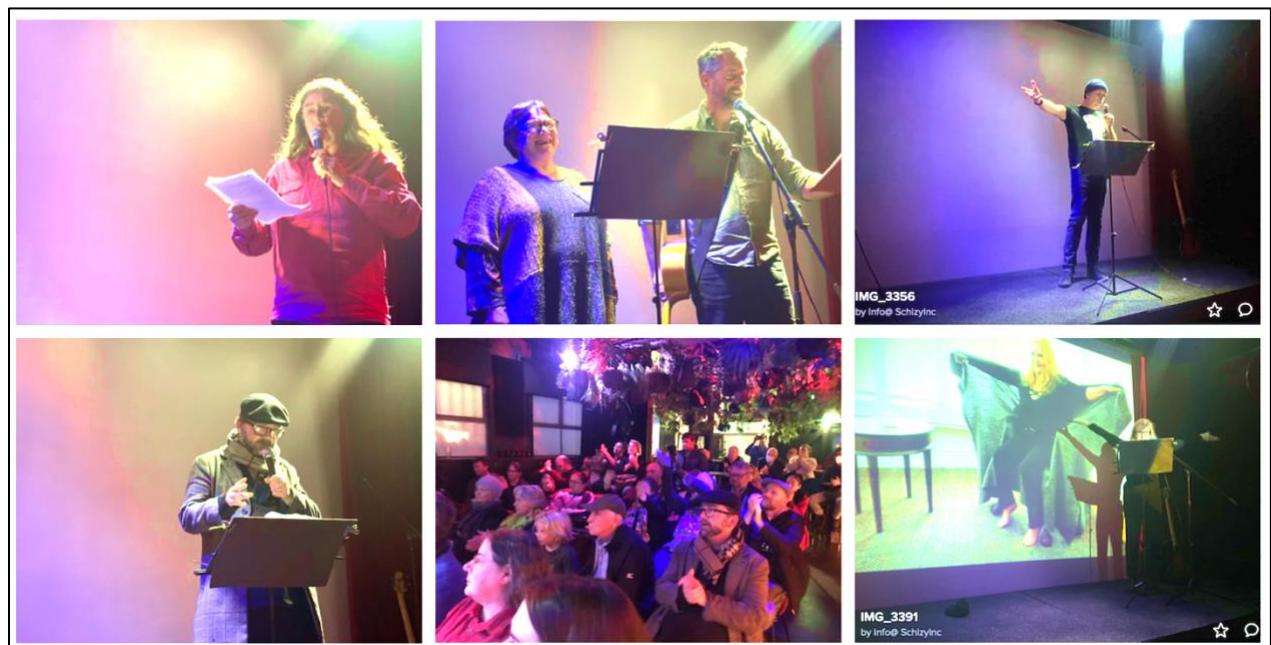




Schizy Inc Annual Report 2022

by Chair Heidi Everett

For the Financial Year 1 July 2021-30 June 2022.



Mojo 2021 – Sandy Jeffs; Jenny Hickinbotham & John Fleming;
Mitchell Fairbank; Bren; LOOP audience; Michelle.

I'd like to thank Schizy Inc committee of 2021-2022. You were present, aware, wise in guidance and generous in time and spirit. Perhaps in the words of a Fleetwood Mac song draft '*you make funding fun*'. My gratitude to Steph Yianakelis (Secretary), Tom Polacheck (Treasurer), Sandy Jeffs (Vice Chair) and general members Kylie Steinhardt, Ross Crawford, Mitchell Fairbank and Michel Tuomy. I'm also grateful to the good people who graced the committee through the year with a moment of shared journey. I hope the following report gives you many good memories and even more reason to feel proud of what can be achieved through gentle persistence and faith in the possible, especially when surrounded by friends.

Schizy Inc began July 2021 with arts workshops planned in comedy, illustration, rap writing and performing, and stop motion animation. Covid restrictions eased, allowing public gathering in Melbourne again, respecting appropriate mandates and social care. These workshops followed through on the ongoing strategy of ours to create meaningful employment opportunities for practicing artists with mental health realities. These workshops also intended to create opportunities for people in our community to start getting out and about in safe social spaces, after such a long time at home in lockdowns, often alone.

We launched the **digital playlist for Mojo 2021** on our Schizy Inc [Youtube](#) page and made a small bit of money back on the tickets for our event at ACMI which is important viability evidence for an organisation. All films were captioned by former Schizy Inc member, Rohan, increasing accessibility. We looked forward to a second social outing of '**Tom's Tours**', with our erudite committee member Tom, to the Ian Potter gallery.

Then, covid lockdown number 8 happened, which put us all back in our homes and back onto Zoom for much of the rest of the year.

Good things continued however. Through the efforts of committee and NFP mentor Helen, Schizy Inc was awarded a **Ducas Paul Foundation grant**. This grant supports disadvantaged young women access and contribute to the arts. In August 2021, we drew up a project with peer network artist Hannah Friebel, and through her dance project Grace Dance, Hannah planned a new creative development program for a group of young women with complex mental health. Hannah is being mentored by Schizy Inc artist engagement mentor, Fiona Cook, professional dancer. Respecting the ethos of Schizy Inc supporting the overlooked demographic of people over 26, we plan to run a series of 'old codgers' dance workshops as an annexe project.



Schizy Inc **human resources and administration** peer mentor Chrissie, organised a Microsoft Office account for committee members doing administration, easing the pressure for us to share private email addresses. We're grateful for the ongoing support Chrissie enables Schizy Inc, aligning us with good business and administration wisdoms and IT practices. We also paid annual members of Community Grants Hub. 'Not For Profit Training' delivered finance training to our treasurer Tom, and I attended a day workshop on leadership. Steph our secretary is mentored by Helen and is doing a wonderful job with meeting minutes, emails and other committee administration.

Helen, Chrissie, myself and Fiona worked day and night for a **Creative Victoria Creative Ventures Grant (Deaf and Disabled Artists)** to try get the Schizy Inc dedicated art studio (SiDAS) established at Collingwood Yards. The studio has been a goal ever since the beginning of Schizy Inc, when I saw a current affairs story about a warehouse in New York filled to the roof with artists and creatives with schizophrenia and similar, making art and sculptures to their hearts content. Collingwood Yards had suggested to us over the past two years that a studio would be coming up suitable for Schizy Inc in mid 2021, so the time was right to apply for the grant. It's not over dramatising it to say we poured our heart and soul into this grant; it was one of our best funding chances to secure the studio.

The Farm Feasibility Report was completed by our employed academic from La Trobe. It's a big document but upon reading, it didn't have adequate content pertinent for our work. Helen is spending considerable time working with a structural editor, to fill out the report to a much more appropriate document for our project. In 2021, we placed an advertisement on SEEK and LinkedIn for a farm Project Manager, however with limited time between lockdowns, we aim to re-engage this stage after the report is finalised to our standard which should be soon.

As Melbourne plunged back into lockdown, we returned our activities to **Zoom**. Fiona kindly facilitated online gentle stretching and movement sessions with Schizy community. We received a covid Essential Public Support Service permit which allowed Schizy Inc to gather as a small group in a park for vulnerable people. We ran a number of 'Mental Health Meetups' including at Lower Plenty Park and Fitzroy Gardens, where we enjoyed a picnic and games. I ran online writing workshops.



In September, we paid a small fee to become a member of **Ross House** as first stage for an application for an office. I've been knocking on the door of Ross House for many years trying to get a small room for Schizy Inc but to no avail. Covid waved the magic wand and Schizy Inc was now suddenly welcomed with open arms due to many tenants leaving the building. Once we were members, it was a relatively fast process to become **Schizy Inc Office Tenants**. I'm currently paying the rent through my Creative Victoria Independent Producer Initiative up until mid 2023. We moved into our very own space in December 2021, and Ross House donated tables, chairs and shelves. Tom, Steph and I spent a few days bringing in Schizy Inc equipment and rearranging the room to our satisfaction. A computer was donated by supporters. Tenancy means we receive a discount booking meeting rooms and we've taken advantage of this perk many times already for arts workshops.



Schizy Inc office at Ross House

Lockdowns eased in December, and our usual October event **Sanctuary**, was held at Melbourne Botanic Gardens with their [Health and Wellbeing in Nature](#) program in early December. The session is geared for tertiary students studying botany but with encouragement, the Gardens ran the workshop for Schizy Inc community. It was a beautiful afternoon walking through various parts of the Gardens with a guide, interacting with the Sensory garden, rainforest and ending in a natural found-object creative mindfulness activity. We hope to do the session again and build on the relationship.



There was some nervous excitement for a month late in the year when it seemed possible that Schizy Inc might be able to rent out an entire former care home premises in Essendon for a peppercorn rate until it would be demolished. We visited a number of times and sketched out a huge artist colony. Despite our best intent, we didn't end up with the *Schizy Psych Ward*.

I wanted to host a fun and engaging evening out in Melbourne as a thank-you to the committee members who have supported Schizy Inc (and me) over the past few years. However, I overlooked it was a Friday night so the event didn't turn out as planned, and we ended up back at the Schizy Inc office at Ross House with pizza. I'm thankful that the committee is made up of such supportive and persistent people who I call friends, who can find a positive way through adversity.

In late 2021, we were advised our Creative Ventures grant was successful to establish an art studio at Collingwood Yards. The celebration was short lived when we discovered serious miscommunication with the Yards. After a big push of intuition (which informs a lot of my work!), a studio vacancy on offer at nearby **Abbotsford Convent** became the goal, and after much persistent emailing with the Convent, we secured a studio.

The Creative Ventures grant covers fees for people to run workshops and mentoring, and Schizy Inc needs to cover the rent and equipment, which means we need to secure grants to keep **SiDAS** going beyond the next two years. Grant writing is a big part of work running a NFP and I'm deeply thankful to the grant-writing team for all the support and input in the process. It feels like we're in better territory with funders now so hopefully it will be a better strike rate. There are a number of grants we wrote together that didn't succeed but they actually make better intel for the ones that do. I express my thanks for all the work put into these works of art/neverending VCE exams.



SiDAS Studio

The end of 2021 was a joyous, momentous experience, moving into the Schizy Inc office at Ross House and entering into 2022 with an art studio on the horizon. A number of us Schizy committee members went on a shared cost **Rest & Recovery holiday to Warrnambool** where we stayed in an 8-bedroom mansion overlooking the Warrnambool River. We swam in the ocean and had a great time in the extensive games room and opulent kitchen.

Schizy Inc held a **Christmas Party** at Fairfield Boathouse which was attended by about 20 people, friends and family. Santa paid a much welcome visit. Schizy Inc committee members created a calendar with artwork and Schizy Inc became a signatory member to the international Charter for Compassion.

A few words on covid and Schizy Inc.

For us, 2021 was a good example of how people in the mental health community knuckle down and get on with things. While many people were clamouring about covid ‘freedom rights’, the majority of our community just needed to know they were being thought of. Random ‘welfare check’ messages popped up on phones; Schizy Inc members looking out for each other. Some of us met for crisis prevention covert coffees in parks.

Being made to stay at home for extended periods is situation normal for many of us and the Premier’s announcement that we were heading back to normal by inviting five people into our homes, for us, was not normal and reminded me of the work mental health advocacy still needs to do. During covid, Schizy Inc took a gentler approach to talking about vaccines and mandates. We respect the trauma of coerced medical treatment in so many of our community, and the reality of mental health conditions blurring the lines.

From my position in the wider arts and mental health/disability community, I’m proud that Schizy Inc proved to be one of the most successfully adapted arts and mental health focused organisational communities throughout covid. My hat goes off to everyone who made one or two small actions throughout the period to brighten another person’s day, even when many of us operate from a normal level of social anxiety. That is the power of the arts - it overrides the usual.

2022 began in a flurry of activity. Lockdowns ended and the Schizy Inc office hummed with activity as we planned **Mojo Arts TakeOver 2022**.

A successful **Sustaining Creative Workers Fund** grant through Regional Arts Victoria/Creative Victoria meant we could deliver 16 arts workshops in the lead up to our World Schizophrenia Day event in May. Workshops were held weekly February to May at Ross House in comedy with Nelly Thomas, spoken word poetry with Jesse Oliver, songwriting with John Fleming and visual art with Felicity Gordon. Group numbers were deliberately kept to six, so people experienced personalised skill development from the tutor, which is lacking in the more common practice of gathering larger groups. We engaged social worker Jon and his therapy dog Jack to attend the sessions for anyone needing a chat/pat.



Schizy Inc moved into the Convent studio in April 2022. Our studio address is C1.19 and serendipitously, the former national office for Lentil As Anything. A volunteer from the Banyule community, Rod, kindly helped source suitable tables and art storage shelves. With the grant and in-kind Schizy funds, newly formed studio team - Fiona, Steph and I went shopping at IKEA for drawing desks, artist boxes and lamps. With quite a bit of marketing, eight artists and four writers applied for residencies at the new SiDAS studio - Schizy Inc Dedicated Arts Space. SiDAS was officially launched on Saturday 26 June 2022 with an artist luncheon and speeches. Images from the studio are on the Schizy Inc [SiDAS Flickr](#) and [SiDAS Facebook](#) page.



TakeOver artists – Steph, Jon & dog jack, Jenny, John, Sammy, Ev.



SiDAS studio launch

Hannah's pilot **dance creative development project** is successfully being rolled out at a hall in south-east Melbourne with six young women who are receiving an artist fee for their involvement. We're trialling **Schizy Talks**, a new monthly online social meetup for people with schizophrenia. There are 35 people from Victoria and NSW on the mailing list and Sandy, Michel and myself facilitate a Zoom meetup on the

last Sunday of the month since March. We're finally covered by our own **Public Liability Insurance**. In March Tom, Steph and I frocked up to attend the City of Melbourne Annual Arts Grants recipient's dinner at Melbourne Town Hall, for the grant we received last year for Mojo.

Our **World Schizophrenia Day event, Mojo Performing Arts Festival** was held at LOOP Space on Saturday 28 May 2022. Twenty artists from the Arts TakeOver workshops presented newly created stand-up comedy, spoken word, songs and projected art to a very supportive audience at venue capacity. The TakeOver workshop facilitators kindly donated their time to be at the event, supporting their protégés and keeping the audience humming. After the event, the artists, friends and family headed to a local restaurant, organised by *Tom's Tours*, and shared and rowdy celebratory dinner. All the photos from the event and the dinner are on the Schizy Inc [Flickr page](#).



Mojo 2022 Artists. Photo by Mark Morris.



Mojo at LOOP: artists Alycia, Bren and Ayden.
Mojo Audience.

Schizy Inc at a glance is a gentle community of people interested in the arts. But looking at this Annual Report from the inside out, it's clear our roots go far deeper than the soil, and our branches far more resourceful than just bearing fruit. We're the first big tree in a new forest. As a team, we're creating structures that don't exist to copy from, and we're building tangible realities on persistent foundations. Artists see things that others don't. Schizy Inc are true artists; we see, think, feel and we move. I'm very glad and grateful to be among a steady and optimistic community who are ok about doing things a little differently, and **having fun**.

Heidi

SCHIZY INC.

Call out for artists with living experience of schizophrenia and similar realities.

Schizy Inc are accepting **Expressions of Interest** from creatives wanting to attend workshops to create a work for our World Schizophrenia Day event. Artists can select one of the following:

- SONGWRITING** Feb/March
- WRITING/SPOKEN WORD** March/April
- VISUAL ART** April/May
- STAND UP COMEDY** April/May

Please email info@schizy.org for an EOI pack.

*Beginners, emerging artists and older adults welcome..

www.schizy.org

SIDAS
schizy inc dedicated art studio
creative expression of living experience

VISUAL ARTISTS - WRITERS - DIGITAL ARTISTS

Schizy Inc are seeking Expressions of Interest from creatives to be part of the new **SIDAS** lived experience artist studio in Melbourne

EOI's now accepted from emerging and practicing artists with schizophrenia and other ongoing mental health realities

Information about Schizy Inc + SIDAS EOI
studio@schizy.org

Abbotsford Convent. CREATIVE VICTORIA

Schizy Inc SiDAS is supported by Creative Victoria

www.schizy.org

WORLD SCHIZOPHRENIA DAY 2022

LOOP BAR
23 MEYERS PL. MELBOURNE

SATURDAY 28 MAY
4PM - 6PM

20 artistes
amazing feats of insight and suprem artist dexterity

STAND UP COMEDY, MUSIC, SPOKEN WORD, PROJECTION ART

MENTAL HEALTH LIVING EXPERIENCE

CREATIVE EXPRESSION

TICKETS/Info
admin@schizy.org

www.schizy.org

CREATIVE VICTORIA

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Ducas Paul Foundation



All about writers



Abbotsford Convent.

