# LISA DEMPSTER

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## OBJECTIVE

My vision is to bring a robust, diverse literary culture into the mainstream. My ambition is to be an international leader in the creative sector and develop world class programming of writing and ideas. I wish to empower writers and work on projects that are inspirational, innovative and delightful.

### SKILLS PROFILE

- Innovative creative leadership, dynamic artistic programming and audience engagement
- Executive skill, experience in strategic planning and sound arts management experience
- Leader in digital innovation, strong social media marketing and online programming
- Collaboration, engaging partners and supporting arts, corporate, government and philanthropic stakeholders
- Responsible financial management, budgeting and demonstrated income generation skill
- Literary expertise, knowledge of reading, writing and publishing industries

### **EDUCATION**

- Australia Council's Emerging Leaders Development Program (2011)
- Graduate Certificate in Creative Writing (2009), University of Adelaide
- Bachelor Arts (Asian Studies) (2002), University of Melbourne

## **EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

# Director/CEO - Melbourne Writers Festival

Oct 2012—

current

## Melbourne, Australia

- Undertook a consultative internal process to develop and implement the Melbourne Writers Festival Strategic
  Direction and Business Plan, positioning the festival as a literary event of local importance and international stature.
- Delivered two excellent and diverse programs that has lead to increased attendances (5%) across two years.
- Improved quality of audience experience through increased opportunities to participate, structured social events, and large-scale experiential events. Increased access to the festival through collaborative partnerships (including regional expansion), and presented 25% of the program at no cost.
- Developed and managed a suite of over 100 arts, corporate, government, university and philanthropic partnerships and over 80 significant private donors. Maintained a high level of stakeholder care and worked collaboratively to deliver meaningful and engaging programming outcomes.
- Lead a core team of five year-round staff and 30 contract staff to design and deliver the Melbourne Writers Festival, ensuring excellent leadership, organisational management and rigorous financial processes.

## Asialink Resident - Ubud Writers & Readers Festival

Jun 2012 - Oct

2012

# Bali, Indonesia

- Asialink Arts Management Residency working at the Ubud Writers & Readers Festival, a world-class literary event that brings together diverse Indonesian and international voices for intercultural dialogue and exchange in Bali.
- Working within the programming team, coordinated 16 book launches across five days of the festival; programmed and produced 16 'Offbeat Program' (fringe) events at Bar Luna; and produced the International Poetry Slam.

### Melbourne, Australia

- Responsible for creating and delivering annual operations, festival and project budgets and timelines. During my tenure EWF's annual cash operating budget has grown by 22%; I have built our cash reserves from zero to \$40,000; we achieved highest-ever annual profits of 10% in 2010 and 14% in 2011, up from 2.5% previously; box office revenue increased by 57% and government support by 60%; and philanthropic donations grew by 107%.
- Responsible for delivering a creative artistic program for the festival that achieves the aims of the organisation.
  Across three festivals, increased attendance at the flagship Melbourne festival from 6000 in 2009 to 11,300 in 2012
  (88%) through solid artistic programming driven by audience engagement tactics.
- Implemented a social media marketing and online engagement policy that has seen EWF's online presence rise 600% since 2009. During the 2012 Festival there were over 12,000 tweets from 1200 individuals, plus 2100 unique visitors to the festival blog.
- Developed and implemented an organisational strategy to transform EWF from a state-based festival to national advocacy body committed to promoting the interests of emerging writers. As a part of this expansion strategy, delivered an ambitious Emerging Writers' Festival Roadshow in Sydney in 2010 and a Digital Writers' Conference in Brisbane in 2011.
- Brokered financial, in-kind and programming partnerships between a large variety of individuals and stakeholders, including tertiary relationships and corporate partnerships. Highlights included the development of a prestigious writing award, the Monash University Undergraduate Prize for Creative Writing, and delivery of interstate road shows supported by New South Wales and Queensland Writers' Centres.
- Managed teams of up to eleven staff (2012) to ensure the timely and successful production of an annual Emerging Writers' Festival in Melbourne in May. The EWF team increased from five (three paid/two volunteer) in 2010 to eleven (seven paid/four volunteer) in 2012.
- Founding Director of EWFdigital, an innovative online programming stream that runs digital events in real-time throughout the festival, engaging regional, interstate and international audiences. EWFdigital has enjoyed a 10,000-strong audience across three years and is a leading model for digital programming in Australia.

# **BOOKS & EXHIBITIONS**

- Future Bookshop (curator and producer), National Gallery of Victoria, 2012
- The Australian Veg Food Guide (Ed.), aduki independent press, Melbourne, 2010
- Neon Pilgrim, aduki independent press, West Footscray, 2009
- The Words We Found: the best writing from 21 years of Voiceworks magazine, Express Media,
  2009

# INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT

- RMIT Creative Writing Degree Programming Advisory Committee
- Arts Victoria Programming grants panel member
- Qantas Spirit of Youth Awards judge and mentor (Written Word category) (2013)
- British Council Bookcase Conference delegate as part of the Edinburgh International Book Festival (2010)
- Appeared on the programs of Australian and international cultural events including Remix Summit, Sharjah International Book Festival, Abu Dhabi International Book Festival, Ubud Writers & Readers Festival, Adelaide Festival of Ideas, Williamstown Literary Festival, Express Media, Wheeler Centre, Festival of Unpopular Culture, Critical Animals, Format, Writers Victoria and SA Writers' Centre.