



# **CANBERRA:** THE LABORATORY OF THE POSSIBLE

# PROGRAM

# 12-14 JULY 2023 MARIE REAY TEACHING CENTRE, KAMBRI, ANU

Canberra is a place of immense possibility, with a creative community passionate about the future. It has a reputation as the 'serious' heart of government – but in fact, Canberrans love to play.

As part of *Uncharted Territory*, the 2023 Play Symposium brings together an exciting mix of designers, place-makers, innovators, artists, thinkers and community leaders – including globally acclaimed NZ creative place-making team Gap Filler – to disrupt your thinking with playful, tangible ways to transform places and communities.

We also explore compelling new tools – 'real world' and digital – to improve our city's vibrancy and wellbeing as we participate in the capital's 'laboratory of the possible'.











# DAY ONE: WEDNESDAY 12 JULY





### 9.30 - 9.50 Reimagining play in Canberra - the laboratory of the possible I Cathy Hope, Associate Professor, Coordinator Play Creativity and Wellbeing Project, Centre for Creative and Cultural Research, Faculty of Arts and Design, University of Canberra

- 9.50 10.20 Welcome to Country Playing on Ngunnawal country Aunty Tina Brown, Ngunnawal elder
- 10.20 11.00 Transforming cities through creative play From City in Crisis to City of Play: Creative place-making in Ōtautahi (Christchurch), New Zealand Ryan Reynolds, Director and Co-founder; Kate Finnerty, Play Coordinator, Gap Filler
- 11.00 11.30 Gap Filler takeover
- 11.30 12.00 Recess and play
- 12.00 1.30 Playful activation for social and environmental change Win/Win: cultural adaptation through play Georgie Pollard, Emmanuela Prigoni, Leanne Thompson Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation Art & Impact - activating audiences for change Alex Kelly, Producer, Impact Producer, Strategist, Director The Unquiet
- 1.30 2.30 Lunch and play Moodshift
- 2.30 3.50 Play to improve wellbeing

Designing for wellbeing - re-designing the unremarkable

Debra Cushing, Associate Professor, School of Architecture and Built Environment, Faculty of Engineering, QUT

- Creating wellbeing universes
- Missy Gilbert, Founder, UnitePlayPerform
- Systems of sanity: play and mental health
- Robin Davidson, Artistic Director, Rebus Theatre

3.50 – 4.30 Head home or stay and play









# DAY TWO: THURSDAY 13 JULY





- 9.30 9.45 Reimagining play in Canberra the laboratory of the possible II Cathy Hope, Associate Professor, Coordinator Play Creativity and Wellbeing Project, Centre for Creative and Cultural Research, Faculty of Arts and Design, University of Canberra
- 9.45 10.15 Play for diverse communities
   What you need to know about how we play: the ACT African community
   Betty Macharia, 2023 ACT Woman of the Year; ACT Secretary, African Australian Council ACT
- 10.15 11.30 Intergenerational Play

Designing for intergenerational play

Debra Cushing, Associate Professor, School of Architecture and Built Environment, Faculty of Engineering, QUT Activation for meaningful intergenerational play Georgie Pollard, Emmanuela Prigoni, Leanne Thompson, Farm it Forward and Cementa Our big fat intergenerational play tour Tim and Nathalie Bevitt (AKA Mr Tim + Ms Nat), performers

- 11.30 12.00 Recess and play
- 12.00 12.45 Play for young people (16-25)

What you need to know about how we play: ACT young leaders Kat Reed (they/them), CEO, Women with Disabilities ACT; 2021 Young Canberra Citizen of the Year; 2021 Out for

Australia's 30 Under 30

Youth panel TBC by Kat Reed

#### 12.45 - 2.00 Activating play for young people

Designing places for young people to play Aaron Wallis, Director, Playce; Youth Play Expert, Victorian Design Review Panel Play that transforms young lives: NEO-Learning in Australia's outback Mark Leahy, Creative Producer and Associate Artist, Big hART Play that transforms young lives: circus and social change in the ACT Isaac Fletcher, Head of Social Circus, Warehouse Circus

2.00 - end Stay and play - Moodshift - take a tour or head home









# DAY THREE: FRIDAY 14 JULY





Symposit

- 9.30 9.45 Reimagining play in Canberra the laboratory of the possible III Cathy Hope, Associate Professor, Coordinator Play Creativity and Wellbeing Project, Centre for Creative and Cultural Research, Faculty of Arts and Design, University of Canberra
- 9.45 10.40 Playful ways to engage and transform the metaverse Bringing play to life Sarah Murray, Director, PLACE Technologies Unlocking Creativity through Neurodesign and Playfulness Jess Herrington, Creative Technology Innovator, AI & Immersive Tech Specialist, Writer, Deloitte Digital and ANU
- 10.40 11.20 Play in the metaverse
- 11.20 11.50 Recess and play
- 11.50 1.10 Playful ways to engage and transform games
   The possibilities of play and gamification
   Dr Kerstin Oberprieler, Behavioural Design Practice Lead, ThinkPlace
   Play to connect people to culture and place
   Dr Keir Winesmith, Chief Digital Officer, National Film and Sound Archives
   Playing out complexity at the intersections of science, art and games
   Nathan Harrison, BOHO Interactive
- 1.10 1.55 Play and games
- 1.55 2.40 Lunch and play Moodshift
- 2.40 3.50 Compelling and playful ways to engage stories. Hosted by Kim Huynh. The official Canberra hero story
   Brodie Fleming, Director, Brand Canberra, ACT Government
   Bringing her-stories to life: walking in the footsteps of Canberra's badass women
   Sita Sargeant (she/her) and Lucy Dingwall (she/her), Co-Directors, She Shapes History
   Canberra playful story-telling panel
- 5.00 700 Play at the National Film and Sound Archives
- 5.00pm Beertent
- 6.00pm Designing Playful and Vibrant Places











#### Cathy Hope

Associate Professor Play Creativity and Wellbeing Project, Centre for Creative and Cultural Research University of Canberra



Aunty Tina Brown Ngunnawal elder



Ryan Reynolds Director and Co-founder Gap Filler

Associate Professor Cathy Hope is Engagement and Impact Director and Coordinator of the Play, Creativity and Wellbeing Project in the Centre for Creative and Cultural Research in the Faculty of Arts and Design at the University of Canberra.

Cathy is dedicated to making Canberra a more playful and playable city through creative and collaborative real- world engagements. She has cofacilitated hundreds of playful projects with and for the Canberra community and produced multiple government and industry reports to improve people and place outcomes and wellbeing.

Cathy led the 2019 national award-winning Haig Park Experiments with a cross-sector consortium, which transformed the once unsafe and unused Canberra green space into a loved community hub. She founded Play Activation Network ACT – an interdisciplinary and collaborative collective of over 80 local professionals who are passionate about play and Canberra. In 2021 Cathy won the UC Citizen of the Year Award for her significant contributions to the ACT. Aunty Tina Brown is a proud Ngunnawal elder who is passionate about improving outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As a child, Aunty Tina was part a vocal group of protestors calling for land rights at the opening of the new Parliament House, and is grateful for the sacrifices made by elders before her to improve her life and the life of her children. Aunty Tina is a woman of the freshwater, raised on the country where the Murrumbidgee flows. Ryan is the Director and Co-Founder of Gap Filler, New Zealand – a globally acclaimed creative placemaking agency that creates conditions for engaging, experimental and playful encounters to connect to people and place.

Ryan is one of a select 100 Regional Placemaking Leaders worldwide chosen by PlacemakingX and is involved throughout Aotearoa developing the theory and practice of placemaking there. He holds a PhD from Canterbury University and has had teaching and research roles at Canterbury University, Lincoln University and Copenhagen University in Theatre & Film Studies, Environmental Management and Landscape Architecture. He is a founder of Life in Vacant Spaces and is also a certified Regenerative Practitioner.

Ryan's favourite thing about Gap Filler has been discovering how unexpectedly profound absurdity can be. Simple acts like dancing on street corners can reveal and achieve far more than you might expect. His favourite example was Eyes on the City where Gap Filler parked a portable grandstand around the city – replete with commentary box, commentator, and scoreboard – and spectated and commentated upon building demolitions, traffic intersections, stalled construction projects and more.

**ACT** 













Kate Finnerty Urban Play Coordinator Gap Filler



Georgina Pollard Collaborative Artist Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation



Manu Prigioni Co-founder and Coordinator Farm It Forward

Kate Finnerty is the Urban Play Coordinator at Gap Filler, a creative placemaking organization in Christchurch, New Zealand. Gap Filler has initiated the Pae Tākaro Place of Play programme to make Ōtautahi a Capital of Urban Play. This programme comprises events, activations, urban interventions and installations that create a playful city for everyone.

Kate's mission is to encourage and support creativity, exploration and fun as shown in the interactive installations that help activate public spaces in New Zealand.

Kate was also the Festival Director of the Nati Frinj in Natimuk in the Grampians where she developed a three-day extravaganza of music, installations, visual arts and performance events with venues ranging from the 180-seat Soldiers Memorial Hall to abandoned shearing sheds, aerial performances on giant silos through to site-specific installations in outdoor dunnies (toilets).

When not occupied with organising things, Kate can be spotted dangling off a cliff on the Port Hills, ocean swimming or heading into the mountains.

Georgie Pollard is an artist who works at the intersection between visual arts and performance. As a socially engaged and collaborative artist she works with curation, writing and the art object as a means of activating community engagement. She's had several solo shows and participated in numerous group shows and awards. As a collaborative artist she has played an active role in a number of artist run initiatives including INDEX. artspace, Cementa Contemporary Arts Festival, Wayout artspace and Kandos School of Cultural Adaptation. Working with painting, drawing, and installation, she uses action and performativity to explore the role that aesthetics and objectivity play in the production of subjectivity and agency. She moved from Cadigal land (Sydney's Inner West) to work and live on Wiradjuri Dabee country (Kandos) in 2012.

Emmanuela (Manu) Prigioni is an artist, regenerative grower, co-founder and coordinator of Farm It Forward, a social enterprise linking residents with unused land to young people passionate about growing local food based in the Blue Mountains. Her passion for socially engaged art and food growing was born in 2014 when she overcame postnatal depression through growing and restoring her home garden, and reconnecting to place and community.

After completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Master of Media Arts and working as a part time lecturer at UNSW Art and Design, she completed a Full-Time Diploma of Permaculture at The National Environment Centre, TAFE Riverina Institute, a Milkwood Permaculture Design Course, and Permaculture Teacher Training with Rosemary Morrow. She also studied soil microbiology by completing studies with Doctor Elaine Ingham.

The Farm It Forward social enterprise she cofounded has fostered community resilience through bushfires, floods and pandemic since the beginning of 2019, and recently won a Greater Sydney Local Landcare Service Landcare Farming award.













Leanne Thompson Multidisciplinary Artist Cementa



Alex Kelly Producer, Impact Producer, Strategist, Director The Unquiet



Associate Professor Debra Cushing School of Architecture and Built Environment Faculty of Engineering, QUT

Leanne Thompson is a multidisciplinary artist employing diverse creative practice as 'terrain' to explore relationships between environmental issues, cultural perspectives and 'spaces of possibility' outside the traditional artworld. Her practice includes painting, encaustic, work on paper, sculpture, interactive installations, public art, and community engagement. Leanne lives and works on Dharwal and Wiradjuri lands and aims to acknowledge and respond to science, old ways of knowing, land, multiple species, and interdependent networks to inspire richly textured, socially just, and abundant living.

As an intuitive maker with capacity and experience to conceive, manage and deliver creative programs in conjunction with communities, Leanne values collaborative and transdisciplinary modes for their capacity to translate and play with shared information - widening perception and drawing awareness to tacit knowledge held in communities and places. She supports people individually and collectively, encouraging their ability to invest care through creative processes: making, repairing, growing, imagining, and sustaining. Alex Kelly is an artist, filmmaker, and impact producer based on Dja Dja Warrung Country. Working across film, communications strategy and impact making, Alex purposefully connects the disciplines of art and social change. Alex's previous films include Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything* (Global Impact & Distribution Producer), *Island of the Hungry Ghosts* (Producer) and *In My Blood It Runs* (Impact Producer). Alex was also impact producer on *The Dreamlife of Georgie Stone* (Netflix 2022).

In 2013, Alex was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to research documentaries and impact producing in the UK, Canada and the USA; Alex has been further supported by a Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship in 2016 and a Bertha Challenge Fellowship in 2020. Alongside her film work Alex's has a speculative futuring practice - *The Things We Did Next* - a collaborative hybrid of theatre, imagination and democracy. Alex is a founding member of the social impact film company the Unquiet Collective. Deb is a leading academic in landscape architecture, focusing on health-promoting environments for all ages, especially children and youth. Deb uses design theory, environmental psychology and placemaking principles to inform the design of public spaces of different scales. Her current research areas include:

- Intergenerational park design for active and engaged communities;
- Urban design solutions that are sustainable, salutogenic (health promoting), playable, and inclusive;
- Green infrastructure for human health and ecosystem services; and
- Design nudges to encourage physical activity and social engagement within public spaces.

Deb's first book, "Creating Great Places: Evidencebased Urban Design for Health and Wellbeing, co-authored with Professor Evonne Miller, draws on international research, illustrated case studies, personal experiences, and pop culture to introduce the theory-storming approach for creating inclusive, sustainable and salutogenic (health promoting) urban places. Her recently released second book, "Redesigning the Unremarkable" again coauthored with Miller, presents a timely reminder that the neglected elements and spaces of our built environment must be thoughtfully redesigned to enhance human and planetary health.















Missy Gilbert aka ØFFERINGS Founder Unite*Play*Perform



Robin Davidson Founding Director Rebus Theatre



Betty Macharia 2023 ACT Woman of the Year; ACT Secretary African Australian Council ACT

Multi-hyphenate talent Missy Gilbert, who also goes by the pseudonym ØFFERINGS, is the founder of Australian arts health organisation, Unite*Play*Perform, which seeks to enhance wellbeing through creativity in a globally connected world.

Missy imbues her art with a form of therapeutic methodology – incorporating play, making, performance and community into Unite*Play*Perform's various experience-based works, exploring the many ways that art can improve our mental state, both individually and collectively.

As an artist, Missy is "a cultural disruptor" (Broadsheet) known for creating otherworldly, immersive environments. An Australian multidisciplinary artist whose work spans the fields of art, performance and experiential design, her experiences provoke, disarm, educate and heal.

Robin Davidson is the founding director of Rebus Theatre and co-leads the company with Ben Drysdale. Robin is an actor, clown, director, teacher and writer. He is a graduate of Charles Sturt University in Theatre/Media, with First Class Honours. He devises theatre with communities, including five years as founding artistic director of Hidden Corners Theatre, a company for young people who have a family member with a disability, seven years as director of Imperfectly Sane Productions, the Mental Health Foundation ACT's theatre company, and fifteen years as a founding member of Canberra Playback Theatre. He was co-awarded the 2005 Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance ACT Green Room Award for services to community theatre. He also performs, directs and teaches clown and Commedia dell'Arte, including performing in Nara, Japan and at the Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Robin has worked with a wide variety of communities including young carers, people who experience mental illness, people with disability, young adult migrants, children, at risk young people, environmentalists, climate scientists, and teachers. Betty Macharia is the 2023 ACT Woman of the Year. She is a community sector worker and a proud African Australian woman who has dedicated many years to volunteering in the ACT community services sector. Her contributions include volunteering as the executive secretary of the African Australian Council ACT and as an executive in the East African Community Association.

Betty coordinates support for vulnerable people and is passionate about making a difference in mental health, domestic and family violence and overcoming barriers for culturally and linguistically diverse communities. In 2022, Betty pioneered and led the delivery of a cultural Women's Health Week event themed 'Dera Night – Our Health, Our Way'.









play.







Tim and Nathalie Bevitt (AKA Mr Tim + Ms Nat) Performers



Kat Reed 2021 Young Canberra Citizen of the Year & CEO Women with **Disabilities ACT** 

**Aaron Wallis** Director Playce

Play experts Tim and Nathalie Bevitt (Mr Tim and Ms Nat) are a husband/wife duo that love to explore the creative arts! Their combined talents help people of all ages to find their 'inner child' and release it to

They run a performing arts business and create music for primary aged children. They run a family and community choir each week with people of all ages.

Tim and Nathalie are also children's theatre directors and have written a number of original professional musicals written with children aged 7-13yrs. They perform rocking kids music with their band "Mr Tim & the Fuzzy Elbows" and love to help adults to play too.

Tim was awarded a Churchill Fellowship in 2019 and they have just returned in the last month from investigating "Intergenerational play and creativity for building cohesive communities".

Kat Reed (they/them/theirs) has been a local queer and disability advocate and community builder in the ACT for the last eight years. They are currently the CEO of Women with Disabilities ACT and a Board Director of Women with Disabilities Australia and of Youth Coalition of the ACT. Kat is a Council member of the Domestic Violence Prevention Council and the Ministerial Advisory Council on Women.

Kat was awarded 2021 Young Canberra Citizen of the Year and one of Out for Australia's 30 Under 30 for 2021.

Their activism and community building work spans from advocacy for the rights of people of colour, queer youth, trans and non-binary people and people with disabilities, to holding positions of leadership in both local and national organisations including the ANU Students' Association and led the Australian Queer Students' Network as the National Co-Convenor. Kat was a Council member on the ACT LGBTIQ+ Ministerial Advisory Council and advised on issues affecting queer youth from 2015-2018.

Kat is also a political performance artist and through their arts persona they recently finished work on Australia's very first all trans and gender diverse original musical titled Lost in Transit with a cast of six local trans and gender diverse artists.

Aaron Wallis is the Director of Playce, a creative multi award winning design studio passionate about designing playful and fun spaces for people of all ages. Supported by a small and committed group of like-minded experts, for over 12 years. Playce has created designs for bespoke playspaces, parkour and climbing walls, skateparks, wheel parks, youth spaces and interactive sculptural play elements.

A registered landscape architect, regular guest lecturer at RMIT, Youth Specialist on the Victoria Design Review Panel, Play Australia and Parks and Leisure Member, Aaron is passionate about everyone in the community being able to have fun, enjoy themselves and be active.





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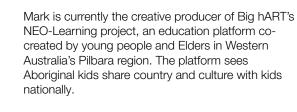




Isaac Fletcher Head of Social Circus Warehouse Circus



Sarah Murray Director PLACE Technologies



Mark will share about NEO-Learning as a case study which demonstrates the power of creativity and creative practice in enabling positive social change. NEO-Learning builds pathways to new digital skills, education and employment for Aboriginal people locally, and drives respect and understanding between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Australia.

Mark Leahv

**Big hART** 

Creative Producer

Big hART is Australia's leading arts and social change organisation, making art, building communities, and driving change. Mark began working with Big hART in 2016 applying his musical direction skills to the SKATE project, and has since expanded his work for the company by working across projects, including leading NEO-Learning as Creative Producer and also delivering music based skills workshops and mentoring in communities. Isaac is an enthusiastic circus trainer and Occupational Therapist. He has been coaching for over 10 years, seven of which as part of Warehouse Circus, helping people enjoy and engage in meaningful and beneficial activities. Over the years he's been a part of many different projects utilising circus and play, but specialises in paediatrics, human development, and early intervention. Sarah is the founding Board Member of PLACE Technologies, who make metaverse like environments for net zero developers that decrease their costs through the lifecycle of a development project from design, to entitlement to construction and management. Creating prosperity for residents, communities, and developers and the environment.

A corporate innovation professional with 15+ years experience, her passion is at the intersection of technology and social impact, join Sarah and she brings play to life through exciting and interactive examples of play that will shape our future and benefit our communities and our environment.













#### Jess Herrington

Creative Technology Innovator, AI & Immersive Tech Specialist, Writer, Deloitte Digital and ANU



Dr Kerstin Oberprieler Behavioural Design Practice Lead ThinkPlace



Dr Keir Winesmith Chief Digital Officer National Film and Sound Archives

Jess is a designer, artist, and creative strategist focusing on interaction, innovation, and human behaviour. She is an AI and immersive tech specialist, as well as a neuroscience PhD researcher specializing in visual perception. Her work anticipates and prepares for the future of creativity, work, and society. She collaborates with leading global brands, creatively using new technology to drive cutting-edge experiences for scientific, educational, and creative purposes. Jess is also a writer, with a special focus on art, technology, AI, and ethics. She is interested in making digital experiences better for everyone. Kerstin Oberprieler is the Behaviour Practice Lead at ThinkPlace, and a thought leader in gamification for behaviour change. Described as one of the world's leading figures in behavioural science, Kerstin combines her expertise in design thinking and user research to deliver effective and innovative behavioural solutions for organisations to increase engagement and boost performance. She is a renowned keynote speaker and facilitator in gamification for behaviour change.

Kerstin has won multiple awards including Most Outstanding Gamification Specialist Australia 2021, 2021 NYX Gold Winner for Best Educational Game, and 2021 Top 3 Game Developer Awards by AGDA 2020. Keir is passionate about finding new ways to use digital to connect people to culture and place. He is currently the Chief Digital Officer at the National Film & Sound Archive, mentor in the Australia Council for the Arts CEO Digital Mentoring Program, and co-founder of the bi-monthly Cultural Data Salon for Sydney cultural workers. His book, co-authored with Dr. Suse Anderson, is *The Digital Future of Museums* (Routledge, 2020).

Prior to leadership roles, Keir has a background in strategy and consulting, and has collaborated on award-winning projects that blend the digital and the physical across the globe. In 2018, he was named in Fast Company's 100 Most Creative People in Business for this work.

Keir holds hold a Ph.D. in new media and writes and speaks frequently on the intersection of digital and the arts, in particular, the role of digital as an agent for organisational change.

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Nathan Harrison Boho Interactive



Kim Huynh

School of Politics and International Relations and the Humanities Research Centre The Australian National University

Nathan Harrison is a performer, writer and gamemaker living and working on Bidjigal Land. He works as a solo artist and as part of collectives Applespiel and Boho Interactive, creating theatre and games about nature and social-ecological systems. Working with scientists he has created live games for the London Science Museum, Stockholm Resilience Centre, Earth Observatory Singapore and The Lowitja Institute.

A founding member of Sydney-based performance collective Applespiel, Nathan has developed and presented work around Australia and internationally. With Boho Interactive he has developed interactive science theatre in the UK, Sweden and Singapore, and been featured in New Scientist. As a sciencetheatre practitioner Nathan has developed works about water security, long-term thinking, and wildlife conservation. Nathan is a 2021 Griffin Studio Artist, a radio broadcaster and a host of the podcast Hottest 100s and 1000s. Kim Huynh is a teacher, writer, researcher and broadcaster who helps everyday people tell their extraordinary stories. Kim has produced and presented profiles of refugees and migrants, carers and the people they care for, queer communities, and blokes among others with ABC Radio Canberra.

His latest book reviews Australia's Refugee Politics in the 21st Century (Routledge) and develops ways to enhance national security, refugee rights and social cohesion. Kim's published a collection of stories about contemporary Vietnam entitled Vietnam as if ... (ANU Press). His biography of his parents Where the Sea Takes Us (HarperCollins) attracted academic and literary acclaim. He co-authored Children and Global Conflict (Cambridge University Press) and co-edited The Culture Wars (Palgrave-McMillan). He facilitates discussions on culture and ideas with the Vietnamese Australia Forum, coordinates a current affairs discussion group at the Early Morning Centre and writes essays on a wide range of topics for news outlets. He ran as independent candidate in the 2016 ACT election and in the 2022 federal election. Kim is also a presenter at ABC Radio Canberra and Deputy Director of the ANU Humanities Research Centre.









Symposit

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Sita Sargeant Co-Director She Shapes History



Lucy Dingwall Co-Director She Shapes History

Sita is the Founder and Co-Director of She Shapes History, a social enterprise established in 2021 to address the lack of representation of women in Australian history. She is a passionate storyteller who wants to transform how people understand Australian history and what it means to be an Australian. Her mission is to make Australian history accessible, engaging, and entertaining. Sita does this through a variety of initiatives, including walking tours, digital content, and fun events such as trivia nights and murder mystery nights. Lucy is Co-Director of She Shapes History, a proud queer feminist and a self-titled Can-Bassador. She also works as a Digital Art Curator at a major cultural institution, and before coming to the curator world worked as an arts and objects conservator. She has been lucky as a result to be very hands on with history, and is passionate about finding new and engaging ways of sharing the diverse stories of Australia. She is currently studying her Masters in Gender and Sexuality. Often the loudest person in the room, and swears all her facts are fun.

