

Case study

Reality Bites

Details

What:

The Sunshine Hinterland Writers' Centre Inc. (SHWC) aims to promote Australian literature, enhance the skills of, and provide resources, information and literary activities for, writers and readers in the Sunshine Coast and its Hinterland.

The SHWC received funding through the Projects and Programs Fund to present the *Reality Bites* festival.

Now in its seventh year, *Reality Bites* brings Australia's best minds and writers of literary nonfiction to the Noosa Hinterland. The festival is hand-crafted by a dedicated group of writers, readers and lovers of books and ideas.

When:

23-26 October 2014

Where:

The festival was held in multiple venues in Cooroy, Eumundi and Noosa heads over three days.



Reality Bites Festival launch at Berkelouw Books, Eumundi
Photography: Glenn Hunt 2014

Key stats:

- *Reality Bites* had seven main program events
- 2066 people attended the festival over three days
- 133 people directly participated in workshops

Arts Queensland contribution:

\$32,950 – Projects and Programs Fund

Contact for further information:

Email: info@realitybitesfestival.org

Website: www.realitybitesfestival.org

Links:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Reality-Bites-Festival/115661915184582>

<https://twitter.com/search?q=RealityLitFest>

Outcomes

- This year the festival moved to Eumundi which has resulted in the program being able to be extended to three days. *Reality Bites* was also able to extend their partnerships with Eumundi bookstore Berkelouw Books. Together they aim to put the town on the Book Tour circuit.
- The *Reality Bites* festival has also extended its media reach through new and exciting partnerships including local journal *The Green* with a circulation of 4000. This year a comprehensive media campaign was initiated with highly successful outcomes. Increased membership, new ticketing and programming strategies and improved delivery systems have also contributed to this years' success.
- The festival offers significant professional and career development opportunity through pitching clinics, workshop and schools programs. Thirty per cent of the audience identified as aspiring writers who were attracted to the broad range of the programs on offer.
- The festival raises the profile of Queensland writers and 12 interstate and 32 Queensland authors were assembled for the 2014 program. Among them were also award winning local writers, poets and high profile journalists.



Reality Bites Festival
Photography: Glenn Hunt 2014

Learnings and reflections

This year the festival was required to move dates and location due to other conflicting activity. The move presented the organisers with a range of challenges that they were able to manage successfully and have also been able to learn from in terms of the programming of multiple events over multiple venues.

Eumundi is a regional community with a history of local engagement and support for the arts as well as excellent infrastructure for tourists and festival attendees. It is considered that the move to Eumundi has been a success and that with further development will become a strong base for future festivals.

Gathering statistical data and following up with participants has given the organisers valuable insight to a range of the festival outcomes and logistics. They have been able to use this information to interrogate ticket pricing and audience demographics with a view to continued improvement.

Generally feedback from the festival was excellent;

- *'Fantastic. Great presenters. Exactly what I needed.'*
- *'A lot of the larger festivals have lost much of their intimacy and immediacy – it was lovely to experience that again at Reality Bites.'*
- *'I think this event has a very strong future in the area, especially with the changing demographics. Many people are interested in learning about and participating in current issues and good literature.'*