

REFUGE

Angharad Wynne-Jones

REFUGE is a collaborative five year investigation into the role of art and culture in preparedness, resilience and recovery in the face of climate change impacts and extreme weather events. REFUGE is a research-action event with multiple partners in which artists and disaster management professionals work with local, regional and international communities to devise responses to a climactic disaster scenario, by configuring the Arts House buildings in Melbourne as a place of community refuge. Arts House is an existing designated relief centre in the city's emergency management plans and the project is a rehearsal in preparedness that incorporates artists fully into the planning and delivery and builds community networks and connections. In July this year we began with the first pilot exercise over a 24 hour period. The scenario that triggered the use of Arts House as a relief centre was an extreme weather event that involved local flooding of residential areas close to Arts House, city wide power outages and reduced access to food and accommodation. Six artists were paired with relevant professionals prior to the exercise and developed contributions (activity based, functional, and/or aesthetic) in their focus areas of food, light and warmth, sleep, wayfinding and communication and wellbeing. The evaluation process (supported by Melbourne University Research Unit in Public Cultures) will offer a policy contribution into the integration of an arts and culture aspect, specifically the networks and communities of cultural centres, in emergency management plans and community preparedness, resilience and recovery.

Bio

Angharad Wynne-Jones, Artistic Director of Arts House and initiator of the project, will share some of the initial understandings from the pilot exercise that occurred in July this year. A video as part of the presentation will be screened.