



A vision by and for the community
of Greater Geraldton City Region

Big Sky Big Ideas Festival Report

September 2010



City of
Geraldton-Greenough
Climate of Opportunity



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of Greater Geraldton City Region

BIG SKY *big ideas*

FESTIVAL 2010

The Big Ideas Festival was an initiative of the 2029 and Beyond project. The festival had the main aim of providing inspiration, education and capacity building to professionals and the general community. 2010 was the first year that the Big Ideas festival was held and it was held in collaboration with the Big Sky Readers and Writers Festival. The Readers and Writers festival was held on the 10th – 12th of September and the Big Ideas festival on 17th-18th September.

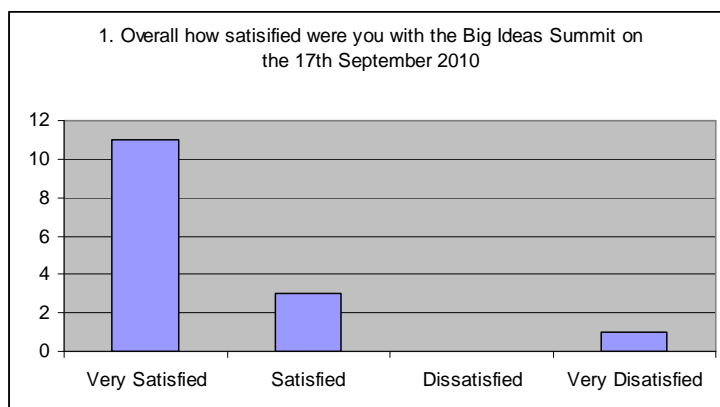
1. Friday 17th September, Big Ideas Summit and 2029 Hypothetical

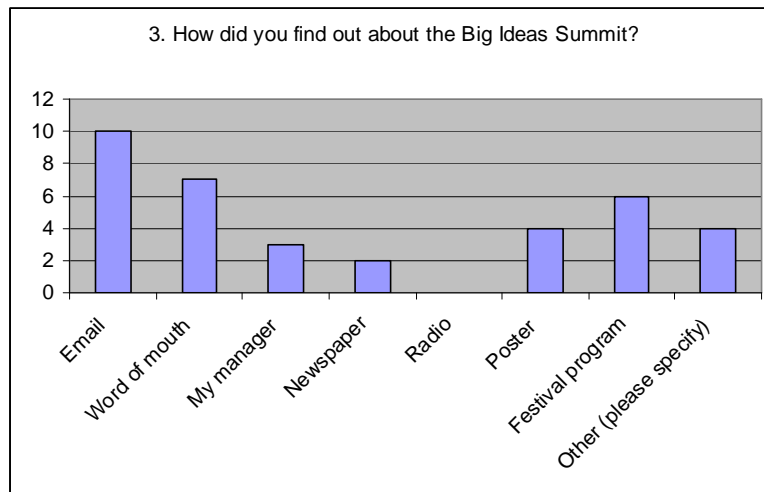
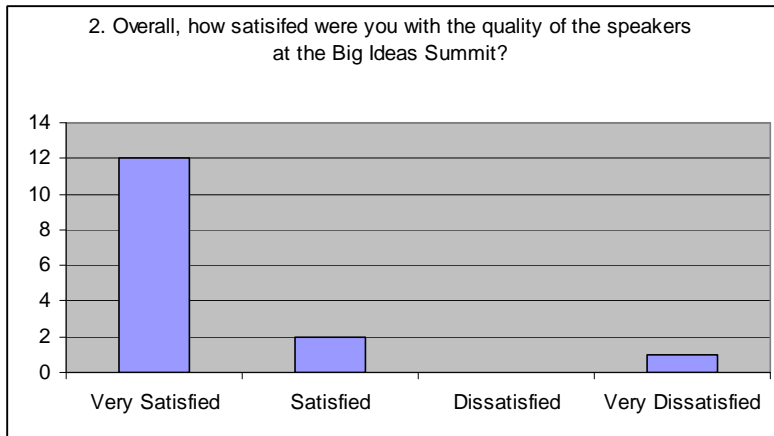
The key target group for the Big Ideas Summit was professionals, however general community members were also encouraged to attend. The summit carried a fee of \$250 and 10 free spots were offered to community members who entered a lottery.

The summit featured internationally renowned speakers, Larry Beasley (Vancouver), Gilbert Rochecouste (Melbourne), Richard Weller (Perth) and Brian Haratsis (Melbourne) as well as local presenter Jackie Gill. The venues for the summit were an empty shop front on Marine Tce (Artizen) and the Art Gallery. These sites were intentionally chosen to fit with the presentation topics and facilitate discussion between participants and presenters regarding the local built environment.



Approximately 50 people attended the summit for all or part of the day. A feedback survey was distributed using Survey Monkey to gain feedback on this event. The results are below:





Other ways participants indicated that they found out about the event were that they were a community champion a CGG staff member or a councillor.

Participants were also asked to make general comments about the overall summit event to guide future planning of the event. Comments below:

- The quality of speakers was superb. I would have liked to have had longer session times with each of them.
- Great idea, quite expensive but good speakers. I was sorry I could not attend the workshops in the afternoon as they sounded as if they would be excellent and it would have been a difficult choice
- Bi annual type event might be appropriate
- I went away without any clear understanding of the likely outcomes of the day - a plenary session at the end where outcomes of all workshops were presented and how these outcome would be taken forward would have nicely rounded off the day and given both a sense of closure and assurance that the day would result in some action going forward.
- I'd like to see some real-time actions directly related to these workshops. For example the community involved with Project Developers and the city to preserve the Geraldton feel. Also for instance the community and city setting STRICT guidelines on what project developers can build. In other words: preserve the Geraldton feel, engage the community in every way (and do something with community input!) and don't let project developers have it their way.

- The audience was predominantly the converted; I therefore suggest considering targeting/engagement with other groups, such as CBD shop owners, Chamber of commerce, developers etc.
- Also engage more with the general community in raising awareness of key conference issues.
- Utilise and engage the expert knowledge of the visiting speakers and ensure a greater legacy remains after their departure; e.g. have them stay for a period of days for developing planning strategies, get them out in the community giving guest talks etc.
- Concern that one speaker (Larry Beazley) created such a huge carbon foot print in being here for only a day (i.e. Vancouver to Geraldton then on to the Middle East), I think we need to seen to “Walk the Talk” as energy consumption was the central issue of Richard Weller’s presentation.
- well run day congratulations to all involved
- Congratulations on such a brilliant day. I was extremely impressed by the way in which it was organised, the quality of the speakers, the enthusiastic participation of those attending and the positive feelings generated through the day.
- My only recommendation would be to allow for more community participation next year by holding the Summit in a larger venue and at a lower cost. I am sure that the success of our first Big Ideas Summit will generate increased participation next year and stimulate community engagement and improve the relationship between all facets of the community.
- Congratulations and well done.
- Really only small things to suggest - like that the setup for the slideshows were a little low in both venues (i.e. need to be raised to see above people sitting in front) and that the Artisan was a little light so it was hard to see. Otherwise really great - speakers were fabulous - lunch venue and style suited the day really really well.
- I think the content of discussions was great for an inaugural summit and maybe each year it could focus on different issues facing Geraldton and regional development?
- The placemaking workshop was interactive and interesting - my favourite part of the day. Would have been nice to have some landowners in the CBD attending - but I think that’s just pushing the event out there more and more with time. It’s good to get people talking - great work!
- Cost was quite prohibitive.
- More vegetarian food at lunchtime.
- The speakers were great, but some were not adequately prepared to lead 'workshops', and so there was low energy. I also think there needs to be a serious review of 'who' we get along, and how we reach them. There were nowhere near enough government, business or community leaders present. There must have been some barriers that presented them attending, and these need to be identified and overcome. Finally, I think a serious cost-benefit analysis needs to be done of all the staff time and money that was involved, and benchmarking against other similar events. If I was a councillor I would be asking for this sort of analysis. Not because I don't think it is good value, but when it is that expensive for a potentially small

audience...we need some clear facts that can inform thinking on how to reach more people, at less cost etc.

- Making it more accessible to a larger public, so may be not during working hours



On the evening of the 17th of September a panel event, Hypothetical 2029 and Beyond was held. The event was free and was reasonably well attended with approximately 60 people in attendance. The intention of the event was to provide access to the summit speakers to the broader community at no cost. The evening was facilitated by Verity James and the

panel consisted of some of the Summit speakers as well as community representatives. Unfortunately two of the Summit speakers (Larry Beasley and Brian Haratsis) had to leave before the Hypothetical event. The community members on the panel were:

- Brian Pollard (local comedian)
- Jackie Gill (NACC)
- Deborah Woods (GRAMS)
- Tom Campbell (Local year 12 student, Geraldton Grammar)
- Catherine Belcher (WA Museum)



2. Saturday 18th September, Big Ideas Community Day



The second day of the festival was dedicated to a range of activities to reach the broader community. Activities were located at various places in the town with some being organised workshops and others being more informal in nature with the intention of capturing community members who would not usually register for these types of events.

The weekend was a collaborative effort with several external agencies as well as internal departments facilitating the events.

An overview of the events, general attendance and other comments is detailed below:

EVENT	ATTENDANCE	COMMENTS
Build it Better Workshop (Dept Sustainable Communities)	Approx 50	Successful event Reached a very good range of people
Homegrown Garden Tour (Dept Sustainable Communities)	Approx 20	Successful event Reached a good range of people
The Local Larder (Geraldton-Greenough Farmers Markets)	Approx 50 -60	Successful event People reporting attending markets specifically for the demo
The Technology Tent (NACC & Dept Creative Communities)	Approx dozen	This event could be improved, limited interest and practical issues of accessing internet on the foreshore Expected to reach people on the foreshore but limited numbers of people where on the foreshore on the day
What's the big idea? (WA Museum)	Good numbers	The event was a good start to the Museum's work to gather ideas for their 40 th birthday celebration
Portal C2030 (Landcorp)	Unknown	The portal created good interest but people were deterred by needing to sign waivers for Landcorp and CGG to use their footage
2029 aging booth	Unknown	This event was popular but there was some limits to its success in that there were some issues with access the internet and laptop capabilities
ACDC exhibition	Unknown	Better communication needed to occur between CGG and ACDC to ensure they felt part of the festival
Free Tree Event (Men of the Trees & Dept Creative Communities)	Limited	This event anticipated capturing community members on the foreshore but few people were out and about. This may have been due to several local sporting grand finals being on at the same time

3. Marketing Strategies

There were challenges in trying to market the Big Ideas festival in combination with the readers and writer festival. It made program design challenging and some feedback has noted that the program brochure was difficult to read and understand.

Strategy	Comment
Weekly ½ page adverts in the Geraldton Guardian	Successful strategy
Radio interviews 2 ABC radio 1 Spirit FM	Successful strategy, should be increased in the future
Email	Successful for Big Ideas Summit Could be improved by using a tool such as mail chimp to increase quality of the emails sent
Posters, banners and corflute signs	Successful strategy
Stories in the Geraldton Guardian	Successful strategy
Short films clips played on the CGG website and in local electrical stores	Unsure of the impact
Website	All festival events located on the library webpage with links from CGG page. Some challenges in trying to promote both events on the site.
LinkedIn advertising	Poor impact – only 8 clicks on the advertisement over two weeks

4. Advantages and Disadvantages of Combining Festivals (Big Ideas coordinator's reflections)

Advantages:

- Library staff able to coordinate bookings and manage summit fees
- Library staff able to share their experiences from coordinating past festivals
- Shared costs of marketing and launch
- Library was a central spot for community to obtain information

Disadvantages:

- Events tended to reach similar audiences which may have spread attendees too thinly
- While combining festivals did assist marketing it also hindered it as Big Ideas specific marketing couldn't start until readers and writer's festival was finished.



5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Allow for regroup and review time at the end of the Big Ideas summit
- If bringing speakers to Geraldton from interstate or overseas ensure that they are able to stay at the festival for the entire event and where possible arrange other meetings etc with CGG or other agencies in order to maximise their expertise.
- Be conscious of environmental impacts E.g. carbon emissions, when considering speakers and travel modes
- Identify who the responsible IT staff member will be at least two weeks before the event to allow that both parties are prepared and all equipment is available
- Consider program brochure design to make it easy to identify the two separate festivals/weekends
- Establish a festival team and allocate responsibilities to individuals or small groups E.g. speaker liaison, finances, marketing.
- If continue to combine with the Readers and Writers festival then coordinator needs to communicate better with library staff to ensure they understand all the Big Ideas events so they are able to answer the community's questions
- Allow adequate time to plan and market the event
- Set a marketing budget during the festival planning stages

