

DRIVING SOCIAL INNOVATION IN PLACE AND COMMUNITY

2025 City North Activation Program

SHARED SIGNALS: STORIES IN TRANSLATION

Shared Signals: Stories in Translation

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Project Summary

The *Shared Signals: Stories in Translation Project* was designed as a public celebration of the ways people communicate, miscommunicate, and find meaning across cultures. The aim of the Project was to address the City North Activation Challenge concerned with the building of trust and belonging through cross-cultural dialogue.

The Project was inspired by the diversity of cultures that populate the City North Precinct and was designed to seek both commonalities and differences in cross cultural communications. The power and value of non-verbal communication also formed another key focus of the Project.

The Project used art, design, and creative practice to deliver four key interactive installations that sought to highlight the nuance and beauty of human communication and miscommunication.

The Project's activations were connected by the core project theme, each approached from different contexts and perspectives, and aimed at engaging communities within City North.

The Project brought together students and staff from RMIT College of Vocational Education's (CoVE's) Creative Industries Cluster and included the program/discipline areas of Photography, Graphic Design, Professional Writing and Editing, and Screen and Media. The goal was to engage the public with a series of enlightening activations to further dissolve the invisible barriers of cross-cultural communication, understanding and empathy.

Key Project Activities, Milestones & Deliverables

A key activity of the Project was the development of an extensive showreel, exhibited across Building 94 on RMIT's City Campus and screened on the City North STORYBOX Cube and plinths installed throughout the Precinct.

The showreel included a range of photographs shot in RMIT's professional labs by CoVE Creative Industries staff and students in addition to a stop motion animation showing the literal and figurative of five idioms that cannot be understood by those outside a specific culture.

Outputs of the Project were part of the [2025 City North Shared Futures Festival](#) and included an AI Photobooth and the [Pavement Print Studio](#) which distributed interactive screen prints to event attendees.



The final deliverable of the Project was a progressive story activity entitled 'Stories in Time' where passers-by were engaged in continuing a piece of a story prompted by real-life events in the City North Precinct across the last 100 years.

Project Impact

Utilising different spaces across the City North Precinct to display installations highlighted the breadth of communication methods as well as the beauty and unique nature of language.

The impact of the Project's installations can be ascertained from the qualitative feedback gathered informally on the main day of the 2025 City North Shared Futures Festival, further supported by the large number of engagements recorded for both the AI Photobooth and Pavement Print Studio installations as part of the event.

Both the Stories in Time installation and the AI photobooth were very well received, with the photobooth offering an engaging, interactive experience for the public. Over 150 photos were distributed, and participants also spent time exploring the makeshift gallery. Similarly, the Pavement Print Studio proved highly popular with both adults and children, with 500 prints collected on the day.



Future Planning

Important learnings which can inform future work were gained over the course of the Project. The most important was how space can be used for impact, as positioning proved vital to the success of the Project activities. Expanding viewing times for showreels across numerous locations may also increase the Project's impact.

The Project activity with the most potential for the future was the AI photobooth concept. This is due to there being more options that can contextually adapt to this technology. The popularity of the Pavement Print Studio was also recognised and as a result has been utilised as part of the 2026 BDD Melbourne Design Week Open Studios event, and the RMIT Brunswick Campus Semester 1 Orientation Day.

One of the installation ideas planned that could not be delivered within the Project timeframe involved using AR/VR to create/recreate immersive environments from the past. Buildings, fashion, vehicles and activities were to be used to bring the past to life. This will be further explored in 2026 and strongly considered for future engagement.

The overall uptake and experience from the RMIT CoVE Creative Industries students and staff as well as the broader City North community was overwhelmingly positive and discussions around how this can be expanded in 2026 are taking place.



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The *Shared Signals: Stories in Translation* team acknowledge and thank the following contributors:

Shared Signals: Stories in Translation

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