

To whom it may concern,

My name is Mikayla King, and I am writing to you in hopes that what I have to say will sway your decision in funding The House That Dan Built, so that Danielle can run another amazing residential camp for the youth of rural NSW.

In April Danielle ran a 5 day camp.

I was 15 and I had (and still have) bad social anxiety, I was and still am homeschooled because of this but I attended this camp, which was the first 'big' thing I had done in two years. The five days I spent with Danielle and everyone that works with The House, were the best 5 days of my whole year (are still currently the best 5 days of my *life* to date).

Around 50 or so kids between 12 and 19 attended, and everyone was so welcoming. Over the week we covered song writing, recording and story writing. We made a short stop motion film on the first day and I watched our song come alive. Every soundtrack and backing in the performance we did, as a group we created over that week. Every song lyric, musical composition and vocal arrangement we made ourselves. It was an amazing learning experience.

As much as I think that the actual activities are important, but I think the things that aren't planned are moreso.

While I was attending this camp, I met some of the most amazing people. The sleeping arrangements meant that it was like a week long sleepover. We had breakfast together, and dinner, and most of the time we also had lunch together, depending on what activities you chose to do that day.

One of the nights we had a 15 minute dance party before bed (controversial as it is), and the memories I made in those 15 minutes are forever going to be ones that I treasure the most in life. I didn't anyone could sing and DJ like that.

The experience I had at this camp is obviously going to be different then others, but it was the first time in a very long time that I had felt like I belonged somewhere. I want everyone to find that.

I want every teenager (and adult. everyone!) who loves music and drama and dance, to find a place for themselves. Danielle makes this happen. Danielle and everyone from The House, and the Toy Choir are inclusive, diverse and make everyone feel welcomed and like they belong, because they do.

Before Danielle came along, I never thought I would be able to do something like spend five days and four nights away from home again, but my experience with The House was the best experience anyone could have ever received.

There are so many other teenagers out there, that like me are in a similar situation, that have the talent and the love for music, and song writing that could change the world. There are so many words bottled up in the hearts of teenagers across rural NSW that need to spill out and flood the ground. I strongly believe that Danielle can aid them in this.

Because of my experience, and because of how much The House has helped me with so much, I wish to strongly recommend that you provide The House with the grant needed to run another camp. I believe that so much of the NSW youth could benefit from the experience.

Danielle, Soren, Scarlett, Freya, Jayden and everyone that helped make the camp happen, will forever have my utmost respect and love.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mikayla King". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Yours sincerely
Mikayla King

27 October 2022

South West Arts Inc
PO Box 378
Deniliquin NSW 2710

Dear Minister

Re: Funding Request – The House That Dan Built

South West Arts would like to support this important and much needed project in Deniliquin. The House that Dan Built initiative will enable the delivery a three-day workshop for young people from ages 12 to 16 years.

The Deniliquin community has struggled for the past ten years with crippling drought, the COVID pandemic and now major flood events. There is a critical need and demand for programs, such as that proposed in this application.

This project will also give two young people the opportunity to gain employment and mentorship training.

The benefits of this project for youth and the broader community include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting mental health and wellbeing youth and community
- Skills development for youth
- Paid employment for youth
- Skills to support career pathways
- Build youth resilience.

South West Arts confirms its commitment and support for this exemplary project and looks forward to being able to work with the team from The House.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any further information.

Yours sincerely



Kerry-Anne Jones

Executive Director

Kate Butler
1105 Nesbits Rd
Deniliquin NSW 2710

27 October 2022

To Whom it May Concern,

Re: Children and Young People Well-being Recovery Initiative

I am the parent of three young people who have been raised on our farm north of Deniliquin in Southern NSW.

We are a family who has always encouraged involvement in creative and performing arts and we have been involved over the past 20 years, through paid work, volunteering or participation in activities, with South West Arts, Outback Theatre for Young People, Deniliquin Dramatic Club, Deniliquin Film Society, Deniliquin Pastoral and Agricultural Show Society, Deniliquin Arts Council, Edward River Art Society and South West Music Regional Conservatorium amongst others. Our three daughters, now aged 16, 19 and 22, all have interests in drama, music and visual art.

I have seen a marked decline in activities and opportunities for young people over the past ten years and it has accelerated since the pandemic. This is in part due to the economic effects of the millennium drought (2001-2010) that saw water being permanently sold from farms, the local redgum industry forced to close and businesses and farms selling up and workers moving away. Since 2010 there have been successive years of drought, the COVID pandemic and now local and regional flooding.

This has had an economic effect but also a loss of social capital as families and professional organisations move away, government and other services are downgraded and community groups and networks struggle to survive. There has been an increasing reliance on volunteer community groups to provide cultural activities – Edward River Council hasn't had a Community Development Officer for a decade – and more and more are folding or seriously struggling due to lack of volunteers.

This has become increasingly marked in 2021 and 2022 where groups that thrived pre-pandemic are now struggling to find enough volunteers to be viable. I coordinated a major local community photographic project in 2021, A Day in the Life of Deniliquin that has successfully run in 1990, 2001 and 2011, and we significantly struggled to complete it due to lack of volunteers. A ukulele festival that we have run successfully for seven years has had to be cancelled this year as we couldn't form a committee; our 25+ regular attendees at our weekly ukulele group that went into hiatus during COVID have dwindled to fewer than 8. The uncertainty that events like a pandemic or floods create contributes to the likelihood that already stretched volunteer community groups will cancel or postpone events and activities.

Opportunities for creative and performing arts through the local high school have also diminished due to staff shortages and the difficulty of attracting teachers to move from Sydney to outback NSW. My eldest daughter was lucky enough to have Drama as a subject one year as there was a teacher available and despite a surge of interest from students, it was not offered again when the teacher relocated. There were quite a few years when Outback Theatre for Young People had visiting creatives, ran improv workshops and competitions and staged youth theatre but haven't staged a local theatre-based activity for

years. My daughters' only opportunity now to participate in drama is an annual seven-hour round trip to Wagga Wagga for the four-day Riverina Drama Camp.

Music and art are taught at the High School but are not specialised and provide few pathways for particular interests, such as developing skills in a particular medium, learning an instrument, song-writing, recording and production. South West Music Regional Conservatorium provides more specialised pathways but at a significant individual cost to parents.

Although there are no easy fixes for the lack of volunteers, it is vital that we keep providing opportunities for young people to lead and participate in initiatives that help them develop their creative voices and skills. It provides them with pathways for study and employment that are easily available to most metropolitan-based young people but out of the reach of those in rural towns. It builds their confidence and mental well-ness through support for personal expression and social connection with other like-minded young people.

I fully support the Children and Young People Well-being Recovery Initiative by South West Arts and The House that Dan Built and see it as an important contributor to the well-being of young people in our district.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Butler', with a stylized, cursive script.

Kate Butler

Dear Colleagues,

Re: Children and Young People Well-being Recovery Initiative

I write in support of The House That Dan Built, and their project working in Deniliquin.

This project will connect young people in our community with music opportunities. It will give young people in our regional community the opportunity to engage with artists, learn to raise up their voices and develop the resilience that is so important to young people in these times of uncertainty and rapid change.

The House trains young people in the foundations of musicianship with a focus on joy and self-directed learning. Over the past eight years The House has developed this original system of teaching music that can be made accessible to every girl who wants to learn, with low or no cost to her family. Every young person in the program has their own musical instrument, learns to use her voice with strength and confidence, and writes her own songs about her own experience and the things that are important to her.

The House are planning to roll out a weekly program that will run for 6 months in Deniliquin.

Danielle O'Keefe, AD/CEO of The House, is a former Artistic Director of OTYP, and is well known to our communities. She has delivered several large-scale artistic outcomes across Southwest NSW that united communities, celebrated regional stories, and developed young artists. I have complete faith that any project under Dan's direction will be well supported, received, and loved across our jurisdiction. We support Danielle and The House That Dan Built, and look forward to seeing it roll out across our area.

If you require further information in support of this application, I am happy to be contacted on the information below.

Best wishes,



Sarah Parsons
Creative Producer/CEO
sarah@outbacktheatre.com





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17 August 2023

Letter of Support: Create NSW Annual Program Funding

I am writing in support of The House that Dan Built's application for Annual Program Funding.

We have been working with The House that Dan Built since March 2020 and held our first AKIN workshop just prior to the initial COVID-19 enforced lock down. In hindsight it feels quite surreal that we were able to develop and deliver a face-to-face music program just on the verge of state lock down.

Gunnedah Conservatorium has developed a strong partnership with The House that Dan Built over the last three years allowing and expansion of the create programs available to Gunnedah youth. This year we have delivered two programs – *Reverence* Residency in June and July School Holiday Workshops. These have attracted strong participation from developing musicians as well as beginners and the opportunities have extended beyond music to theatre performance and animation development.

The House That Dan Built has an innate understanding of how to deliver a program to a regional community. Their team has members from regional areas and with significant experience working with regional communities. They understand the importance of developing strong local connections to ensure the successful programs and learning experiences. While many city-based organisations purport to understand regional communities The House That Dan Built is the real deal.

In June this year selected female vocal students of Gunnedah Conservatorium were able to work with Rose Riebl in the development and presentation of the new opera work, *Reverence*. During the residency, students were involved in rehearsing and refining several works. The week culminated in a well-received performance for family and friends and participants expressed a desire to take this work further – to be involved and witness to a full production of the work.

Gunnedah Conservatorium supports the development of *Reverence* as a touring production in partnership with Arts on Tour 2024/25 to revisit the communities of Gunnedah, Deniliquin, and Broken Hill with which The House That Dan Built has an existing relationship. This tour would bring the project full cycle for the students and their communities.

I am excited to be able to continue to offer meaningful projects to our community through this strong and respectful partnership. I endorse The House That Dan Built as an organisation worthy of Create NSW Annual Program Funding based on its track record of delivery.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Ryan
Director Gunnedah Conservatorium

Amanda Kelly
93 Hunter Street
Gunnedah NSW 2380

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8th May 2019

To Whom It May Concern
AUSTRALIA COUNCIL Assessment Panel

Dear Sir/ Madam

RE: Letter of Support for Regional Tour of "The House That Dan Built" to Gunnedah, NSW

I am writing with the privileged opportunity to offer a letter in support of a regional tour of workshops and performances from "The House that Dan Built" that would contribute to the enhancement of the musical, literacy, and emotional resilience skills and development for the female children, adolescents and young adults of Gunnedah, New South Wales.

I work as a doctor in a General Practice clinic in Gunnedah. My work has given me an insight into examples of some of the cosmopolitan troubles the young women of this town, and their elders face. Projects run by the company "The House that Dan Built" offers a structure and forum that target key areas of the development of young people to allow them to become empowered and contributing citizens of Australia, ultimately in preparation for education of the next generation. Workshops and performances provided by the Toy Choir, AKIN, and The long table target areas that include: literacy, numeracy (music is in part applied maths after all), communication (via group work and composition skills), emotional intelligence (the structure of the projects stem from key theories of music therapy and psychology, for example the girls are often asked to compose a novel text and music in response to a current social issue or theme usually with the goal of exploring and resolving internal or community struggle) and community strength through positive supported relationship development.

The Arts provide a medium that allows such education to be accessible in an age appropriate and culturally safe manner. All of the modern, and sometimes, age-old struggles faced by the community that enlist me as their doctor for advice, support often face heart sinking problems and cries for help of social inclusion and yearnings for supported development of the aforementioned skills. I see daily examples in my clinic of children and adolescents who's parents and grandparents have not had the privilege of completing their secondary education. Part of closing the gap in the sphere of health needs to be done outside of the clinic room. The forum provided by the well-researched platform within "The House that Dan Built" allows young women to explore some of these intergenerational experiences including development of language skills to express emotion. These young women will in turn help break the cycle of domestic violence by increasing their confidence in the experience of what their own emotion feels like, confidence in expressing this emotion, and confidence in advocating for their own advancement because they have a greater understanding of the role of their emotions to guide positive decisions.

My informal consultation with the community has received unanimous support for a venture as discussed. I have recently spoken with the Gunnedah Conservatorium, who reported they would support the program. Members of the community often talk about the reduced opportunity for cultural extracurricular activities that do not involve sport. I am also concerned that many of the rising young stars of Gunnedah of limited financial, geographical and social means are not aware of their tertiary education aptitude, suitability and available opportunities beyond Gunnedah. Health and council stakeholders continually encourage opportunities to promote development of our growing agricultural, industrial and mining community. Reduced educational and health resource availability within the region are a known barrier to its advancement. There are two high school options available within Gunnedah being one state and one catholic high school, which provide limited pastoral care, and in my experience is inadequate to respond to frequent issues of bullying and isolation. A recurring program facilitated by The House that Dan Built would provide an age appropriate public mental health promotion program.

I intend on being an active hand in the lead up and delivery of this program in Gunnedah having been very impressed with the work I have already witnessed. As an active member of the community and financial supporter of this project I hope that I can assist with giving this experience to my community and develop new leaders for this sacred land that has developed leaders of Australia's past.

Amanda Kelly



08 August 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

RE: Letter of Support: The House That Dan Built

As an Artist and Arts Worker based in the New England North West, it is my pleasure to offer a letter of support for The House That Dan Built's (The House) funding application.

I first came across The House as an applicant for the Whispers and Roars Festival in 2022. I had been finding it very challenging to find a supportive and female centric performance opportunity as an emerging cross-genre female artist in regional NSW. When I was given the opportunity to perform as part of the Whispers and Roars Festival in November 2022, networks were built, and I was able to gain a better sense of my artist identity through the feedback received from other artists that could relate to the journey I am on.

Since then, The House has provided me with wonderful opportunities to really sink my teeth into songwriting workshop facilitation in multiple communities across the New England North West including Somerton, Mullaley and Gunnedah. Through the paid opportunity to facilitate workshops in an intensive setting, I was able to gain new skills and approaches to teaching songwriting to children and young people. The workshops were very well received by both students and teachers, which is a real testament to the work that The House does in making musical opportunities more accessible to rural and regional communities. The skills sharing benefits to these communities is also so valuable in strengthening the arts in rural and regional NSW.

I look forward to more opportunities to collaborate with The House, and wish them every success in gaining funding to continue the great work they do.

If there is any additional information I can provide, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sewa Emojong', is positioned below the word 'Sincerely,'.

Sewa Emojong (E.S Malaika)

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Email: esmalaikamusic@gmail.com

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