Afternoon performance

JULIE McCROSSIN
Facilitator

FACILITATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome. Because you responded to my call, we’re starting in two minutes, you’re going to get chocolate. I’m afraid I’ve run out of apples. You’re going to be forced to eat chocolate.

Working with me is Paul. Paul is handing out chocolates. This is an example of the adaptability. My goodness, you want upstairs people. Cherie I think is present upstairs. If Cherie could come and obtain—one of you come down and I’ll give you a bag of chockies. Paul, excellent. I’ll leave it to a young person showing initiative. Would you like chockie? We’ve got Caramello Bears. We’re about to see some marvellous theatre, and the consumption of chocolate is known. Thank you for distributing. Paul, clearly a history in panto, believes in manual thrusting as a method of distribution. Some people are taking two. They’re very, very greedy. Chocolate, chocolate, chocolate. I like to see—look, I have to be honest with you, you didn’t get this excited about apples.

Okay, I’ve run out of the frogs. Ladies and gentlemen, I promise there will be more chocolate a little bit later. Paul, if you could come up on stage with me, mate? Ladies and gentlemen, we’re about to begin, but first of all I’d like to introduce Paul. And I’ve asked Paul to use this marvellous language to show us barrel girl with his hands—barrel girl. And now I’ve got to try barrel boy. Do you want to see it again? Barrel girl. So, what’s this? Thank you. And barrel boy.

May I ask you a question? Could you come up and say hello? Ladies and gentlemen, Alex Jones, whom we’re going to meet very, very soon. Come on, put your back into it. Could you ask Alex—I beg your pardon. Could you ask Alex why is girl like that, and why is boy like this? Do you know the origin of those signs?

ALEX JONES: I don’t know. Can I ad lib here?

FACILITATOR: Why they’re getting really excited, Paul, is, I never let anybody hold it. I am making an exception today.

ALEX JONES: Thank you. Do I have to be PC or can I be a little birdie? All right. First of all, the sign for a girl and boy, as I just demonstrated there, some signs have no particular origin from my understanding, but if I’m just creative here, maybe a long time ago girls had bonnets like that. It could have been maybe in relation to that. That could be a possible point of origin. This sign here for boy. Maybe a little wiener, a little willy—I don’t know.

FACILITATOR: Thank you very, very much. Thank you. Well, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to our afternoon session on our fourth day of this National Rural Health conference. It’s my enormous pleasure now to welcome to the stage Maud Clark. If you could give Maud a round of applause, please. And Maud is the artistic director of Somebody’s Daughter. And we’ve met before but only over the radio waves. You’re short aren’t you. Look, it’s Ms McCrossin’s box I used to have when I was on telly.

Tell us about Somebody’s Daughter and about Highwater Theatre. What are we about to see, and why is it important and linked to health?

MAUD CLARK: It’s an important thing for health and it’s a great tribute to this community. Upper Hume Community Health and the Department of Education and Training have been in collaboration with Somebody’s Daughter for five years now, working on a program for young people between the ages of 12 to 15, although some of them are 18 now because they were between that age when they came in. For young people who are totally disengaged with the school system, this is for hard-end kids, not the kids that are still hanging in there or just, you know, it’s for kids that are totally disengaged.
The whole idea of the program was to reconnect them. And the big, big, big difference with this program is that it’s creatively led. It hasn’t been tacked on as an add-on to welfare or education. It has been creatively led, although it has been a true collaboration. There’s a report on it that’s been done by Jaynor’s mother. If you give your name to Chris Pidd, you can get a copy through Upper Hume. We’ve got some young people that are performing—there’s one young person that’s performing for the first time ever today. And you’ve got a couple of people that have come back to help out. They’re actually studying year 12, which is a great accolade for them.

FACILITATOR: Thank you. Just before you go, there was something else I wanted to say. Yes, I’ll ask you about what we’re going to see, but as I understand it, over the last five years this group has put out 176 public performances to over 20 000 people. Give us a sense of where you’ve been performing.

MAUD CLARK: We’ve performed for some conferences or for some community groups now, like, 10 and then we’ve done things like today where there’s a thousand. Last year we toured a show called Catch a Star Falling, that was based on an early intervention program in Wangaratta, and that went to Portland, Hamilton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool, Casterton, Hamilton, Melbourne. So we get around, and it’s quite something to have kids that are supposedly totally uncontrollable on the road for up to two months and there’s 16 to 20 of us travelling. It’s very interesting.

FACILITATOR: Can I just say, Somebody’s Daughter—because there’s people here from all over Australia who may not be familiar with it. Somebody’s Daughter is a theatre company founded by former prisoners.

MAUD CLARK: Yes. It came from Fairlea Women’s Prison over 20 years ago. I was involved in a show that went into Fairlea Women’s Prison that was about bringing female prisoners over on the hulks. One woman asked for drama, and somehow the company has kept on going. So, one of the wonderful things about this is that women who have been through the system or who have histories of abuse or drug abuse, work in the company.

FACILITATOR: So, what are we going to see today?

MAUD CLARK: You’re going to see, because we couldn’t get into the 15-minute period time, Catch a Star Falling, you’re going to see extracts from earlier shows. I must point out too that all the material is based on young people’s experiences, their actual stories. You’re going to see also one scene at the end that we call the school scene, which is very, very, very much why this whole project started in 2000.

FACILITATOR: Thank you very much. A round of applause, please. And can I just say, Maud has mentioned that this is excerpts. I just want to pay tribute to the theatre groups we’ve seen such as Chopped Liver yesterday, who in a sense have chopped their productions to give us the duration required, and that itself has taken a lot of special effort and time. Please welcome Somebody’s Daughter and Highwater Theatre.

FACILITATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, Somebody’s Daughter and Highwater Theatre.

Ladies and gentlemen, just before our next speakers, the set is going to be struck, as I understand. You’re going to take it all out now. Is that the go? And so I thought we might meet a couple of the cast while the equipment is taken away.

Hello, Michaela and Felicia. Would you give them a welcome, please. And can I just say, Maud has mentioned that this is excerpts. I just want to pay tribute to the theatre groups we’ve seen such as Chopped Liver yesterday, who in a sense have chopped their productions to give us the duration required, and that itself has taken a lot of special effort and time. Please welcome Somebody’s Daughter and Highwater Theatre.

[Futuristic performance]
MICHAELA: Well, I was about to be kicked out of school and the teacher told me to put my drama skills to use and so they sent me here. And that’s about it.

FACILITATOR: And what do you reckon you got out of it? How long have you been involved?

MICHAELA: For about four years, but I’ve gone back to school for the last two years and now I’m in year 12.

FACILITATOR: What made you go back to school?

MICHAELA: Well, their encouragement probably, or else I don’t think I would have done it, so it’s really good.

FACILITATOR: And how hard was it coming back? That experience of having left and coming back, can you tell us just a little bit about it?

MICHAELA: Well, it was all right. It was a bit hard at first because I’d been out for so long. It was all, like, not familiar any more. But then, yeah, I got through it.

FACILITATOR: Good on you, and thank you for going first. Do you mind me asking—thank you. Give her a round of applause. Thanks.

And have you gone back to school as well?

FELICIA: Yes.

FACILITATOR: How long have you been back?

FELICIA: I just started back this year doing year 12, and I’m doing it as Continuing Education Centre in Wodonga.

FACILITATOR: And how is that different from being at school, if you were advising someone who was thinking about it?

FELICIA: Well, I found the whole five subjects five days a week a bit too hard. I found myself wagging nearly every day. So at least this time it’s only two days a week and, you know, over the course of a year, so it’s a bit easier to attend.

FACILITATOR: Is there anything else that’s easier, apart from it being less often? What about the style of teaching or the way the relationships are?

FELICIA: At the Continuing Education Centre it’s more for adults, so they don’t treat you so much like teacher/student relationship. It’s more friend.

FACILITATOR: Do you mind me asking how old you are?

FELICIA: I’m 19.

FACILITATOR: I’m 52. How old are you?

MICHAELA: Seventeen.

FACILITATOR: Can I just say, really best wishes from all of us and congratulations on coming back to school and being part of all this.

Ladies and gentlemen, a couple of quick reminders, and we move on to our next presentation. The recommendations, they’re just really dead keen for them. So remember all of that on page 32, very important. End of today, quarter to 6 in the exhibition area, Happy Hour. Got that? Quarter to 6, back in there is a Happy Hour today for an hour. And for those people going to the carnivale tonight, the
performance as part of the Todos Arte concurrent session, the bus is leaving from here at 7 pm to go to carnivale and returning at 9:30.

Anyone who saw that incredible American television series Carnivale will wonder if that bus will ever come back. That’s just a small joke for anyone who watched that series. Okay.

Do you like the stylish and professional way I just crouch down and flip the pages? Have you noticed that? I don’t know where I learnt to do that. It’s a technique of professional facilitators. Okay. It is enormously exciting now to welcome to the stage Jenny Rosen, who’s chair of the Libby Harricks Memorial Oration Committee, and we’re going to hear all about the Deafness Forum, this particular oration, and our orator, Rick Osborn. Please welcome Jenny Rosen.