

## **Village Voices - Public Response (summary)**

### **September 2016**

9.9.2016 - *It's beautiful.*

9.9.2016 - *I can relate to that.*

9.9.2016 - *It survived the night!*

9.9.2016 - *Great idea. What is the font?*

9.9.2016 - *So can anyone change the stories?*

9.9.2017 - *Great stuff.*

16.9.2016 - *I think it looks like the front of a theatre.*

20.9.2016 - *I think this is really great. There should be one of these in every suburb. Public art is really important. It's really improved this alleyway. You are going to run it for five years, wow that is a commitment. Surry Hills is great, a pity about the department of housing.*

21.9.2016 - *It is really great, I just hope it doesn't get damaged.*

21.9.2016 - *Is there a number we can call if we see any damage?*

22.9.2016 - *This is great, can you take the letters out?*

28.9.2016 - *I talked to the artist on Saturday and she said she might include some of my words.*

### **October 2016**

5.10.2016 - *I enjoy passing by this every morning it looks wonderful.*

8.10.2016 - *I have seen many people stop and look at it and all of them touch the letters and think they can change the words themselves. I am glad to finally meet the person who has the keys and who can change the letters.*

8.10.2016 - *Who decides what words go on? Where are the workshops? Are you the artist?*

15.10.2016 - *I have told the graffiti gangs in the area not to tag the artwork. I will keep an eye on it.*

21.10.2016 - *This is wonderful, who writes the stories?*

### **November 2016**

1.11.2016 - *I like the artwork and how it will keep changing.*

1.11.2016 - *What is it about? We really like it.*

1.11.2016 - *It's great.*

1.11.2016 - *I went a couple of weeks ago to have another look, and whilst there I spoke to a couple of people walking past. Some really interesting interpretations of the text and how people actually 'read' the text. I also had lunch nearby and spoke to some of the staff there about the artwork, locals started to join in the conversation, it was great!*

4.11.2016 - *I really enjoy reading this text every time I walk past.*

4.11.2016 - *Who is responsible for this? I really like it. It's a great idea.*

11.11.2016 - *I walk past this every day and really like it.*

30.11.2016 - *What is it all about?*

30.11.2016 - *People are suffering, dying here, this artwork can't help that. But I guess it is doing what you wanted because we are talking.*

### **December 2016**

5.12.2016 - *This is a Council project isn't it? It's great.*

### **January 2017**

1.1.2017 - *How often do the texts change?*

1.1.2017 - *That word 'plastic', lots of people are like plastic these days. People on their phones all the time, not looking up. Not being present. So many on ice. It's dangerous. No one looks at you.*

1.1.2017 - *Good to see it's still up.*  
1.1.2017 - *I like it. Where is Surry Hills Library?*  
1.1.2017 - *What is it going to say? That's great. Happy New Year!*  
1.1.2017 - *That is exactly what I was thinking about yesterday, that people are lonely in a big city. There are statistics about the amount of interaction in big and small towns.*  
1.1.2017 - *Wow that's good, I like that.*  
19.1.2017 - *I can relate to this text of not looking. We teach our kids to look at some people but not to others. You have to discern when a look is actually wanting something from you.*  
19.1.2017 - *Can I take a photo?*  
25.1.2017 - *Good to see it is still standing. It is great.*  
27.1.2017 - *I am so pleased that I had the opportunity to meet you and be part of this wonderful creative project. Thank you for being so cool.*

### **February 2017**

3.2.2017 - *I love your piece, I live nearby on Nickson Street so I walk past it almost daily, and also by the people who make their homes in that same alley. It's a wonderful way of creating dialogue in a suburb where people often don't acknowledge one another - and hopefully it can start to change some of that. Looking forward to seeing how the work evolves.*  
28.2.2017 - *I feel terrible asking, but.. does it do emojis?*

### **March 2017**

28.2.2017 - *How long has this been here? I am surprised I never saw it before. Can I film this?*  
28.2.2017 - *Where are the stories from?*  
28.2.2017 - *This is really good art, but it would be better in an A+ location.*  
3.3.2017 - *Can anyone change the letters?*  
3.3.2017 - *A pity it's located in this lane where you can't step back and see the whole thing so easily.*  
7.3.2017 - *Lucky it wasn't located up the other end of Crown Street, otherwise it would be smashed up by now.*  
25.3.2017 - *Everyone really likes the work and they take photos of it all the time.*  
25.3.2017 - *Having this public artwork in Surry Hills encourages the possibility for other public artworks to be installed in the area.*  
29.3.2017 - *I went past 'Village Voices' the other night and all across the board was cigarettes and other numerous things. Also, sadly a homeless person has left all their bedding and clothing straight across from it and people were reluctant to go in the alleyway. The current lines are also so beautiful. I wish people would treat this artwork with a little more respect.*

### **April 2017**

1.4.2017 - *The artwork has been getting a lot more attention recently, many people are taking photos.*  
9.4.2017 - *This laneway is not for the public (local rough sleeper).*  
21.4.2017 - *Isn't it a great piece of art!*  
23.4.2017 - *That's bad poetry.*

### **May 2017**

2.5.2017 - *I look forward to seeing it when the words are all up later.*  
2.5.2017 - *It's a pity this is not in a more obvious location.*  
2.5.2017 - *How do you submit? How do you choose?*  
2.5.2017 - *It would be good if there was a letterbox just here.*

2.5.2017 - *You should add the story also on the panel, as sometimes there are so many words that you can't easily read the whole story from this close distance.*

2.5.2017 - *This is great, I hadn't noticed it before.*

2.5.2017 - *Can I take an instagram now, or wait until later?*

2.5.2017 - *Who writes the words? I have lived here for thirty years and have a lot of stories.*

2.5.2017 - *You could highlight certain words or letters with coloured perspex.*

2.5.2017 - *Beautiful.*

2.5.2017 - *Great community project, keep up the good work!*

3.5.2017 - *Can you stop speaking so loudly, some people are trying to sleep here (local rough sleeper).*

3.5.2017 - *What a great idea your Crown St. Surry Hills display is, simply fascinating. I would have liked to see a suggestion box, there was no place to leave feedback, leave a story or start a conversation.*

7.5.2017 - *It's a great idea. Can I have some information about how I can find out more about the authors?*

12.5.2017 - *I might put a letterbox here myself, so people can leave their stories.*

12.5.2017 - *Thank you for meeting us today and talking to us about your installation and commitment to community work. By all reports our tour guests regarded the experience as a highlight and I think we all agreed that it would be wonderful to have a few more installations like this one in Surry Hills.*

17.5.2017 - *This is awesome!*

17.5.2017 - *Melbourne knows how to do public art so well.*

17.5.2017 - *This one is in Sydney, but awesome nonetheless. I know it's almost too cool for Sydney.*

### **June 2017**

19.6.2017 - *I saw a guy trying to pull out the letters the other night and I said to him: "why are you doing that?" He was with a girl who said: "do people often try to pull out the letters?" I said to them: "we like having this artwork in our neighbourhood and if I see you or anyone else doing something like that, I will call the police straight away".*

### **July 2017**

1.7.2017 - *I used to do a lot of writing. I have lived here for a long time. I would like to write something for this. I'll put it in the box at the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre.*

1.7.2017 - *What's going up today? At least it's clean around here this morning.*

1.7.2017 - *I'm up from Melbourne for a month, who writes the texts? Are there other ones of these around, or is this the only one?*

1.7.2017 - *What are you advertising?*

1.7.2017 - *I have heard people say that it would be good to have a response page on the opposite wall, or a letterbox for people to leave comments. Also that it would be good if the texts changed more often.*

1.7.2017 - *It is good to see someone so enthusiastic about what they do. Have you talked to the Missionaries Of Charity just up the road? They do a lot of work with the local community.*

17.7.2017 - *There should definitely be a dropbox located at Village Voices for people to leave their stories or comments.*

27.7.2017 - *Were the Council thinking of installing other Village Voices artworks in Surry Hills?*

### **September 2017**

2.9.2017 - *Seeing these stories makes me not feel so alone.*

2.9.2017 - *So you are the one who comes up with all the wisdom.*

2.9.2017 - *It's great.*

2.9.2017 - *How often do the words change?*

2.9.2017 - *I like it.*  
2.9.2017 - *You are amazing.*  
2.9.2017 - *Fab work!*  
23.9.2017 - *We walk past here every day and enjoy reading the text.*  
23.9.2017 - *I'd just like to say that what you are doing is great, we really like the stories.*  
23.9.2017 - *I think it is important to have a work like this, as we need to be reminded of the harsh realities. We need not just words, but words that inspire action. Surry Hills is becoming sanitised to the point of insanity.*  
23.9.2017 - *This is telling it how it is, Sydney is getting so expensive.*  
23.9.2017 - *You should add a phone number, this could be a dating service.*  
23.9.2017 - *People are slaves to the terrace houses, it's like a gaol behind those doors. People need freedom. A mortgage is not that.*  
23.9.2017 - *We should try and crowd fund this project if the Council doesn't support it anymore after four years.*  
23.9.2017 - *I really like this project and look forward to the next change and when you install the drop box there.*  
23.9.2017 - *It was a special experience hearing the authors read their poems.*  
23.9.2017 - *Are there plans to put more of these in other suburbs?*  
28.9.2017 - *It's obvious, the dropbox has to be here.*  
5.10.2017 - *This is real qualitative research, through narrative we are able to hear the voices directly of the people living in this area.*  
19.10.2017 - *I stumbled upon this work in a moment of intense sadness and worry and it reminded me that the world is chaos but chaos is full of beautiful moments and places and people. It's ok to be vulnerable and soft and confused. We live with ourselves everyday and forget that we are made of stars. Be kind to yourself and to others.*

### **November 2017**

4.11.2017 - *There is going to be a new message today.*  
4.11.2017 - *Is it already two months, the last one didn't seem to be up that long.*  
4.11.2017 - *They regularly change the words.*  
4.11.2017 - *Why are you doing this on a Saturday morning?*  
4.11.2017 - *It's good that nobody has damaged it.*  
4.11.2017 - *I read it every time I passby. Is it a new one today?*  
4.11.2017 - *I like it.*  
4.11.2017 - *That's a pretty good one.*  
6.11.2017 - *Impressive.*  
6.11.2017 - *Ohh!! New words! Must go see.*

### **January 2018**

4.1.2018 - *Your back!*  
4.1.2018 - *How often do you change the stories?*  
4.1.2018 - *Everyone in the area talks about this work.*  
4.1.2018 - *What is it about? I thought it was advertising for a cinema?*  
4.1.2018 - *This is great.*  
4.1.2018 - *The fact that this has got us talking is great.*  
4.1.2018 - *So you're the one who does this. I love it!*  
4.1.2018 - *It's a pity this is not in a more prominent location so that more people could see it.*  
4.1.2018 - *It looks fabulous. It does.*  
4.1.2018 - *I agree with what that says. I really do.*  
5.1.2018 - *That poem to me is about apathy.*  
5.1.2018 - *You should have one of these artworks in Redfern.*

## **February 2018**

13.2.2018 - *I had a wonderful experience a few weeks ago in Maya Indian restaurant, then I walked around the corner and found the Crown Street Artwork. Wow! Fabulous synchronicity! Thank you for such an inspiring project so beautifully executed.*

22.2.2018 - *I quite literally walk past this every single day, and don't think I've ever paid attention to it, but today something spurred me to stop and see what it said. Quite interesting, and a good little phrase I believe! Good effort.*

27.2.2018 - *I managed to take my parents and two good friends via the artwork yesterday, it's been so nice to be a part of the community in a new way over the last two months thanks to your beautiful vision. It's renewed my energy to play a bigger part in the local community.*

## **March 2018**

3.3.2018 - *What does it say today? Everyone looks at it.*

3.3.2018 - *So are they going to decommission this after four years? You wouldn't think so.*

3.3.2018 - *So you are the wordsmith!*

3.3.2018 - *We love this. How often do you change it? Can the kids help get the letters?*

3.3.2018 - *We walk past this often and wonder who changes it. Now we know!*

3.3.2018 - *How can you submit a story? I walk past here often and when I see the stories, it makes me feel better. The other day I was not in a good head space and when I saw the story it made me feel more positive. I was thinking suicidal thoughts but this got me through. Thanks.*

3.3.2018 - *People often take selfies with this in the background.*

3.3.2018 - *Excellent. I really like it.*

3.3.2018 - *Thanks!*

## **April 2018**

2.4.2018 - *I often take a panorama shot of the current message.*

2.4.2018 - *Love the originality of this Art Work and have seen the box at Community Centre.*

2.4.2018 - *Cool idea!*

5.4.2018 - *Hey I've seen it ... it's pretty cool.*

8.4.2018 - *Amazing!*

9.4.2018 - *Nice!*

25.4.2018 - *I think it is a very cool installation and I'd love to be part of it.*

## **May 2018**

5.5.2018 - *Back already, that went quick.*

5.5.2018 - *Good on ya. Glad to see a lady electrician...or whatever you are doing. Good on ya.*

5.5.2018 - *There shouldn't be any mental health.*

5.5.2018 - *So you are the person who does this. I live nearby and walk through this alley everyday. I see it on instagram feeds all the time. Council should spend more money on this and less on the light rail.*

5.5.2018 - *I understand this one, I lived there, the others were a bit cryptic. I also lived at Matthew Talbot, Campbell House and Edward Eager. Foster House is different now. I live in department of housing up the road. The light rail is terrible. They should put the money into affordable housing instead.*

5.5.2018 - *So you are giving a voice to the voiceless?*

5.5.2018 - *What does it say, can you read it?*

5.5.2018 - *I saw some kids pulling at the letters the other day and I told their mother that they shouldn't do it and that it was a council project.*

## **June 2018**

23.6.2018 - *What is the new text going to be?*

23.6.2018 - *Changing the sign again today!*

23.6.2018 - *That's fab. I live in Darlinghurst and was on my way to finally see the Brett Whiteley Studio, but they don't open for another ten minutes. Great idea.*

23.6.2018 - *What's going up today? Oh, I can leave my story in the dropbox? Yes, ok I will take a piece of paper. I'll encourage some other locals to contribute as well.*

23.6.2018 - *This is great. I live in Alexandria but have never seen this. It's been here for two years? Really? Can I take of photo? I'll tag you in it.*

23.6.2018 - *Really nice words.*

23.6.2018 - *What is a Salwar Kameez? Has it got vandalised much? Oh so I can submit a text? I just live around the corner.*

23.6.2018 - *Is Salwar Kameez a brand?*

23.6.2018 - *I'd do it for nothing. All I want it s coffee and a bed and two pyjama tops.*

23.6.2018 - *We are from Bulgaria. We have been here for three years. This is a nice idea.*

23.6.2018 - *I am up from Melbourne. I will tell my son when he is next here to come and have a look. Can I take a photo? It's a great idea. Ok, so you space them all yourself. I don't feel comfortable with that knife being there. Put it over here for now.*

23.6.2018 - *We live nearby but have never noticed this. It was only with the road works that we got diverted up this lane. Great font and I see that you have to use your design skills to think about the spacing. I like the lighting behind showing the texture on the wall. The physical nature of it works well. Do you enjoy the process?*

23.6.2018 - *How long does it take to change? So you do it how often? Where are the words from? Has it had much graffiti or damage?*

## **September 2018**

22.9.2018 - *There's the lady changing the letters.*

22.9.2018 - *What's this all about?*

22.9.2018 - *Ah, so that's how you do it. I always wanted to know.*

22.9.2018 - *Are you the artist who does the change over? I love it!*

22.9.2018 - *There changing!*

22.9.2018 - *Cool as. Nice to see this happen. I live in Woolloomooloo, so I haven't seen this before.*

22.9.2018 - *This is so instagramable. It's got such a profile. It's an icon of Surry Hills. The butcher that's just moved in next door wants to put chairs and tables in this laneway. I am getting all my friends to write to Council to support it. It would be great having people sit and eat next to it. Like Melbourne's laneways.*

22.9.2018 - *It's a great project creating a sense of belonging in the area.*

22.9.2018 - *It would be good to have one of these in other suburbs, like Western Sydney.*

22.9.2018 - *I haven't seen this before, I live in Coogee. It's a good idea. People can read what they want in it. If they see negativity, they will read the negative, but if they are positive they will see the positive.*

## **October 2018**

31.10.2018 - *A beautiful community project in a hidden laneway. Called Village Voices, it invites locals to share stories, ideas and reflections. There's no delete, copy and paste buttons. It's all done the old way, just like newspapers once were. Each letter put, by hand, in its rightful place.*

31.10.2018 - *Awww, compositing, letter-press ... the smell of ink and lead-type (well, not so much a fan of lead-type) ... what a thought-provoking and interactive project.*

31.10.2018 - *This idea is amazing!*

## **November 2018**

30.11.2018 - *Fell in love with this.*  
30.11.2018 - *The Best.*

### **December 2018**

1.12.2018 - *Is there a way I can submit something?*  
1.12.2018 - *Already the changeover again!*  
1.12.2018 - *How do you submit? Is there a website? How often does it change.*  
1.12.2018 - *Is this your regular job? It's amazing how much this work activates the area. Not just people looking, but people stopping and talking about the meaning of each text.*  
1.12.2018 - *Oh look, it's a new sign. We look forward to seeing what it is.*  
1.12.2018 - *I'll come back later to see what it says.*  
1.12.2018 - *We see it all the time, but have never seen the change. Are you the artist?*  
1.12.2018 - *It's very Dutch. Are you the cleaner? Oh so you are the artist. It's like something you would see in the Netherlands, with a social conscious.*  
1.12.2018 - *I have been living overseas. I just came back recently. How long has it been here? Do you change it every week? It's a good idea.*

### **February 2019**

2.2.2019 - *The change seems to get faster and faster.*  
2.2.2019 - *That's cool, there should be one of these in more places.*  
2.2.2019 - *Where do you get the writing from? You should do more with Northcott. You could put up a story everyday from there.*  
2.2.2019 - *How can you submit? I want to write one, but haven't had the courage.*  
2.2.2019 - *You wouldn't want to change this everyday, it looks like a big job.*  
2.2.2019 - *How do you get the poems? Oh, I have heaps of poems. I'll send some to you.*  
2.2.2019 - *Have you got a way of finding out more about it, like a website?*  
2.2.2019 - *What is it about? It becomes part of the gentrification of the area. It's the same in Berlin where we are from. It's our first day in Sydney. We are from Germany. It's good to see another side of this area. We were told to come to Surry Hills by our guidebooks. Thanks, we might submit something.*  
2.2.2019 - *You could add quotes of famous people.*  
2.2.2019 - *Can I take a photo?*  
2.2.2019 - *Oh all the letters are just there. This is a great idea. How often does it change?*  
9.2.2019 - *Many thanks for including me in the Village Voices art project. I love the installation and the work you are doing there. It takes a village to raise a child and it takes a Village Voice to raise social consciousness. I'm honoured to be part of a collaboration text on the Village Voices art project. Blink Or You Will Miss It refers to the art installation itself and to life in general. Take time to look up from your phone and stop and smell the roses.*

### **March 2019**

1.3.2019 - *Dear Astra, this is the loveliest piece of art I have seen in too many years to admit. Thank you. Just wanted you to know that on a very rainy day this work has brought us joy! What an idea. Bravo.*  
30.3.2019 - *I've always wondered who does these beautiful poems.*  
30.3.2019 - *So they're your texts. It is fabulous.*  
30.3.2019 - *Are you the artist? This is a great idea.*  
30.3.2019 - *Is this yours? We are from Washington. So how often do you change the stories? Do you have a website?*  
31.3.2019 - *Hi, firstly how incredible and inspiring this is. Beautiful way to portray the hearts of this community. There needs to be more around the world. After losing*

*myself, spirit and soul to ice for three years, I have learnt invaluable lessons and rapidly turning my life around since admitting it was a problem. Changing myself through honesty, openness and integrity led me to writing my own mantra that retains my focus and choices in a positive manner yet makes me 100% accountable for my future. I will email through a bit more. Thank you.*

### **June 2019**

1.6.2019 - *I must say we enjoy these.*

1.6.2019 - *I love this project, it's the best.*

1.6.2019 - *So how did you come to doing this? I think it's a great idea. There should be more in other places.*

1.6.2019 - *This should be promoted a lot more. I don't think many people know about it. I found out about it on some website about Surry Hills. So is it one author? Who writes the stories? Can you take a photo of me in front of it?*

1.6.2019 - *I walk past here all the time, they're good.*

### **August 2019**

3.8.2019 - I have wanted to write something for this, but whenever I start I don't think what I am writing is good enough. I lose my attention and get tired. I have been on methadone for over twenty years. To begin with you have lots of energy, but now it just makes me sleepy. I will take a page and see if I can write something and will drop it back here. I really like poetry, particularly the work of Bob Dylan and Rodriguez.

3.8.2019 - Changing again today, what is the text this time?

3.8.2019 - I have never noticed the panel with author details. Thanks. I will look out for that now. It's good the range of different ideas presented.