



# Arts Access<sup>®</sup> Aotearoa

WHAKAHAUHAU KATO A O HANGA

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## Big 'A' Community Partnership Award

**Winner: Voice Arts Trust** for its partnerships with the Museum of Wellington, Village at the Park and Wellington East Girls College:

**Judges' comment:** "An outstanding nomination. It was clear that all partnerships believed strongly in the project and all contributed equally. All the components came together to create magic. There was a strong sense that the energy generated by this project would roll on and have long-term benefits."

**Some background:** A group of female secondary school students, seven elderly women in hospital and dementia care, a team of artists and a museum formed a partnership in 2008 to create and present an innovative theatre work called *Memory – An Intangible Map*. Using live performance and film to explore the nature of memory and images of Wellington, the work was shown over three weekends at the Museum of Wellington and attracted capacity houses.

Voice Arts Trust initiated the project and brought the Museum of Wellington on board. This was followed by the drama department at Wellington East Girls College and eight Year 13 students, and Village at the Park in Newtown and seven elderly women – some with advanced dementia, some with physical disabilities.

"The journey provided so much more than what we had expected," says Heather Timms, Voice Arts Trust, and co-director of the project. "Special relationships developed and we saw wonderful moments of insight and true understanding."

Each partner benefited in different but complementary ways. Village at the Park, for instance, saw the project as an opportunity for some of their residents to reminisce about their lives and interact with young people. "They talked about the pleasure they got from telling their life stories, talking with the young women, and being listened to. They also felt they learned something about young people today and the challenges facing them," says Jenny Sanders, activities co-ordinator Village at the Park.

The Wellington East Girls College students kept a blog, documenting their experience of the process and the final performances.

Ways in which the partnership developed beyond initial expectations include the positive and at times overwhelming feedback from the participants and the public; building capacity in terms of influence, infrastructure and reputation; and opening up new opportunities months after the project was completed.

**Special mention: Auckland City Council** for its partnership with Ngati Whatua o Orakei Volcano's Sport and Cultural Club:

**Judges' comment:** "A valuable project where both partners worked in a professional and flexible way. The four-day workshop aimed to engage and empower rangatahi through the arts and within a community context."

**Some background:** The focus of the project, held over four days on Orakei Marae, was to build on the skills of Ngati Whatua rangatahi and teach them the art of waiata (music) composition and mahi whakairo (carving/sculpture). As a result of workshops, 30 pieces of work and one full-length waiata were created. The pieces were all linked to themes of culture and identity. The partnership delivered beyond expectations and strengthened relationships between the two partners.