



2025

STEAMED UP IMPACT REPORT

**BARKING
GECKO**  **ARTS**



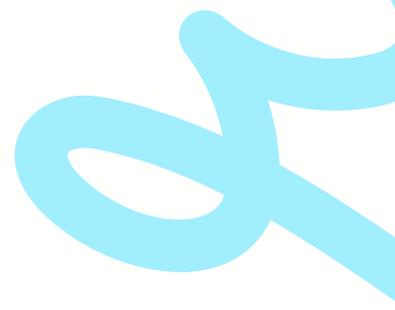
Prepared by
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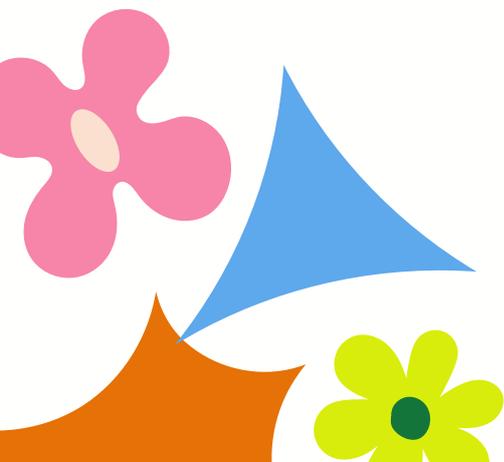


Executive Summary



In 2025, Barking Gecko Arts partnered with Newman Primary School to deliver four **STEAMED UP** residencies with Year 1-2 students and including one Professional Development session with staff. Across three terms, six teaching artists engaged 33 students in collaborative, creative projects blending Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics, Enterprise, and Design (STEAMED).

Students demonstrated measurable growth in imagination, creativity, and problem-solving, as assessed against the SEW Arts Framework. Parents and teachers reported increased confidence, teamwork, and engagement. The residencies culminated in a celebration with families and the broader school community, showcasing more than 300 artworks, collages, puppets, original children's books, audio books/digital formats and sculptures.



Program Overview

STEAMED UP is a process-driven arts program designed to build creativity, collaboration, and wellbeing in early primary years. Delivered over three residencies, the 2025 program at Newman Primary School focused on embedding arts in curriculum, supporting transitions into “big school”, and fostering student resilience and imagination.

Residencies:

- Residency 1 (29 July and 18 November) – Artists: Sam Nerida & Brianna Wotzko
- Residency 2 (25 Mar – 4 Apr) – Artists: Sam Nerida, Mariah O’Dea & Kim Walsh
- Residency 3 (12 – 23 May) – Artists: Sam Nerida & Rae Cottam
- Residency 4 (28 Jul – 8 Aug) – Artists: Sam Nerida & Jessica Russell



Program Aims & Evaluation Objectives

The program is designed to strengthen student learning and wellbeing by embedding creative practice into the classroom. Its aims were both educational and social, focusing on skill development, confidence-building, and the integration of cultural knowledge. The evaluation sought to understand how these aims were achieved in practice, and to identify the broader impact on students, teachers, and artists.

Program Aims included:

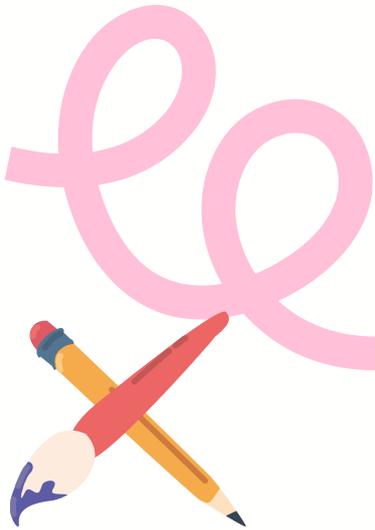
- * Enhancing student engagement through creative arts experiences
- * Supporting student wellbeing using the SEW Arts framework
- * Building teacher capacity to integrate arts into learning
- * Fostering collaboration between students, teachers, and artists

Evaluation objectives were to:

- * Measure student growth across SEW ARTS categories
- * Document the teaching artists' professional development and practice shifts
- * Assess the program's contribution to school strategic goals
- * Identify strengths, challenges, and areas for improvement



Demographic Overview



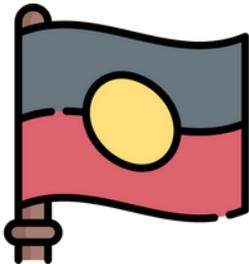
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TEACHING ARTISTS



33

NUMBER OF STUDENTS



8

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS
(~24%)



14

CULTURALLY AND
LINGUISTICALLY
DIVERSE STUDENTS
(~42%)



20

MALE STUDENTS



12

FEMALE STUDENTS



4

STUDENTS WITH
LEARNING & SUPPORT
NEEDS

Methodology

The evaluation combined both quantitative and qualitative tools to capture different perspectives and outcomes. Survey questions were developed using the SEW ARTS Framework, which integrates Social and Emotional Wellbeing with arts-based learning. Each item aligned with a SEW ARTS skillset, enabling measurement of growth in self-awareness, empathy, creativity, imagination, problem-solving, and adaptability.



Student Pre/Post Survey

36 responses across residencies

Students completed a short survey before and after the program, using an emoji scale to show how they felt about skills such as trying new things, collaborating, and sharing ideas.

This provided a measurable indication of growth across SEW ARTS categories.



Parent / Carer Survey

12 responses collected at the celebration event.

This provided insight into how families perceived the impact of the residency on their child, particularly around confidence, creativity, and willingness to share learning at home.



Artist Reflection Workbooks

3 Artist Reflection Workbooks completed by 6 Teaching Artists at the end of each residency

These captured process learnings, strategies that worked well, and challenges encountered.

They also highlighted professional growth in adapting practice, embedding cultural content, and using SEW ARTS wellbeing principles.



Artist Reports

3 Artist Reports completed by 6 Teaching Artists at the end of each residency

Collated feedback that reinforced key learnings from the reflection workbooks and provided a more formal record of program outcomes.

Results & Impact



+300

Creative works: puppets, sculptures, collages, books, audio recordings



4

Printed and recorded children's books created in Residency 4

The evaluation results bring together student survey data, parent feedback, and artist reflections to provide a picture of the program's impact. While the pre/post surveys offer measurable evidence of student growth across SEW ARTS categories, the parent and artist perspectives add depth by showing how these changes were observed and experienced in real contexts. Together, the findings highlight both the achievements of the program and areas where further development may strengthen outcomes.

Student Growth (SEW Arts Framework)

While the pre/post emoji surveys provided measurable data, some students were initially more focused on giving the "right" answer or pleasing the artist rather than responding honestly. Given their very young age (5–7 years), many were still developing early literacy and comprehension skills, which meant some circled emojis without fully engaging with the question or simply chose the option they thought adults wanted to see.

By the final residency, however, students showed stronger independent thought and greater confidence in expressing their own feelings. This suggests that while the data may not be entirely precise and should be understood as showing broad trends rather than exact individual shifts, it still reflects an overall increase in student self-awareness and expression.

Community Engagement

- Final celebration attended by ~20 parents and carers, siblings and teachers
- Students presented collages, audiobooks, and received take-home creative packs



Results & Impact



The following results show strong growth in imagination, creativity, and problem-solving, with continued work needed to support resilience and adaptability to change. It is important to note that students were aged 5–7, and their developmental stage significantly affects how they interpret and complete surveys. Many relied on visual cues or attempted to give “correct” answers, which means the data should be understood as directional rather than precise.

Despite these limitations, student-created stories and artworks consistently reflected the objectives of the Strategic Partnership Plan. Themes of teamwork, empathy, creative problem-solving, and listening were not only practised throughout the process but also woven into the final narratives and artworks.

SELF AWARENESS & IDENTITY



86%

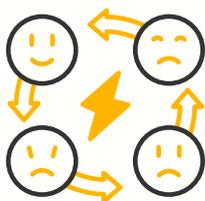
Recognised special things about themselves
(3% increase)



89%

Felt happy being themselves even if different

EMPATHY & RELATIONSHIPS



88%

Could tell how someone feels by looking at them
(2% increase)



86%

Liked sharing their ideas and thoughts



94%

Enjoyed playing and working together with friends

Results & Impact

CREATIVITY & IMAGINATION



88%

Enjoyed imagining and exploring new things
(8% increase)



89%

Liked trying new things
(5% increase)



93%

Liked hearing about new ideas
(4% increase)

PROBLEM-SOLVING & ADAPTABILITY



77%

Enjoyed solving problems on their own
(4% increase)



85%

Liked finding out about new things and asking questions



59%

Students reported still finding change difficult, indicating that adaptability remains an important developmental focus for this age group

**"IT FEELS LIKE I'M CREATIVE, AND FEELS LIKE I WANT TO BE AN ARTIST."
- ALANA, YEAR 1**

Results & Impact



Parent Feedback

100%

Said their child enjoyed the STEAMED Up program

100%

Said their child spoke about the program at home

100%

Felt their child benefited from participating

100%

Said their child enjoyed working with peers

100%

Reported their child had not participated in a program like this before

100%

Want to see STEAMED Up continue

"IT HELPED BOOST HER CONFIDENCE."

"100% THE PROGRAM HAS BEEN INTEGRAL. WELL DONE."

"HIS STORYTELLING AND IMAGINATION HAVE IMPROVED."

"THE SOCK PUPPET WAS AMAZING AND HE LOVED IT SO MUCH."

"FEELS LIKE EVERY DAY THEY TALK ABOUT IT!"

"FANTASTIC PROGRAM AND LOVED THAT WE CAN RE-WATCH THE VIDEO TOGETHER."

Results & Impact

Voices from School staff & Teaching Artists

**"THIS RESIDENCY IS STANDING OUT PARTICULARLY AS WOW."
- PRINCIPAL, NEWMAN PS**



**"I'VE NEVER SEEN [STUDENT] SIT STILL FOR THIS LONG."
- ART TEACHER**

**"I'M INCREDIBLY IMPRESSED WITH WHAT THEY'VE DONE WITH THESE ALIENS, ESPECIALLY FOR YEAR 1S."
- CLASSROOM TEACHER**

**"NOW THAT I'VE SEEN THE AUDIOBOOKS, I'LL BE IMPLEMENTING THIS INTO MY CLASS STRATEGY MOVING FORWARD."
- CLASSROOM TEACHER**

**"IT WAS WONDERFUL TO SEE WHAT YOU WERE DOING WITH THE KIDS."
- HEALTH TEACHER**



Areas of Improvement



Alongside the positive outcomes, the evaluation also identified opportunities to strengthen future residencies. These points are not limitations of the program, but constructive insights drawn from student feedback, parent observations, and artist reflections. They highlight where additional support, adjustments to delivery, or clearer communication could further enhance the impact of the program.



Student attendance disruptions

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Behaviour and teamwork scaffolding

- Artists reported that “this age group struggled with articulating moments of reflection” and required constant prompting in group work (Residency 4 Reflection workbook).
- Teachers also highlighted that teamwork was a challenge despite high survey scores in “playing and working with friends”.



Adaptability to change

Survey data showed 59% of students still found it hard when things around them change, a 10% decline from pre to post. This suggests adaptability is a continued focus area

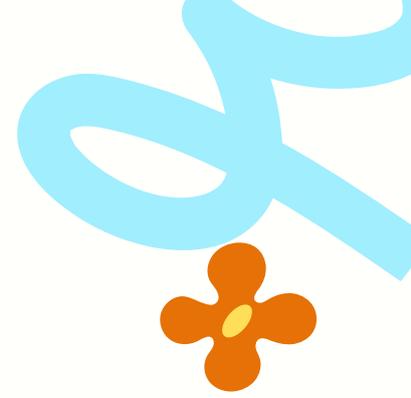


Teacher engagement in co-delivery

Throughout the residencies, teacher participation varied depending on capacity, competing duties, and familiarity with the program. In several workshops - particularly during Residency 2 - teachers shifted from observing at the edges of the room to becoming more active participants as their confidence with the creative process increased.

- Some teachers contributed ideas, scaffolded activities, or supported students with additional needs, while others required more encouragement to step into a co-facilitation role.
- These moments of engagement illustrate a positive trajectory toward building teacher confidence and capability in integrating arts-based learning into classroom practice.

Artist Reflection Themes



Teaching Artists played a central role in shaping the residencies, and their reflections provide valuable insight into what worked well and what could be improved. Through reflection workbooks and reports, artists shared their experiences of engaging with students and teachers, adapting creative processes, and applying the SEW ARTS framework in practice. These reflections highlight common themes that speak to both the impact of the program and the professional growth of the artists themselves.

Artists noted that their reflection workbooks and the spontaneous responses from students often provided a more accurate picture of program impact than the survey data alone.

These insights captured the nuance of student growth in ways that numbers alone could not.

Student confidence

Artists noted breakthroughs with selectively mute students beginning to participate verbally by the end of the residencies.

Residency 3 and 4 Reflection workbooks

Parents also highlighted confidence gains: “It helped boost her confidence.”

Creative engagement

Students were consistently engaged by hands-on creative activities such as puppetry, collage, and audiobook recording.

Reflection workbooks noted comments like “Teamwork makes the dreamwork” and “You can pretty much use collage for anything.”

Process-based learning

Artists observed that the structured cycle of “plan → do → reflect” helped younger students manage projects and celebrate achievements.

Residency 1 and 2 Reports

Importance of continuity

Having the same lead artist (Sam Nerida) across all four residencies provided stability, with reports noting this consistency helped scaffold student progress across terms.

Conclusion



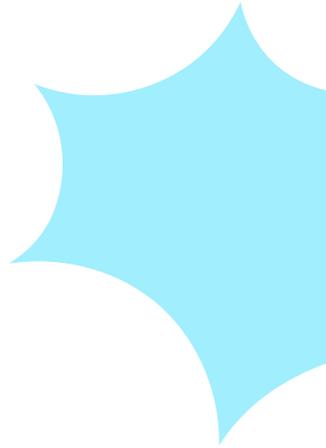
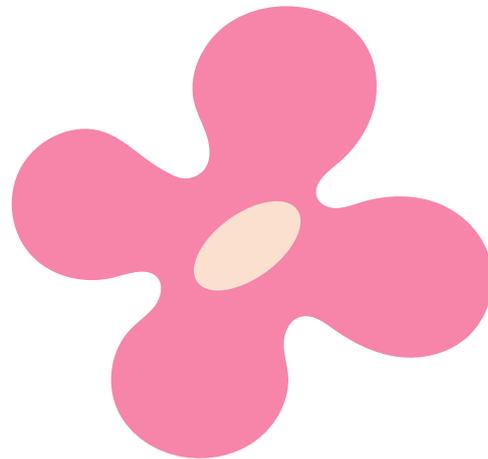
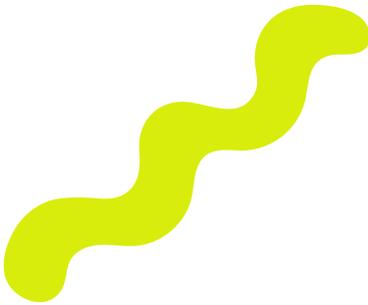
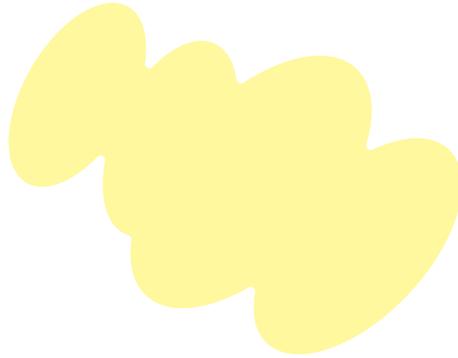
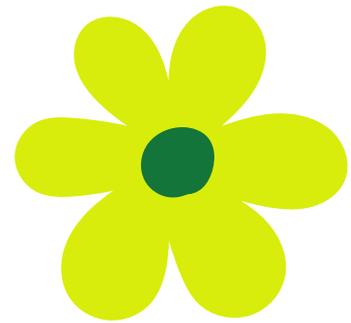
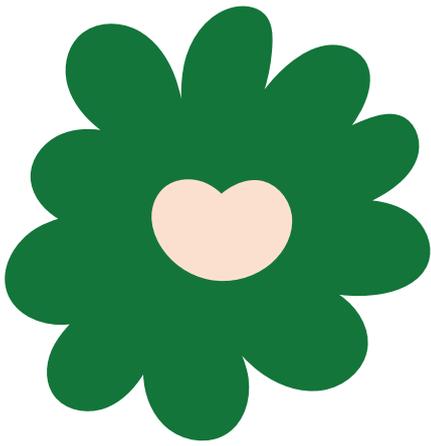
STEAMED UP 2025 successfully delivered three residencies at Newman Primary School, engaging 33 students, six teaching artists, at least six teachers and dozens of families. The program met its objectives of fostering imagination, collaboration, and wellbeing in young learners.

Student surveys showed measurable growth in creativity and problem-solving, while parent feedback confirmed benefits in confidence and storytelling.

Across the year, the program engaged at least six teachers directly, including classroom teachers, support teachers, the art teacher, and occasional relief teachers who participated in co-delivery. Their involvement - whether through supporting individual students, engaging in the check-in circles, or assisting in the creation of artworks - played a key role in enabling student success and strengthening arts-based teaching capacity within the school.

By embedding evaluation within the SEW Arts Framework, **STEAMED UP** provides clear evidence of impact in self-awareness, empathy, creativity, and problem-solving, while identifying adaptability as an area for continued focus. The program demonstrates the power of arts-based learning to support early primary students' development and community connection, with strong endorsement from students, parents, and school leadership for continuation.





Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our findings further, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

