcased outdoors and online.**

We curate and commission work by local artists, storytellers and residents. We also partner with place-based organisations to facilitate unique and diverse cultural programming in public spaces.

**STORYBOX partners include a mix of precinct owners, content makers, creative organisations and educational institutions.**

These partnerships are augmented by a curated program of community and artist contributions supported via online and social media engagement.

**STORYBOX promotes data-smart approaches to public space programming.**

The Digital Cube incorporates a sentiment analysis tool that invites outdoor audiences to share their mood about a place, with responses visualised on the Cube via a colourful, pulsating Mood Ring.



Images from top: STORYBOX in Parramatta Square featuring artwork by Darug artist Leanne Tobin. STORYBOX says 'Hi!'.



Year 12 students contributed to STORYBOX through Story Factory, with support from City of Sydney for the 'Words in Space' program.

## 2. ABOUT STORYBOX PARRAMATTA

# STORYBOX PARRAMATTA

The STORYBOX Parramatta pilot was designed as a 3-month activation, supported by City of Parramatta Council as Precinct Partner and the ABC Content Ideas Lab as Anchor Content Partner.

The Pilot targeted Parramatta Square as a new development precinct adjacent to Parramatta train station, a major transport hub that attracted a diverse spectrum of audiences. When complete, Parramatta Square is to be home to over 23,000 workers, with the WSU Parramatta CBD campus also hosting more than 10,000 students annually.

We identified this new Parramatta CBD location as an opportunity to test STORYBOX as a new platform for public space media, connecting digital content innovation for outdoor audiences with hyper-local stories, data and community perspectives.

### Project Partners

ESEM Projects led the development of STORYBOX PARRAMATTA through curated partnerships with place-based organisations.

We attracted new organisations as we built the Pilot. The final list of organisations who contributed to STORYBOX during the Pilot Period included:

- ESEM Projects: Project Lead & Owner
- City of Parramatta: Pilot Host
- ABC Content Ideas Lab: Content Anchor
- Western Sydney University: Educational Partner
- Story Factory: Cultural Partner
- FORM Dance Projects: Cultural Partner
- Curious Works: Cultural Partner
- Sam I Am Photography: Creative Partner
- City of Sydney creative fellowship funding also received.



We also received in-kind support from the Parramatta Park Trust to film on location, and worked with the Parramatta Women's Shelter and the Deaf Society to generate bespoke content about these organisations to support visibility of their work in Parramatta.

*Key Features of the Pilot are overleaf.*

*More details about the STORYBOX approach to public space media is on page 18.*

Above: Artist impression of Parramatta Square by Walker Corp. STORYBOX is located outside the exit to the Parramatta train station.

## KEY PILOT FEATURES

### Physical hardware

- STORYBOX installation in Parramatta Square for a min 3-month pilot.
- The STORYBOX features a 2m x 2m high resolution LED screen on two faces (outdoor rated 3.9 mm pitch).
- Solar panels integrated into final design
- Touch screen interactivity removed due to Covid-19

### Screen Time

- Active screen time of 12 hours per day: 7am-7pm.
- Additional 3 hours 'night time' visualisation mode: 7-10pm.
- Night time sleep mode: 10pm-7am; revised to 12pm-7am on request.

### Content blocks

- Originally devised as 30 seconds; 1 min; 2 min; 5 min
- Flexibility introduced around content blocks

### Content types

- Digital storytelling: photography, video
- Data visualisation
- Text-based stories (in video format)
- Animation

### Content partnerships

Storybox programming is facilitated by content partnerships with selected cultural, educational and not-for-profit organisations.

ESEM Projects are partnering with cultural, non-profit and/or educational partners (min 5) to participate in the pilot initiative.

- Total Pilot Partners: 8
- Anchor partners: 2

### Partner Screen Time

**Anchor partner (CoP):** Up to 2.5 hours per day

**Content partners:** 120 mins / 2 hours per day.

### Software & interactivity

- Remote cloud-based content programming with external web feeds
- Original touch screen removed due to Covid-19  
Mood Ring sentiment tool accessed via QR code featured on ground stickers and digital programming
- Mood Ring survey responses generate dynamic mood ring representation on the BOX every 45 mins
- While IoT sensors were intended to inform insights into audience behaviour, the Pilot was not able to access pedestrian monitoring data due to issues with data feed and reliability.

### Covid-19 Impacts

- Due to delays to the project as a result of Covid-19, ESEM established an online platform as an 'interim launch' for the program, with social channels also established on Instagram and Facebook to facilitate community engagement during lockdown (and beyond). See <https://www.storybox.co/parramatta>
- Covid-19 significantly impacted on-site activation activities, and also meant a longer program development period ahead of the activation launch.

### Smart Cities Council Future of Place Awards

- STORYBOX PARRAMATTA was shortlisted as a national finalist in the Future of Place Awards by the ANZ Smart Cities Council.



ABC Content Ideas  
Lab collaborators at  
the STORYBOX launch  
in Parramatta Square,  
October 2020 . Image:  
Michael Killalea.

# 3. PILOT OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

## ADVANCING PLACE-BASED PARTNERSHIPS FOR PUBLIC SPACE MEDIA

The STORYBOX Parramatta Pilot saw our partner organisations collaborating around a set of shared ambitions and objectives.

Key Objectives:

- Celebrating Diverse Cultures
- Activating Place
- Showcasing Data-Smarts
- Promoting Engagement and Dialogue
- Promoting Local Talent

Outcomes against these objectives are discussed in the following pages.

***"I have been spending time recently at Parramatta Square and have been loving watching content on StoryBox - what an incredible initiative."***

Email from contributor

## PILOT OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

### CELEBRATING DIVERSE CULTURES

Connecting to the curatorial public art themes for PSQ, STORYBOX Parramatta aimed to reflect Parramatta as a 'Gathering Place' for people from many different cultures.

Connecting communities and lived experiences past and present, STORYBOX aimed to do this by showcase local video storytelling, historical collections, diverse languages, indigenous content and perspectives.

STORYBOX also established new platforms for residents, artists and storytellers to contribute and showcase work outdoors.

### OUR REFLECTION

*We're proud of the diversity of cultural life reflected and celebrated by STORYBOX, achieved in partnership with our committed partners and contributors.*

Left: Community contributor Len Norman at the STORYBOX launch, in front of the ABC video about the Cedars of Lebanon made for the Pilot.



### OUTCOMES

The STORYBOX program featured a diverse mix of programming contributed by program partners, community participants, creators and writers.

Just over **30 per cent of work submitted by community and creative contributors described their ancestry as other than English and Australian**, with heritage described as Indian, Lebanese, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Fijian-Indian, Italian and Chinese heritage.

ESEM also worked with a total of **12 contributors from the Darug nation (21 per cent of all community contributors)**. Final work produced for STORYBOX included four portrait videos, two artwork commissions with accompanying videos, and an additional interview at Parramatta Park.

More information about the Connections to Country program is at page 14.

Through funding received from the City of Sydney, ESEM also worked with school students selected by our partner Story Factory to feature 11 poetry contributors by school students based within the Parramatta LGA.

Our partner collaborations also facilitated a diverse mix of programming with different creatives and community groups. Working in partnership with the ABC, we connected members of the Lebanese Kfarsghab community with historical archival recordings recorded the Cedars of Lebanon Dancehall in 1963, resulting in a new set of video interviews with representatives with a connection to the original recording.

The ABC also contributed a total of six archival recordings sourced from the 1960s, including scenes of Italian famers in Epping, as well Ukrainian and Lebanese dance scenes.

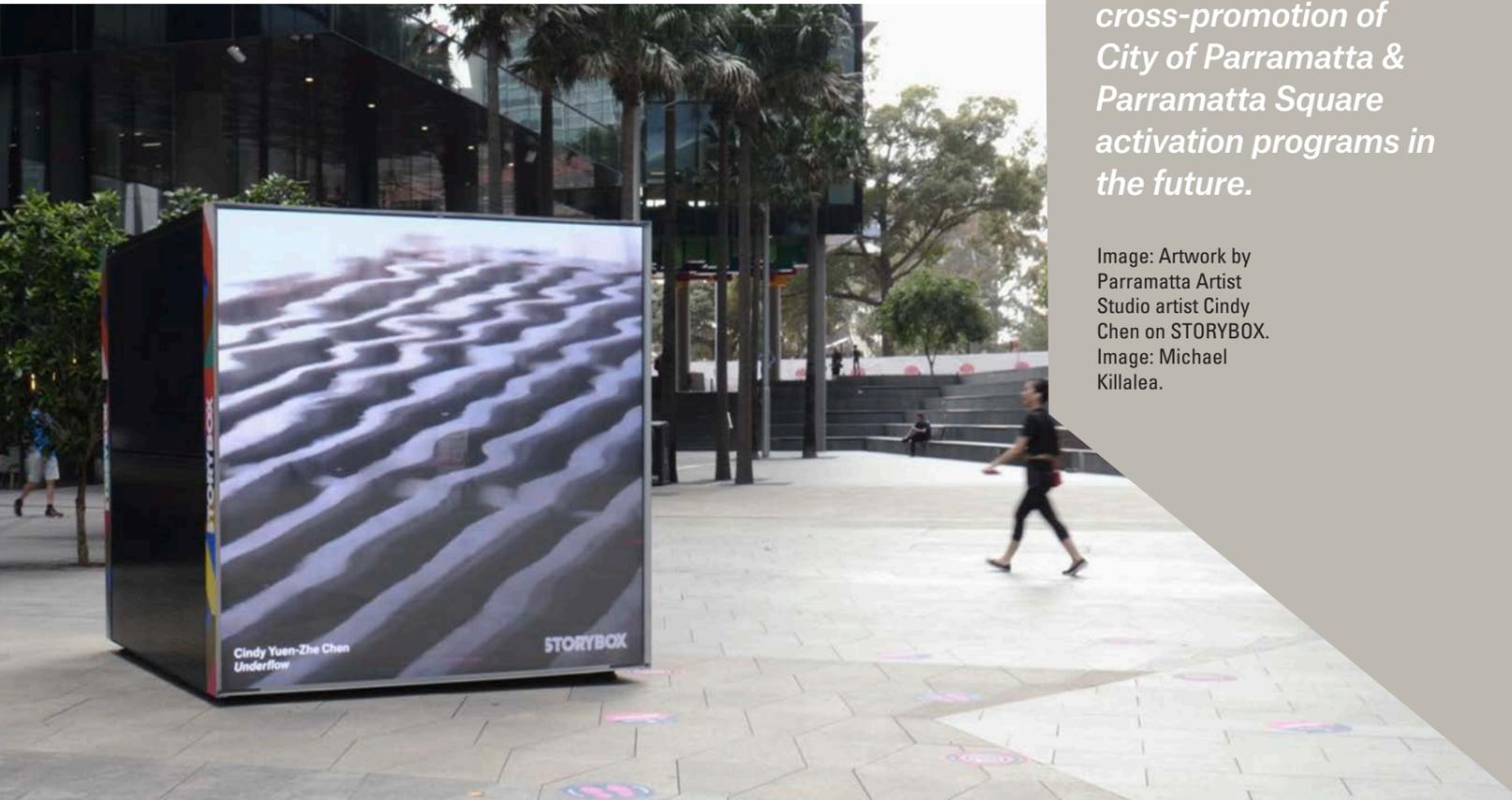
A more detailed Summary of contributions is at Appendix A.

## PILOT OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

### ACTIVATING PLACE

Programming for STORYBOX Parramatta was designed to engage, intrigue and delight audiences visiting or moving through Parramatta Square.

Programming was designed to appeal to audiences at different times of the day, with shorter bursts of programming for morning commuters, longer-form content for lunchtime audiences, and 'ambient' programming for night time audiences.



### OUR REFLECTION

*STORYBOX ran a rolling program of dynamic and changing content relevant to Parramatta over the three month program, with minimal downtime. We see opportunity for more co-ordinated cross-promotion of City of Parramatta & Parramatta Square activation programs in the future.*

Image: Artwork by Parramatta Artist Studio artist Cindy Chen on STORYBOX.  
Image: Michael Killalea.

### OUTCOMES

The impact of Covid-19 delayed the launch of STORYBOX, but also had an impact on the total volume of foot traffic in Parramatta Square, with key anchor buildings remaining underutilised as government and educational institutions extended working from home (WFH) policies into 2021.

However, the opening of new Parramatta Square hospitality venues also saw a larger volume of people present in Parramatta Square at night time than would normally be anticipated within a primarily office district.

We were able to fulfil a variety of different content formats through STORYBOX programming, with shorter programming during mornings and more ambient, colourful and animated programming during the evenings,

designed to accompany outdoor dining experiences in the Square. We extended programming finish time from 10pm to 12pm to reflect larger numbers of people in Parramatta during these late night trading hours.

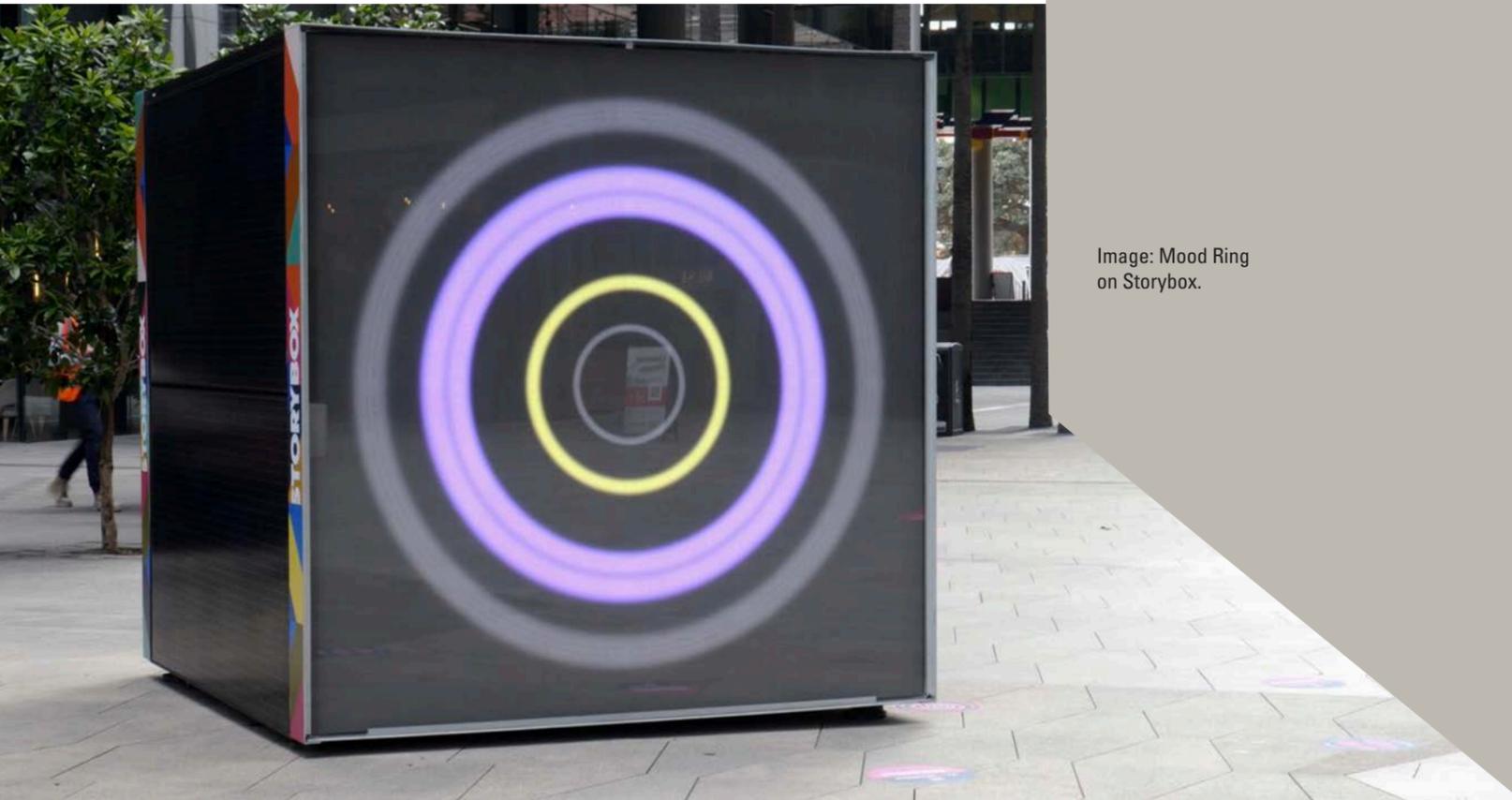
The impact of Covid-19 also meant we were unable to undertake planned user surveys about STORYBOX programming during the pilot activation period. However, user sentiment surveys were invited via QR-code, contributing to the data-driven Mood Ring on STORYBOX. Results are reported overleaf. We also received positive emails from those who discovered the STORYBOX in Parramatta Square (see example p.8).

## PILOT OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

### SHOWCASING DATA-SMARTS

STORYBOX aims to create a vibrant and highly-visual landmark that dynamically responds to changing users, rhythms, activity levels and local mood. CoP Council's Smart City Advisory Committee was a key supporter of the pilot.

Our partnership with the City of Parramatta Council was designed to test new methods for integrating localised data into programming, through bespoke tools and and CoP data feeds.



### OUR REFLECTION

*We launched a data-driven interactive with questions supplied by City of Parramatta, delivering insights into community sentiment. This tool can be built on during 2021.*

Image: Mood Ring on Storybox.

### OUTCOMES

STORYBOX tested the use of digital tools to create a user-driven, animated Mood Ring in public space. The impact of Covid-19 meant use of touch screens embedded into the BOX was not possible, and QR codes were used instead to generate user responses.

The Mood Ring was launched as part of the Pilot and operated with >97 % server reliability. As well as the basic Mood Ring question, the City of Parramatta was invited to contribute up to 3 x additional questions. The three user questions confirmed for the Survey were:

***How are you feeling today?  
How do you feel about the development in Parramatta Square?  
How likely are you to tell your friends and family about STORYBOX?***

A total of 141 respondents participated in the Survey. Respondents were positive about Parramatta Square, with 65 per cent responding that the development was 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

Left: Mood Ring in operation.

A total of 53 per cent of users said they were extremely likely (26 per cent) or likely to "tell their friends and family about STORYBOX", while 27 per cent were unsure and 20 percent were unlikely to.

Answering how they are feeling today, a total of 46 per cent of respondents were feeling either 'Not Good' or 'Average'.

The impact of Covid-19 saw ESEM digital resources for the pilot focused on launch of web and social platforms, with additional data-feeds (including weather feeds and pedestrian data) now scheduled for inclusion in STORYBOX programming for 2021.

City of Parramatta data sourced from pedestrian monitoring was not available for use in the Pilot.

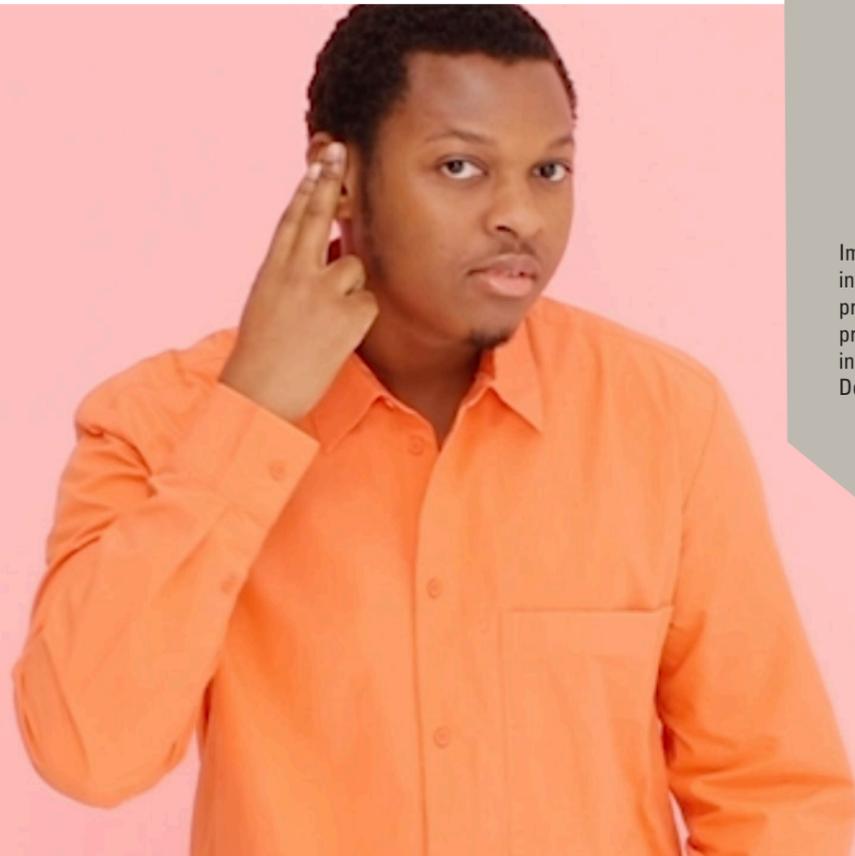
Full Mood Ring data is included in Appendix B on page 30.

## PILOT OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

### PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT & DIALOGUE

STORYBOX aimed to test the benefits of outdoor media for citizen engagement on key topics, including Parramatta's Future City initiatives.

This theme includes the capacity to invite feedback on specified community engagement topics, and linking outdoor engagement with current online and social media campaigns run by CoP.



#### OUR REFLECTION

*We collaborated with partners to demonstrate how STORYBOX can facilitate a mix of online and in-person creative engagement around local issues.*

Image: 'Say I Love You in Sign Language' was produced by ESEM producer Omeo Deling in partnership with the Deaf Society.

### OUTCOMES

The STORYBOX Parramatta Program supported a range of community engagement programs between program partners, indigenous storytellers and community participants.

The impact of Covid-19 saw a longer community engagement program implemented prior to the three-month activation period, including use of web and social channels to build community engagement and storytelling opportunities during the lockdown period.

The City of Parramatta also launched its own STORYBOX page at <https://atparramatta.com/storybox>. The CoP also ran a media release for the interim launch encouraging the community to contribute to STORYBOX. This helped us connect with the wide range of community contributors to the program.

While the City of Parramatta did not utilise STORYBOX for specific community engagement campaigns, ESEM Projects collaborated with the ABC to facilitate community engagement around the topic of 'Your Future' with dedicated questions about the future of Parramatta.

This program was undertaken with a total of 12 community contributors, who participated in 5 minute audio/transcribed interviews and a photoshoot at Riverside Theatre.

ESEM Projects also worked with a number of indigenous storytellers and artists to creatively interpret ways in which Darug people connect to Country at Parramatta, resulting in a number of transcribed interviews, portraits and videos exhibited on STORYBOX.

## PILOT OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES



### Engagement Outcomes Cont.

An archival recording released by the ABC for STORYBOX, featuring the Lebanese community dancing at the 'Cedars of Lebanon' proved extremely popular with the contemporary Lebanese community, and was shared extensively on Facebook.

In response, a set of interviewed recordings were captured with representatives of the community, with a new video released for launch combining new and archival footage. This was the most popular video online with 1764 views.

Left: Your Future contributions created with contributors to STORYBOX Parramatta. [storybox.co/yourfuture](http://storybox.co/yourfuture)

## PILOT OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

### CONNECTIONS TO COUNTRY

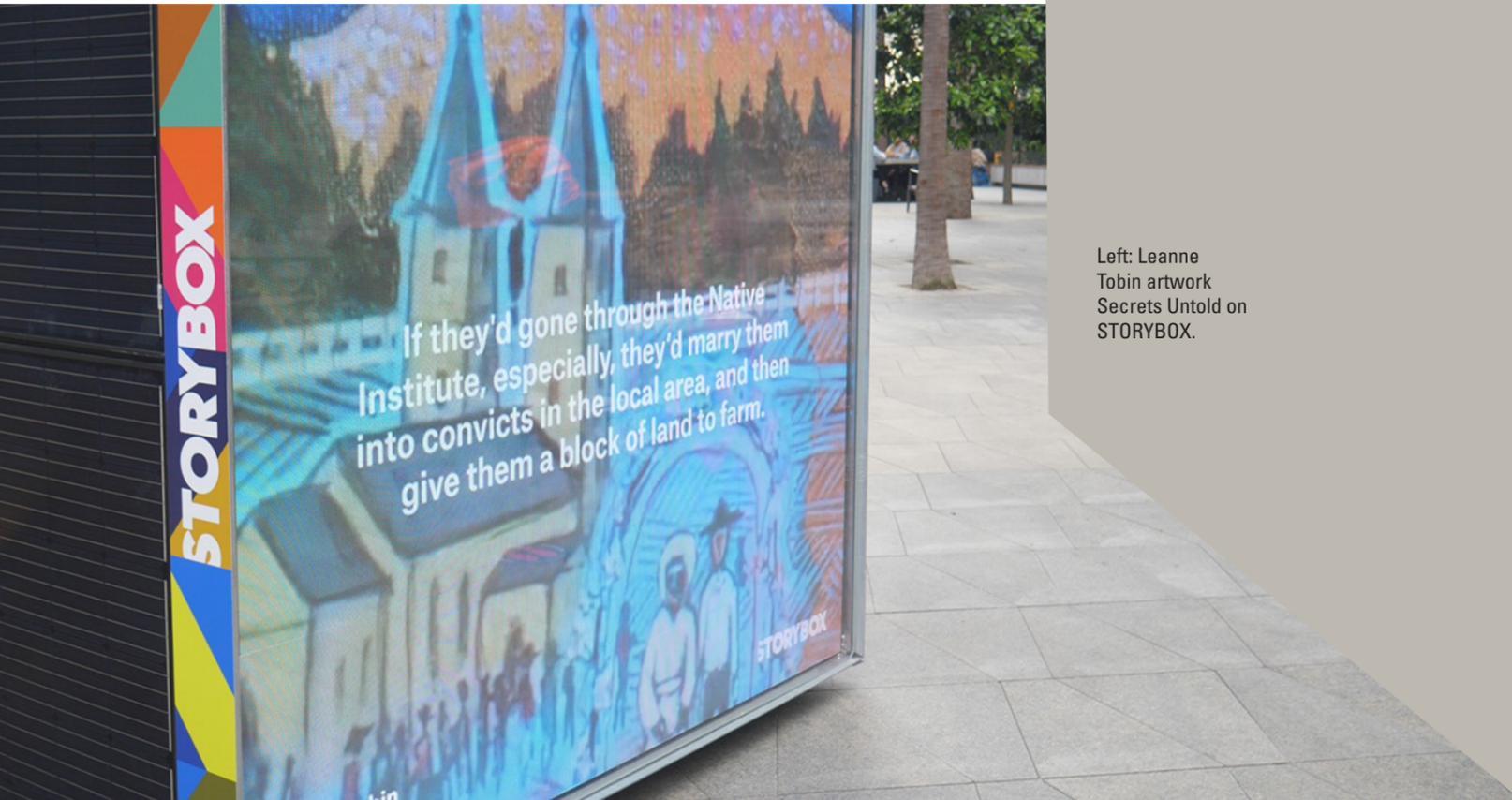
During the development phase of the Pilot ESEM Projects received funding from the City of Parramatta to create new video assets in partnership with indigenous storytellers and artists. This program was established under the name 'Connections to Country' and resulted in a series of four new interviews, video portraits, transcribed stories as well as two new creative commissions.

#### OUR REFLECTION

*We're proud of the diversity of cultural life reflected and celebrated by STORYBOX, achieved in partnership with our committed partners and contributors.*

### OUTCOMES INCLUDE:

- Collaborations with Leanne and Chris Tobin and families
- Leanne and Chris Tobin: Interview at Parramatta Park
- Leanne Tobin: Creative Commission Secrets Untold
- Leanne Tobin portrait by Joseph Mayers
- 'Discovering family secrets with the Tobins' interview and documentation online by ESEM
- Interviews and portraits with Jayne and Jules Christian, Burramattagal line based in Wagga. Portraits by Joseph Mayers
- Interview and video portrait with Uncle Greg Simms by Joseph Mayers
- Portrait of Aunty Edna by Brad Robson
- Dance performance commission to Jannawi Dance Clan (Peta Strachan);
- Short dance video by Tobias Rowles produced by ESEM Projects
- Content is available at [storybox.co/indigenous](http://storybox.co/indigenous)



Left: Leanne Tobin artwork Secrets Untold on STORYBOX.

We have big stories here in Parramatta.

I'm passionate that people understand Aboriginals were living in a way that was quite sophisticated,

**STORYBOX**

Left: Chris Tobin interview at Parramatta Park, featured in STORYBOX in Parramatta Square.

# 4. PARTNERSHIPS

## ADVANCING PLACE-BASED PARTNERSHIPS FOR PUBLIC SPACE MEDIA

The Pilot demonstrated strong appetite from project partners to showcase and exhibit work in public spaces via STORYBOX. During program development we attracted two new cultural partnerships with FORM Dance Projects and Sam I Am photography.

As well as access to screen time on the STORYBOX, the partnership program facilitated creative collaborations between partners, community members and ESEM Projects to co-design and deliver hyper-local content for audiences.

Highlights included:

- Collaborating with the ABC on the Cedars of Lebanon archive-revisited project;
- Connecting ABC content makers & innovators with new audiences in Parramatta;
- Working with creative writing students from WSU on 'Tiny Stories';
- Creating community portraits and Your Future insights with support from City of Parramatta;
- Showcasing work by design studies and academics at WSU;
- Connecting photographers and videographers with indigenous stories and dancers to create new work for STORYBOX (with Sam I Am, Janawwi Dance and FORM Dance);
- Showcasing new environmental initiatives by the City of Parramatta.



Above: Parramatta Mukbang by the ABC.



L-R. Andy Marks, Western Sydney University, City of Parramatta Mayor Councillor Bob Dwyer; Judith Wheelan, ABC Regional and Local; Sarah Barns, ESEM Projects. Parramatta launch, October 2020. City of Parramatta supplied image.

## 5. STORYBOX CONTEXT

**STORYBOX is not just a new kid on the block. The program also embodies a bold new approach to developing and delivering public space media. Here we cover more about the strategic context behind STORYBOX.**

## STORYBOX CONTEXT

### WHY STORYBOX?

#### Technology in public spaces is changing fast.

Public spaces are filled with more and more ambient media, including digital screens, 'internet of things' (IoT) sensors, and near field communications tools. Mobile broadband, including the roll-out of 5G networks, means mobile-equipped audiences now navigate environments via a mix of digital and physical interfaces and wayfinding tools, augmented by always-on content experiences.

STORYBOX is a direct response to this new world of urban connectivity. We utilise a mix of technology platforms to create channels for two-way dialogue with audiences in public spaces. This mix of platforms includes cloud-based publishing to outdoor screens, mobile interactivity, data-driven programming and bespoke digital engagement campaigns via online and social media.

But STORYBOX is not only about using technology to connect. Unlike operators of commercial digital screen networks, STORYBOX aims to facilitate dialogue with audiences as curious and creative citizens.

This way of understanding audiences opens up a new world of content innovation and design for media in public, shared spaces. By rethinking the audience for outdoor media, we are also rethinking outdoor media (or 'out of home' media) as public space media — media designed and curated specifically to support the shared experience of public spaces.

With curious and creative citizens as our primary audience, STORYBOX programming is designed to:

- inspire and inform audiences in shared outdoor spaces;
- promote and support local creatives and storytellers;
- facilitate curiosity and engagement in place-based attractions and stories; and
- promote new digital engagement tools for cities and precincts.

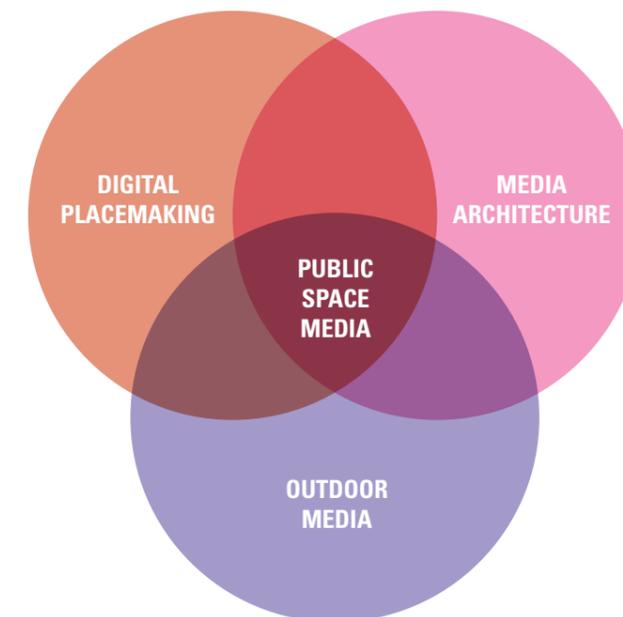
### WHAT'S PUBLIC SPACE MEDIA ?

#### STORYBOX is here to champion new public space media for cities and communities.

As digital outdoor screen networks evolve and expand, cities need to strike a balance between the presence of commercial advertising and more culturally and community engaged assets.

To achieve this, STORYBOX supports partnerships with diverse organisations, who share our intention to engage audiences as curious and creative citizens.

We work with our partner organisations to curate and co-design content for STORYBOX that responds to outdoor and environmental factors. This work adapts our learnings from existing fields such as outdoor media or 'out of home' media (now increasingly 'digital out of home' (DOOH) as well as media architecture, which integrates media technologies into built environmental interfaces, as well as digital placemaking.



*The influence of these three fields on our development of public space media programming for STORYBOX is outlined overleaf.*

## STORYBOX CONTEXT

### OUTDOOR MEDIA

Outdoor media has undergone significant disruption in the five years to 2019. The expansion of digital screen networks has seen outdoor media rapidly evolve from a relatively boring and static medium of outdoor signs, to a more vibrant digital ecosystem of hybrid digital-physical interfaces, intermediated by 'supply side digital platforms' (SSDPs) and 'demand side digital platforms' (DSDPs).

Physical signs have been replaced by digital screens that play rolling schedules of advertising content throughout the day. The monetisation of outdoor digital screens by inventory owners has seen a doubling of revenues between 2013 and 2019 – from around \$500m AUD in 2013 to close to \$1bn in 2019.

New digital screen platforms now allow buyers and sellers of outside advertising space to trade access to outdoor advertising assets programmatically. New platforms use more granular, data-driven insights to set prices for access to screens and facilitating contextual advertising informed by location insights like weather, time of day and congestion levels.

Digital advertising outdoors is also designed for specific audience needs and informed by specific metrics. Audiences are highly transient and mobile, which means content tends to be short and use highly graphic styles, with relatively limited movement particularly when placed along traffic corridors.

#### A growing audience

The Outdoor Media Association (OMA) reports growth of OOH audiences by 31 percent since 2010, a faster growth trend than the general population (20 percent). Factors driving growth of OOH are reported as increased urbanisation and the growing number of digital channels now present in our public spaces where people live, work, and socialise.

Audience measurement of outdoor media has become critical to evaluating the impact of outdoor campaigns. Levels of audience exposure are measured via the metric MOVE ('Measurement of Outdoor Visibility and Exposure'). MOVE measures apply across one of three environments; Roadside, Transport and Lifestyle/Retail. The metric incorporates a range of studies including eye-tracking studies to understand how location environments and time of day influence 'likelihood to see' (LTS) and the 'Visibility Index' (VI).

#### Relevant Sources:

- 'MOVE & Out of Home', Outdoor Media Association, at <https://www.oma.org.au/out-home-audience>
- Industry Performance, Outdoor Media Association, at <https://www.oma.org.au/Industry-Performance>
- MOVE 2020 Update, Outdoor Media Association, at [https://www.oma.org.au/sites/default/files/uploaded-content/website-content/move\\_fact\\_sheets\\_2020\\_2.pdf](https://www.oma.org.au/sites/default/files/uploaded-content/website-content/move_fact_sheets_2020_2.pdf)
- Barns, S. 2020. 'New Neighbourhoods, New Ways of Connecting'. Smart Cities News, December 2020. <https://smart-cities.com.au/new-neighbourhoods-new-ways-of-communicating/>



## STORYBOX CONTEXT

### HOW OUTDOOR MEDIA INFORMS STORYBOX PROGRAMMING

STORYBOX adapts innovations in outdoor media to inform the design of content for audiences in public spaces.

#### We do this by:

- Opening up access to STORYBOX screen interface to third parties seeking to access audiences outdoors. This supports organisations seeking greater visibility in a specific location or community
- Adapting conventions of outdoor media content for any content published on STORYBOX. We do this by co-curating and supporting partner organisations to tailor content specifically for the outdoor experience. This includes relatively simple graphics and text and use of shorter-form content.
- Working towards use of location-based data to inform content displayed on STORYBOX.
- Not using sound as part of the outdoor digital experience.

#### What we do differently:

- Majority of content screened is relevant to the location;
- Partner organisations are confined to not-for-profit media organisations, educational institutions, local government, creative industries and place-based organisations;
- We don't play outdoor advertising, and we don't play existing television content. Social media video may be appropriate but is adapted for use on STORYBOX;
- We reinvest partner fees back into creative commissions and licenses for independent artists, film makers and storytellers;
- We are building two-way sentiment analysis tools that allow audiences to share their mood and also download content they see on STORYBOX. Programming can also be made available to local councils or precinct owners via existing public screens; and
- Content screened on STORYBOX must be of a high quality in order to support the overall visual amenity and experience of a public space.

#### What we learned through the Pilot:

- We selected Parramatta Square as a highly visible location with high volumes of foot traffic - translating to high MOVE metrics. However, the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on the volume of audiences in Parramatta Square. We also experienced a lack of pedestrian data from CoP Council to inform monitoring of audience use and mobility through Parramatta Square.
- We learned that content makers need to be educated on content design for public spaces. This includes use and positioning of copy for the screen, duration of content as well as tempo.
- We found that existing social media and some television content selected by CoP could be adapted for use on STORYBOX.



Image: How do you say I love you? Featured on STORYBOX in Parramatta. Image: Michael Killalea.

## STORYBOX CONTEXT

### DIGITAL PLACEMAKING

Digital placemaking is a relatively new field of practice that's emerged in recent years in response to the many new technologies available now to shape and inform contemporary placemaking practices.

Broadly speaking, 'placemaking' is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Placemaking aims to build on and support a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and wellbeing. Placemaking is both a process and a philosophy (see Digital Placemaking Institute, n.d.).

Placemaking has become a significant part of the urban transformation industry today, and incorporates wide disciplinary perspectives drawn from architecture and landscape design, urban design, planning, events management, public art and curation, and community engagement.

Digital placemaking is also a broad field. The Digital Placemaking Institute defines digital placemaking as

***[T]he integration and [...] strategic use of technology to support, enhance, or accelerate traditional placemaking practice, the strengthening of community connection through collaborative group process to shape the public.***

***In practical terms it is the installation or utilisation of digital technologies in the public space to enhance culture; facilitate urban regeneration programs; deliver education and cultural events; promote public participation and the democratisation of public space.***

The Institute defines relevant technologies as: " non-commercial urban screens; publicly accessible network infrastructure; interactive installations; augmented reality and location based content; integrated social media strategies; media architecture; responsive lighting; projection mapping and other permanent or temporary interactive or media installations – as long as they ultimately support greater community connection between people in their shared public spaces."

There are many digital companies, practitioners and educators who now align their work to the field of digital placemaking. As the field grows, it is also increasingly commercial, with advertising and design agencies now active in promoting digital placemaking initiatives to retail and commercial clients.

#### **Digital Placemaking Research and Resources:**

- Digital Placemaking Institute: <http://digital-placemaking.org/>
- Colangelo, D. (2020) *The Building as Screen: A History, Theory, and Practice of Massive Media* (Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam).
- Barns, S. (2020) *Platform Urbanism*, Palgrave, Singapore.
- Tomitsch M., McArthur I., Haeusler M.H., Foth M. (2015) *The Role of Digital Screens in Urban Life: New Opportunities for Placemaking*. In: Foth M., Brynskov M., Ojala T. (eds) *Citizen's Right to the Digital City*. Springer, Singapore. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-287-919-6\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-287-919-6_3)
- Wilken, R., Humphreys, L., Polson, E., Norum, R., Witteborn, S., Haleboua, G., Frith, J., & Richter, J. (2020). *DIGITAL PLACEMAKING*. *AoIR Selected Papers of Internet Research*, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.5210/spir.v2020i0.11152>

## STORYBOX CONTEXT

### HOW DOES DIGITAL PLACEMAKING INFORM STORYBOX?

ESEM Projects, creators of STORYBOX, are digital placemaking practitioners with decade-long practical experience in the field. Director Dr. Sarah Barns is also a researcher and scholar in the field of digital placemaking.

STORYBOX is therefore strongly informed by key values of digital placemaking, by focusing on connecting citizens in public spaces in order to enhance culture and community outcomes.

While strongly aligned with the field, we recognise the term can alienate many partners and audiences not familiar with the field of placemaking itself - let alone 'digital placemaking'!

#### What we learned about digital placemaking through the Pilot?

- While the Pilot was strongly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, we also found that digital placemaking has a strong role to play in facilitating more programming for audiences in public spaces. Audiences are increasingly willing to use QR codes to access content outdoors, and arts organisations are increasingly looking to outdoor spaces to exhibit new and existing work.
- The context of the pandemic meant many of the touch-based tools we'd originally planned to facilitate interactivity were not viable.
- A longer-term program is needed to embed digital tools used within STORYBOX, including the interactive Mood Ring, within Council programs and research outcomes.



Image: A Tiny Story on STORYBOX by community contributor Amaritha Varshini.



Image: FORM  
Dance projects  
dancer by Sam I AM  
photographer Brian  
Doherty.

## STORYBOX CONTEXT

### MEDIA ARCHITECTURE

Broadly speaking, media architecture embeds digital media into the built environment. The field has grown over the past decade with a focus on integrating lighting technologies into built facades, with an emphasis on using new, responsive technologies such as the internet of things, big data and other spatial sensing techniques into lighting displays and screens.

Media architects advocate for a more 'responsive' approach to designing digital interfaces in cities, with a view to enhancing a built environment and promoting strong community connections to their shared spaces. (Sourced: <https://www.mediaarchitecture.org/>)

While media architecture overlaps with digital placemaking in many ways, the field tends towards use of responsive lighting displays rather than content or community driven projects - though the divisions are fluid. Global engineering firm Arup defines media architecture as "any surface in the three dimensional built environment that contains a matrix of lights that are individually controllable. This approach is fundamentally different to traditional architectural lighting and offers endless new opportunities in designing the built environment."

#### Resources:

- See Ramus: Media Architecture at <https://www.ramus.com.au/>
- Colangelo, D. (2020) *The Building as Screen: A History, Theory, and Practice of Massive Media* (Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam).
- McQuire, S. (2008) *The media city: Media, architecture and urban space*, London, Sage.

### HOW DOES MEDIA ARCHITECTURE INFORM STORYBOX?

We recognise that precincts are increasingly incorporating more responsive lighting displays into their environments. However, much of this data relates to weather or time of day data. We are utilising this approach to test the potential for citizen-generated data to generate responsive lighting displays in outdoor spaces.

Our MoodRing represents a pilot program to incorporate citizen data into outdoor programming, with a colourful pulsating colour-ring responding to user inputs.

There are many more applications of this technology to support the visualisation of hyper-local data in public spaces. We see the potential to combine anonymised survey data with other contextual and temporal data over time, generating insights into community sentiment while also illuminating a public space.



Image: Mood Ring on Storybox.

## 6. VALUES

**Public space media is likely to be experienced by audiences in a transitory way. It's designed to enhance the overall amenity and shared experience of a place. It is not television. It exists somewhere between architecture and media. It should enhance, not diminish, what is unique about shared spaces and diverse communities.**

**STORYBOX facilitates new voices and perspectives on the shared spaces that shape our cities and communities, fostering collaborations between storytellers, filmmakers, writers, artists and local residents.**

**Designed primarily to be experienced outdoors, STORYBOX features curated programming and insights via a two-metre squared media box, for installation within public precincts and squares.**

**STORYBOX programming is designed to be experienced outdoors, responding to unique qualities of an environment and acting as a kind of portal into many different perspectives on a place and its people.**

### STORYBOX Values

#### PUBLIC VALUE

We promote the use of outdoor media as public media, underpinned by the notion of 'public value' as critical to the role of shared spaces to future cities.

#### PARTNERSHIPS

We seek to achieve our outcomes through inclusive partnerships with public and not-for-profit organisations and users of shared spaces.

#### EXPERIMENTATION

We promote innovation and experimentation in digital engagement, activation and storytelling using public media assets.

#### CREATIVITY

We facilitate investment in local voices and creativity.

#### DATA-DRIVEN

We promote access to local intelligence and data relevant to shared spaces to improve service and design outcomes.

#### CULTURE & INCLUSION

We promote a diversity of voices and adopt inclusive methods of contribution and co-creation in project outcomes



# APPENDIX A

## OUTCOMES AT A GLANCE

### KEY METRICS

TOTAL TINY STORY CONTRIBUTORS	51
TOTAL TINYSTORIES PUBLISHED	32
TOTAL TINY STORIES VIDEO ANIMATIONS	13
TOTAL TINY STORY COMMISSIONS	19
TOTAL ART SUBMISSIONS	30
TOTAL ARTWORKS PUBLISHED	25
TOTAL ARTISTS COMMISSIONS / PAID LICENCE FEE	21
TOTAL PAS ARTISTS	9

<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY &amp; ARTIST WORK ON STORYBOX</b>	<b>57</b>
Percentage NESB	28%
Percentage ATSI	21%

### TOTAL PARTNER VIDEOS

ESEM	16
ESEM COMMUNITY PORTRAITS	10
ESEM AMBIENT ANIMATIONS	14
ESEM INDIGENOUS PORTRAITS FUNDED BY COP	5
ABC	16
WSU	8
COP	5
SIA	2
SF	11
FORM	3
CURIOUS WORKS	1
TOTAL PARTNER VIDEO	91
TOTAL VIDEO ASSETS CURATED FOR STORYBOX PILOT	148

### CONTENT ASSETS

ABC ARCHIVES	6
INDIGENOUS STORIES	7
ART	32
PAS	26
DANCE / PERFORMANCE	23
PHOTOGRAPHY	5
PAINTING	4
ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT	3
ANIMATION	10
ABSTRACT ART	9

TOTAL MOOD RING PARTICIPANTS (QR CODES)	141
TOTAL CONTRIBUTORS IDENTIFYING AS FIRST OR SECOND GENERATION MIGRANT HERITAGE	21
TOTAL INDIGENOUS CONTRIBUTORS	12
TOTAL CONTRIBUTORS	198

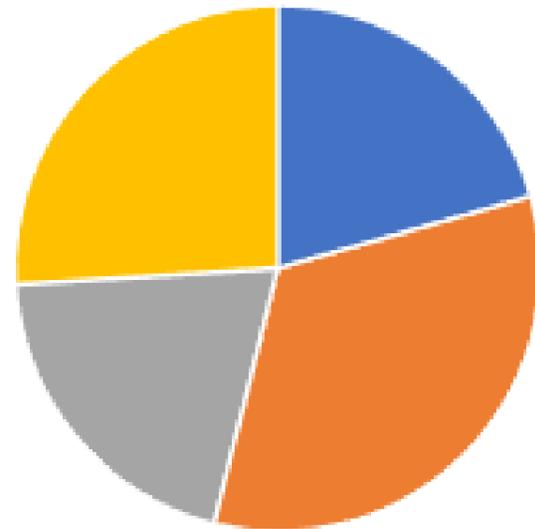
### WEBSITE METRICS

	4359 site sessions
	2,635 visitors
AVERAGE DURATION	9mins 22 seconds
VIDEO VIEWS	5374
UNIQUE VIEWERS	1359
FINISHERS	1010
TOP ABC VIDEO ARCHIVES	3012
MOST VIEWED VIDEO ONLINE	
CEDARS OF LEBANON HALL (ABC ARCHIVES)	1764 views

# APPENDIX B

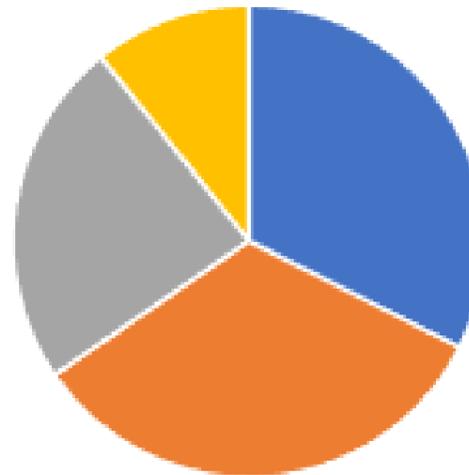
## MOOD RING DATA

How have you been feeling this week?



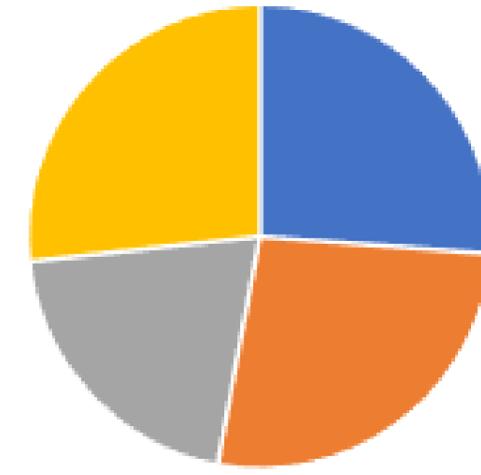
■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Average ■ Not Good

How do you feel about the development in Parramatta Square?



■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Neutral ■ Not Good

How likely are you to tell your friends/family about Storybox?



■ Extremely Likely ■ Likely ■ Unlikely ■ Not Sure



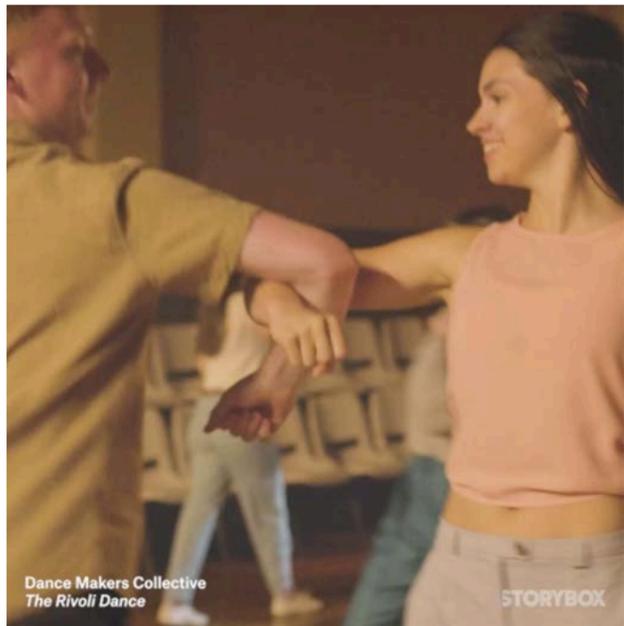


Universal  
Fitness

Image: FORM  
Dance projects  
dancer by Sam I AM  
photographer Brian  
Doherty.

These sounds, they rust a world apart. The whistling of traffic, weather seeping through my scalp. At times, I think of myself as bodiless, that it was always a crusade in my mouth. Late for the 3:30 pm bus. I wait. Human neurons like little factories, I imagine. They work so hard just to be.

Duy Quang Mai, Croydon



Images clockwise from Top Right. ABC Archives Reimagined; MT Resilience AR Experience by ABC; Deaf Society video; Uncle Greg Simms by Joseph Mayers; Mike Daley 'Tidal' supported by City of Sydney; Symphony Chakma portrait; Kalanja Dhir featured on STORYBOX; ABC 'Breath' and Dance Makers Collective Rivoli Dance excerpt featured on sTORYBOX.



Image: ABC Archives  
'Parramatta Re-imagined'  
for STORYBOX  
Parramatta.

**Thank you to all our valued partners  
and contributors.  
ESEM Projects, January 2021.**