


A RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY PROJECT

# Afloat

EVERYTHING CHANGES





“I genuinely believe that if, as a community, we heal the kids, then the kids will heal the family and the family will heal the community.”

POLICE OFFICER, JASON GAFFE



## Acknowledgement of Country

In recognition of the deep history and culture of this place, we wish to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land upon which the City of Hobart was built.

We acknowledge the determination and resilience of the palawa people of Tasmania, who have survived invasion and dispossession, and continue to maintain their identity, culture and rights.

We recognise the value of continuing Aboriginal knowledge, stories and cultural practice; and respect the Aboriginal people as the first custodians of this land who have cared for and managed the environment for 35,000 years +.

We acknowledge the mountain *kunanyi* and its life-giving water channelling into the rivulet, out to the sea and beyond. We pay respect to this land, its Ancestors and to Elders past, present and emerging.



# The Afloat Project

The 2018 May flood event changed Hobart's collective experience of the Hobart Rivulet forever. The once life-giving waters cascaded down kunanyi/Mt Wellington destroying gardens and infrastructure, uprooting vegetation, flooding schools and homes, leaving a trail of human and natural debris. Ordinarily a gentle meandering stream, the Rivulet became a powerful force of nature capable of delivering change and destruction in its wake.


The City of Hobart received feedback from South Hobart childhood centres, school staff and parents regarding the impact the flood had on their community. Many early learning services had to close, move out of classrooms and support families who had temporarily lost their homes. One of the teachers described it as a, *"horrible time for all involved, children lost their school work, personal belongings and spent a few months crammed into other classrooms"*.

In an innovative response to the May flood event, the City of Hobart through a resilience and recovery grant funded by the Australian and Tasmanian governments under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements,

adopted a creative pathway to strengthen community resilience and support the community's recovery. The *Afloat* project (January–June 2019) engaged professional artists to work with children, families and educators using creative recovery and play as a means to help children deal with change, adversity and the associated feelings. In the ever-present global phenomena of increasing extreme weather events – our community's ability to adapt to change and co-exist within our environment would appear to be critical to our survival.

**"A growing body of evidence indicates that, particularly in times of community distress, the arts can provide great benefits to personal and community wellbeing, such as increased community cohesiveness, confidence and resilience, improved physical and mental health, reduced feelings of isolation, new personal and creative skills, strengthened connections to place, and a sense of shared optimism."**

**CREATIVE RECOVERY NETWORK WEBSITE**



**"Sometimes the water goes up the mountain in winter – because it gets frozen and the ice blocks the water."**



ROSIE



LEIGH



## The Artists

**Rosie McKeand's** practice is underpinned by the pedagogy of Reggio Emilia and Eileen Adams. Her practice in community is extensive, and Rosie has been engaged by State Government agency Arts Tasmania, in recognition of her expertise, to mentor emerging community artists. Rosie was the Art Educator at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (TMAG), Artist in Residence for many years at the Fahan School and developed many projects for community groups such as foster care agencies.

*"My planning was based around the words 'everything changes'. To relate this topic to young children I worked with visual literacy by drawing the stories as the children told them. Working in charcoal enabled me to rework areas of the drawings as the stories evolved so change became visible. This process engaged the children in an enjoyable and lively manner and issues were addressed in a non-threatening and open manner allowing for personal stories from children and families to be heard and their experiences acknowledged. Discussing how the Hobart Rivulet changed and how we plan for change reassured the children, built a sense of wellbeing and gave us insight into the plight of many in the community."*

**Leigh Tesch** is a performer, coordinator and facilitator of arts and community projects. Her work includes storytelling performance and workshops for young children and families in the Small Stories Project, and as a clown doctor. She supports artists to work in healthcare through Inscape Tas and is currently undertaking her PhD in arts and health. Leigh has led projects to support quality creative engagement with young children to promote their development, resilience and learning. She is currently a key contributor to ArTELIER, a collective of artists developing their practice with children and young people.

*"These workshops gave children a creative language and understanding of how we live in a changing environment and encouraged children to feel safe and valued as they were the leaders in the activities and created their own solutions to problems. In this way we build understanding of our local environment, create a sense of place and belonging that supports children's resilience and self-confidence for the future."*





“Do a drawing for something, not of something. Drawing builds curiosity — listen without an answer, listen with an openness, developing a visual literacy.”

ROSIE MCKEAND  
citing Eileen Adams



# Creative Recovery

## FOSTERING RESILIENCE AND STRENGTHENING RECOVERY

A series of workshops with children and professional development sessions for parents and staff offered drawing, model making, music, movement and storytelling activities based on the topic of the Hobart Rivulet. These offered ways to build awareness of change and connect the children with the environment – building a sense of place and belonging.

### DRAWING

- Drawing helps us to look at things closely. To think, wonder and be curious about what we are seeing. It allows us to investigate qualities of shape and structure, pattern and texture, the play of light and shade, place and position in space.
- Drawing allows us to engage longer and communicate our ideas and thoughts to others. Often subjects and feelings that are difficult to talk about can be expressed through drawing.
- Drawing and language develop alongside each other in young children. It's important to teach language to support drawing and this in turn extends children's visual literacy.

### CREATIVE COLLABORATION

- Story making and storytelling gives a framework for children to imagine, to try ideas and find solutions to problems. In the workshops, the children shared stories about and created a model of the Rivulet. This gave the children time to notice consequences and anticipate changes, make decisions, plan and work together; this built the children's capacity and confidence.
- The children were asked to wonder what it might be like to be near the Hobart Rivulet on different days and months of the year. To imagine how it might feel to be in different conditions and explore words, movement and sound to express those feelings in a changing environment.

### REFLECTION

- Drawing and creative collaboration can help make sense of an experience, revisit experiences and help children communicate them to others.
- Drawing and playing while reflecting on an experience is an opportunity to record information and learn from our responses and reactions. It can be a safe place to explore difficult feelings and experiences.



# What does the rivulet mean to me?



## The Event

The *Afloat* community event was organised to celebrate South Hobart's resilience and community spirit, as well as support the ongoing process of community recovery post the 2018 flood event. The days following the flood, the South Hobart community responded with a deep sense of community strength as people came together to help neighbours and to support one another.

The *Afloat* community event celebrated this community cohesion and gave South Hobart residents the opportunity to reconnect one year later and once again work together, offer support, share stories and support young people through the journey of change – be it great or small. The event was initiated by the City of Hobart and supported by a variety of creative, sustainable and community services.


Activities for children and families on the day included drawing and story telling, origami boat building, live music and a children's junk orchestra. A sustainability stall shared ideas and initiatives around zero waste and made rainmakers with the children out of recycled materials. A 'Listening Post' offered families the opportunity to hear direct experiences about the flood and share their own story whilst a 'Message Tree' provocation asked community members to respond to the question "What does the Rivulet mean to me?". These responses

decorated a Blackwood tree endemic to the South Hobart area, planted by the City of Hobart to support the environment's resilience and recovery. The reassuring presence of the State Emergency Services and Red Cross provided the community a safe space to talk about emergency preparedness and safety.

The event culminated in a lively community procession and communal feast with the Lord Mayor, Anna Reynold's opening, and Councillors supporting the event with words of compassion, encouragement and a commitment to ongoing support.

However ... the most important collaborators in the *Afloat* project and the *Afloat* community event were the children and families from South Hobart. This booklet reflects their contribution to healing and rebuilding the community.





“Once there was a big storm and it flooded — and the people had to come over to higher ground.”

“The rivulet sounds like jellybeans. It sounds like my sister yelling at me.”





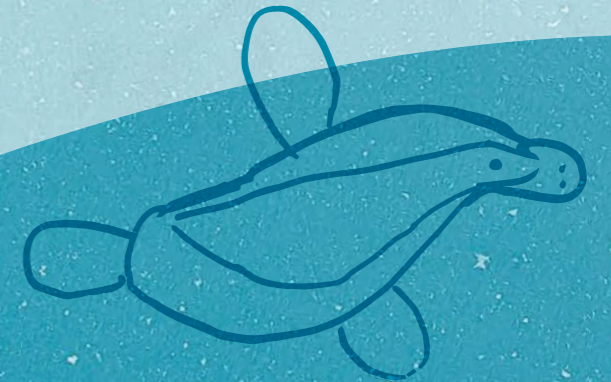
A CONNECTION  
TO NATURE IN  
THE CITY!



THE RIVULET  
IS A LINK TO  
THE PAST



“So when there is lots of water the fish get higher and higher!”





**“I have a big hill,  
so the flood didn’t  
come up my hill.”**





## Thank You!

The *Afloat* project was a part of a suite of other resilience and recovery projects jointly funded by the Australian and Tasmanian governments under the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements, in response to the May 2018 flood event, to prepare for and recover from natural disasters.

The City of Hobart would like to thank the following supporters of the *Afloat* project:

**ARTISTS** Rosie McKeand and Leigh Tesch.

**CHILDREN PARTICIPANTS** Lady Gowrie (Weld Street), South Hobart Play Group, Good Start Early Learning Centre (Molle Street), South Hobart Primary School.

**EDUCATORS/COMMUNITY FACILITATORS** Nadia Mahjouri, Alicia Hallett, Kathy Cripps, Karen Atkinson, Anne Reeves, Belinda Harrington, Jill Anderson.

**RED CROSS** Debra Ong, Howard Colvin.

**CITY OF HOBART STAFF**

**ADDITIONAL ARTISTS** Joel Roberts, Helene Thomas.

**PUBLICATION DESIGN + PRIMARY PHOTOGRAPHY** Sarah Foley.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

Resilient Hobart – Resilience and Recovery Grants

Emergency Management – City of Hobart

Creative Recovery Network

Disaster Resilient Australia – New Zealand School Education Network

Tasmanian- Disaster Resilient Australia – New Zealand School Education Network Forum 2018

Emerging Minds – Resource Matrix: Disaster Preparedness, Recovery and assistance with Trauma, Loss and Bereavement

**RESILIENT**  
Flood 05.18  
**HOBART**

**CREATIVE**  
**HOBART**

AN INITIATIVE OF  
  
City of **HOBART**

