

Project Name :	Albany Song Story Project
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1		Ross Evans	

Distribution List

Name	Position	Interest in Project
Ross Evans	Senior Community Development Officer	Project Officer
Tammy Flett	Community Development Coordinator	Project Manager
		Project Sponsor
		Executive Director

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The City of Albany supports several events, activities, workshops, focus groups, strategies and working groups that actively promote, encourage and build understanding and awareness for Seniors.

Through the Age-friendly Communities Connectivity Grants Program 2023-2024, the City of Albany was awarded a Grant of \$15,000 to deliver the Albany Song Story Project. This unique project invites Albany's senior residents to share personal memories connected to cherished songs, which would be brought to life by local choirs, community groups, and schools at a concert towards the end of the project.

The Albany Song Story Project aims to bridge generations, strengthen community connections, and reduce social isolation among seniors, particularly those living alone—a significant demographic in Albany. According to the 2021 Census, 13.8% of Albany's seniors live alone, compared to 9.4% in Regional WA, reflecting the City's higher proportion of older residents. Project folder here: <N:\Community Services\Comm Dev\Comm Dev\Seniors\2025 Projects\Albany Song Story>

1.2 Executive Summary of Project

Project Name:	Albany Song Story Concert
No. years event/project has been running:	1
Date event/project was last held:	20/11/2024 – 30/05/2025 (Concert on 24/04/2025)
Target demographic:	Seniors, and wider public
Project budget:	\$30,000
Actual net position:	\$27,035
Cost per participant:	\$84
Cost per resident:	0.64 per resident

Results Against KPIs (last event):

	Target	Achieved? (✓/✗)	Actual Result
Attendance	60%	✓	87%
Customer Satisfaction	Satisfied	✓	100%
Budget Variance	<>5%	✓	5% under

1.3 Background

The City of Albany supports several events, activities, workshops, focus groups, strategies and working groups that actively promote, encourage and build understanding and awareness for Seniors.

Through the Age-friendly Communities Connectivity Grants Program 2023-2024, the City of Albany was awarded a Grant of \$15,000 to deliver the Albany Song Story Project. This unique project invites Albany's senior residents to share personal memories connected to cherished songs, which would be brought to life by local choirs, community groups, and schools at a concert towards the end of the project.

The project saw students from several schools visit seniors at residential aged care homes and community venues to interview them, as well as seniors submitting their own SongStory via the City's website or by filling in a form at the Library, Town Hall and visitor centre. The interviews, with their stories and song selections, were then whittled down into a playlist for the concert.

The concert itself took place at the Town Hall on Thursday, 24th April, with the SongStory Project team (our project partners) playing the lion's share role of MCing, singing the majority of the songs and weaving the songs together with the stories. The concert was supported by *The Zazzies*, an instrumental quartet that played prior to the concert and in the interludes, *The Sunset Singers*, a seniors community choir, and by Rosie Talbot, a fourteen-year-old local student.

Two "legacy" concerts were then held in partnership with two schools, Bethel Baptist School and St Joseph's College, as well as the seniors choir, The Sunset Singers, along with seniors care providers like Juniper and Bethel Baptist Care. We hope that these relationships will continue into the future.

2 EVALUATION

2.1 Attendance

The concert was held in the Town Hall from 1pm till 3:30pm on Thursday 24th April. We had 86 people book a ticket, with four cancellations on the day due to a Covid breakout in a care home, but 81 people in attendance which included a few walk-ins on the day. The two legacy concerts combined saw over 60 students perform and over 80 seniors and community members in attendance.

2.2 Participant Satisfaction

Participants were asked to complete a post-event survey, with 80% of respondents rating the event as 5/5 – Excellent, 10% as 4/5 – Very Good, and 10% as 3/5 - Good.

2.3 Other Customer Feedback

Seniors and other participants remarked how wonderful the event was, how good the singers were, how lovely the afternoon tea, and much value for money the event was.

A word-cloud from the survey responses:



2.4 Financial Considerations

Age-friendly Communities Connectivity Grants Program 2023-2024

Income	Budgeted	Actual
1883: Albany Song Story Project Grant	\$15,000	\$15,000
City of Albany Contribution	\$3,000	\$35
In Kind Support	\$12,000	\$12,000
Total Income	\$30,000	\$27,035
Expenditure	Budgeted	Actual
Communications, marketing & promo materials	\$2,700	\$2,110
Facilitator fees	\$8,100	\$8,700
Equipment	\$0	\$300
Venue hire	\$8,200	\$475
Catering	\$2,500	\$3,450
Other (include any in-kind expenditure)	\$800 evaluation, \$4,000 transport, \$2,100 organising interviews, \$2,000 project management, \$3,100 staffing. \$12,000 total	\$12,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	\$30,000	\$27,035
SURPLUS*/DEFICIT	\$0	\$0

The biggest impact on the budget was the cost of the partner organisation, the SongStory Project Team (Penny and her team). They were the Master of Ceremonies for the main concert, singing the majority of the songs and weaving them together with the storytelling and introducing the other playing elements. The price of the partner organisation, however, was reduced by taking on the interview and story collation elements in-house. Given the format of the project, the price of the partner organisation/singers could not have been removed without substantially changing the format of the entire project. That being said, however, the performances and storytelling by the SongStory Project team were a highlight of the concert.

2.5 Strategic Implications

This event aligned with the following strategic objectives:

Strategies and Plans	Key Focus Areas	Objectives/Action
Age-Friendly Albany Plan 2023-2027	4. Social Participation, 6. Respect and Social Inclusion, and 7. Civic Participation and Employment	4.2 continue to develop a variety of affordable and accessible activities specifically for seniors... 4.4 Identify opportunities to increase social connection for seniors living alone. 4.5 Explore opportunities to encourage socially isolated seniors to participate in activities through community support programs. 6.1 Deliver opportunities for seniors to share their stories to preserve for future generations. 6.2 Facilitate intergenerational initiatives to encourage connection between different age groups... 7.7 Continue to recognise the contribution seniors make to the community...
An Age-Friendly WA, State Seniors Strategy 2023-2033	4.2: Safe and friendly communities and 4.3 Staying connected and engaged	Championing the Age-friendly Communities Grants Program. Highlight the valuable contributions of seniors to the community. Work with Community Resource Centres and libraries to design intergenerational programs for local communities. Deliver activities and programs to improve seniors' wellbeing and participation.
The WHO Age-friendly Cities Framework	Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, and Civic Participation and Employment.	Encouraging participation and intergenerational integration. Respect for seniors. Social and economic inclusion

		Volunteerism and employment opportunities
United Nations Principles for Older Persons	Participation, self-fulfilment, Dignity	7. Older persons should remain integrated in society, participate actively in the formulation and implementation of policies that directly affect their well-being and share their knowledge and skills with younger generations. 8. Older persons should be able to seek and develop opportunities for service to the community and to serve as volunteers in positions appropriate to their interests and capabilities. 9. Older persons should be able to form movements or associations of older persons. 15. Older persons should be able to pursue opportunities for the full development of their potential. 18. Older persons should be treated fairly regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, disability or other status, and be valued independently of their economic contribution.

2.6 Cultural and Community Implications

This event was open to all, with a focus on Seniors and Elders from the Menang Noongar people.

2.7 Achievement of Objectives

We had 45 members of the community either be interviewed or submit a “Song Story”. Two school groups, one from Bethel Baptist School and one from St Joseph’s School (average of six students from each) participated in conducting the interviews. Bethel Baptist Care, Albany Community Care Centre, Clarence Estate, and St Joseph’s Care were all aged care residences that participated. The online portal for people to submit a “Song Story” on the City’s website, was a very good tool to have. Despite continued engagement with the elders in the local Menang Noongar community, we did not get much involvement from this group. The two mini legacy concerts were a great success with two school musical groups involved in performing and two Seniors care providers hosting them as well as community musical groups involved and over 80 seniors in attendance. This would suggest that the legacy element of the project will be a continuing success, as originally planned.

2.8 Problems and Challenges

The main challenge in hosting events like this was finding a suitable venues that could accommodate both the performers and a large crowd, while also being accessible to seniors, many of whom were in wheelchairs.

Another large challenge was due to the time constraints by the parameters of the funding stream, the Age-friendly Communities Connectivity Grants Program 2023-2024, the project needed to be conducted between December 2024 and May 2025, with the acquittal due by the end of May 2025. I did not anticipate this being such a significant issue as it turned out to be. With the summer break period spanning the project’s first two months, the project had a window of just over 3 months to be completed, as a significant aspect of the project involved schools and the community, both of which were on summer holidays.

Whilst the project was a success, I would’ve liked a lot more involvement from the schools, and school choirs. If this project is replicated in the future, the recommendation would be to hold it over a much longer time period (one year plus would be ideal), as this would allow the schools to be involved and the possibility of building a community choir just for the project.

One other challenge was the timing and date of the concert. The chosen concert venue, the Town Hall, was going to be closing for refurbishments for two months at the end of April, meaning the concert had to be before then. The final week of April, which was chosen to allow the maximum rehearsal time for the performers, fell during the school holidays and the day before ANZAC Day. This worked well in some respects, but being in the school holidays did restrict school participation. The concert was held in the afternoon and on a weekday to accommodate seniors and aged care residences; this also restricted some adults from attending who may have been at work.

2.9 Innovations and Changes

One way we worked around the issues surrounding the timeframe (see above) was by creating an online portal on the City's website where members of the public could submit their own 'Song Stories'.

The online portal, on the City's website (<https://www.albany.wa.gov.au/forms/albany-song-story/171>), to allow people to submit their Song Story directly was a very good tool, if this was in place from the get-go, with a longer lead-in time and with the portal being mentioned in the media release from the beginning, we would have had a lot more submissions.

If the project were to be replicated, a longer time period would be highly recommended. You could replicate the project without the involvement of the SongStory Project team; however, if you were to do this, the concert would likely just be a musical one, without the storytelling – unless this was organised as a well-significant undertaking.

3 RISK MANAGEMENT

Risks were mostly around ensuring the parameters of the funding stream were adhered to, lack of community engagement, lack of community involvement (especially from musical groups), and a potential outbreak of COVID within the seniors community. An adequate Project Plan, intensive engagement with both the musical stakeholders and the seniors stakeholders ensured their involvement. A significant amount of media coverage also helped both garner more interviews and boost the attendance at the concert.

4 CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the project was an outstanding success. The seniors were engaged; there were elements of inter-generational activities; a significant amount of both media and community engagement as achieved; the concert was a huge success; and the feedback received was extremely positive. Greenman Media, who we commissioned to be our videographers, created this highlight video: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1EvQGaeuMU/>

Whilst the main concert had a limited involvement of school groups, the legacy of the project and the follow up concerts were led by school groups, with Bethal Baptist School and St Joseph's College leading two legacy concerts. It is anticipated / hoped that following completion of the project the relationship build between school and community groups and both residential and independent living residences for seniors will continue and regular circuits of performances for seniors will endure.

A) The effectiveness of achieving the project outcomes

The intended outcomes of this project were mostly surpassed, there were a couple of areas that we would have preferred to have been better addressed, but due to the time constraints (within funding parameter timeframe) were unavoidable.

The ultimate aim of the project, *“to engage with and include seniors in the telling of their own stories to the wider community”*, was met and surpassed, by even the best expectations of the initial planning.

Marked against the original evaluation tolls outlined in the project plan:

- the number of seniors engaged with, was a guide of 100 seniors as a minimum being interviewed.
 - **Well over 100 seniors interviewed, with more than 40 submitting a Song Story**
- A minimum of 10 Song Stories collected.
 - **Over 40 completed Song Stories collected**
- The number of community and school musical groups involved in the performances, with a guide of 8.
 - **Only 3 school / community groups involved with the performance**
- Pre, peri and post surveys to gauge if there has been a decrease in the participant's social isolation.
 - **Undertaken and will have follow up surveys with participants to see if continuing relationships are built**
- The number of community and school musical groups that develop ongoing relationships to perform with seniors' groups, with a guide of 4 as a minimum.
 - **This will be monitored and assessed as we proceed**
- Two legacy concerts have led to over 60 students visiting, talking with and performing for seniors
 - **Two legacy concerts held successfully, will monitor to ensure this endures going forward**

As previously stated, given the school / summer holidays, schools and some community groups felt that they could not participate due to the short timeframe to rehearse and then perform at the main concert, however multiple schools and community groups expressed a desire to be involved in the project and were more than happy to be part of the legacy concerts, two of which have already happened, with more planned for the future.

B) The feasibility and sustainability of the project for the future.

Overall, in the format conducted over the project, this would not be a feasible project to have been conducted by the City of Albany without support from the Department of Communities through the Connected Communities Initiative. However, there is scope to hold an elongated, varied version of the project with the format significantly modified to reduce cost; this would lead to a very different concert. As the most significant cost was the partnership with a professional performing group, the SongStory Project team, who not only acted as Master of Ceremonies and sang the lion's share of the songs at the main concert, but they also crafted the playlist of the concert and undertook the storytelling. There was also a desire from the community to have a community choir element. Therefore, legacy concerts led by the community and schools was the logical next step.

Sustainability-wise, the legacy elements from the initial planning will continue with the groups involved in the Albany Song Story Project, and additional ones that could not take part initially due to time constraints, continuing the partnerships with many of the residential aged care providers that took part in the project. This was key to developing the legacy concerts and will hopefully continue to bear fruit.

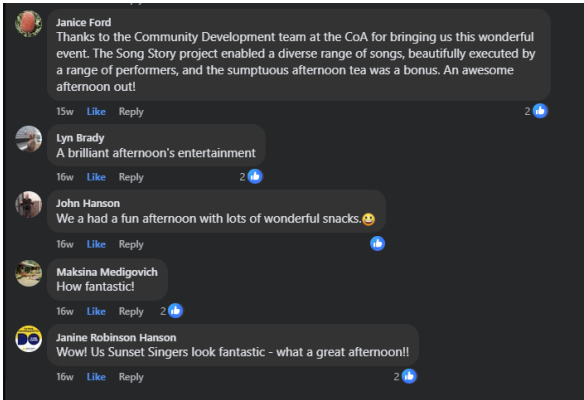
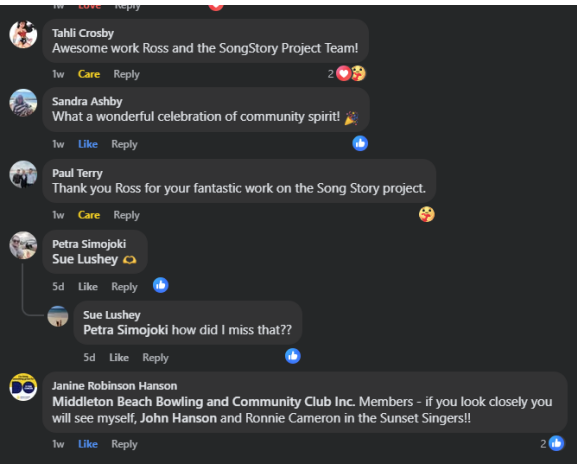
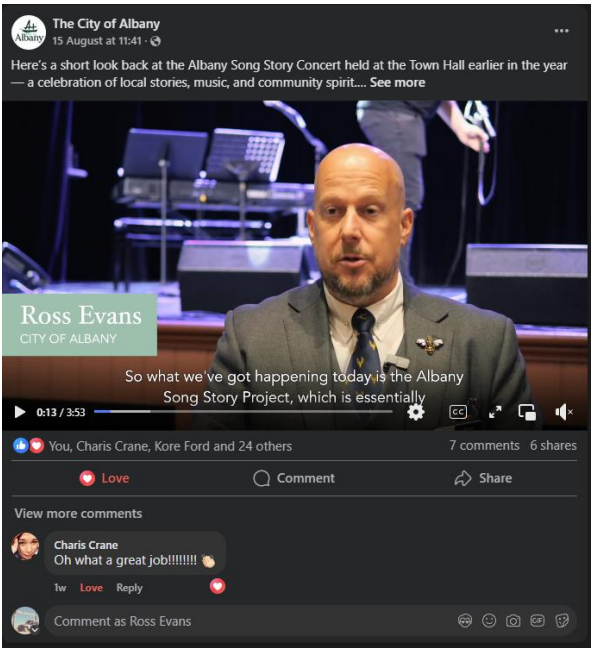
5 COMMENTS

And below are screenshots of the comments received:

Survey comments:

#	COMMENTS	DATE
1	It was a well organised event and the organisers did a fantastic job.	5/6/2025 9:06 PM
2	I had fun singing along to most of the songs and had my own personal stories that I was reminded of.	5/6/2025 3:23 PM
3	Great event. Enjoyed by the audience. Afternoon tea a nice touch. Could potentially have been slightly longer	5/3/2025 12:34 PM
4	Fantastic concept, well executed, delightful atmosphere enhanced by having the band playing as you walked in, excellent performers, afternoon tea was a lovely gesture.	5/3/2025 10:47 AM
5	Our residents loved the concert and would definitely attend again	5/1/2025 9:41 AM

The City of Albany’s Facebook post on the highlights video received many lovely comments: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1EnG5bz4sX/>



RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Director of Community Services ENDORSES:

[Insert recommendations]

AGREEMENT

I do / do not endorse:

<Repeat Recommendation(s)>

Name and Position

Signature

Date

Project Manager

Project Sponsor

Executive Director

Comments:
