

Surveillance with Public Intent Vehicle – Frankston

White Street Project, Frankston City Council

Action Researcher/Performer: Astra Howard

Assistants/Documentation: Yandell Walton and Alex Murray

Commissioned by: Mark Themann

Activation Period: Tuesday 4 – Saturday 8 December 2007

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Questions posed to the public
3. Responses (Assistant and AR/P Notes)

Day 1: Tuesday 4.12.07 (Mall in front of ANZ bank & in front of Train Station)

Day 2: Tuesday 4.12.07 (Mall & Greater Union Entrance)

Day 3: Tuesday 4.12.07 (Mall & Thoroughfare)

Day 4: Tuesday 4.12.07 (Library & across from Train Station)

Day 5: Tuesday 4.12.07 (Mall at entrance to Bayside)

4. Concluding Remarks
-

1. SPIV Frankston: Introduction

The Surveillance with Public Intent Vehicle (SPIV) was positioned in a range of public locations around central Frankston for four hours a day over the course of five days. During this time, the Action Researcher/Performer (AR/P) was contained within the limited confines of the Machine-Vehicle (M-V), enclosed by transparent windows. Inside this viewing platform, the AR/P used writing (necessarily backwards so that people on the outside could read) to engage in a dialogue with members of the public. Some of the passers-by would immediately take a whiteboard marker pen provided to start a conversation, whereas others were a little more hesitant and would respond by speaking through the window panels to the AR/P, or by reading the other discussions being carried out on the windows. For the most part, crowds gathered around the SPIV as various people simultaneously described their personal experience living in Frankston. Themes of discussion were generated by the feedback from locals. From homeless youth to local business owners, school students to tourists, young mothers to the elderly, everyone had something to say about their connection or otherwise to Frankston City.

The SPIV provided a live research, feedback and evaluation opportunity for Frankston locals. It also created a space for new friendships to be formed, ideas to be debated and future aspirations for the city explored. Conversation topics ranged from detailed descriptions of personal difficulties, to local social problems, cultural sensitivities, to political engagements, infrastructure issues to environmental concerns. This simple act of generating discussion about the city experience amongst a broad spectrum of citizens is a noteworthy outcome in itself. The AR/P and her two assistants recorded many of the comments written on the window panels and were also able to document the interactions through photographic and video recording. The Frankston City Council supported SPIV project provided a unique opportunity to assess individual's experience of the city at a time when new community development initiatives, urban design plans and social policy decisions were being made.

2. Questions posed to the public

(Please note: many of the questions and themes listed below, came from discussions held between the AR/P and the public via the SPIV project).

Reason for being in Frankston and length of time as a resident

- Are you a local?
- Were you born in Frankston?
- Why did you move to Frankston?
- How long have you lived here?
- What has kept you here?
- Has it changed much over the years?
- Will you stay here once you finish school?

Particularities about place

- What do you think of Frankston?
- What makes Frankston unique?
- What is it like for young people here?
- What resources and opportunities are available for older people here?
- Are there any notable issues in this town?
- What are the positives and negatives about Frankston?
- What do you think of the Bayside shopping centre?
- Have small businesses been affected by the Bayside redevelopment?

Debating the stereotypes

- Do you agree with the statement that: 'Frankston is a hole?'
- Why then is Frankston 'a hole'?
- What do you think about the 'station people'?
- Why do so many people hold such a negative impression about Frankston?
- Is there really an above average amount of 'druggies' around the streets here?

- Are the beach, shops, movies and Bayside the only positives in Frankston?
 - Do all young people move out of town when they finish school?
 - How can we change the current situation?
 - Who is responsible for making decisions about these issues?
-

3. Responses

Day 1: Tuesday 4.12.07 (Mall in front of ANZ bank & in front of Train Station)

Assistant Notes DAY 1:

- *"I wish I lived here".*
- *"I'm on holidays from Scotland, I have been to QLD and Sydney".*
- *"I love it, have to go now, bye thanks for talking".*
- *"Yeah, in Frankston, this is so cool".*
- *"I believe Frankston has a lot of potential but people don't realise it".*
- *"More money should be spent on the people in the community instead of making a bigger shopping centre or trying to get our name on the map".*
- *"More money should help support the less fortunate, cause there are quite a few in Frankston".*
- **AR/P:** How?
- *"Human existence is worth more than dollars".*
- *"Maybe the people of Frankston could get together more, e.g. a festival".*
- *Young girl (school uniform): "I find there are many people who don't have families, so maybe a homeless shelter. Even a support centre where people in the same circumstances can be together".*
- *"There are also many young children who don't go to school".*
- *"More help is needed for these children, they hang around the station".*
- **AR/P:** Who needs to initiate this?
- *"The council, but the community could also help promote such things".*
- **AR/P:** You are a good spokesperson for Frankston, perhaps you should talk to the council more often about your ideas?

- *"No I haven't/didn't know I could/would know how. Today's generation of younger people are the people we need to listen to most, they have all the thoughts".*
- **AR/P:** Frankston Council seems fairly progressive, I am sure they would be interested in your ideas.
- *Young guy (studded arm band): "I'm planning on moving because almost every time I go out, I end up with someone trying to fight me for no reason or I get bottles chucked out of cars at me".*
- *"Frankston is great but everyone thinks it's a hole".*

AR/P Notes DAY 1:

- *"'Franga' is short for Frankston".*
- A local woman continuously yells at people around the train station in a hostile manner. She then approaches the SPIV and writes quietly, smiling and laughing during the conversation. After finishing the discussion via the SPIV the woman starts yelling again at the people around the station.
- The AR/P notes that the public space 'territory' around the station appears to be controlled by a number of notable locals. In this sense, it has a continuous 'public surveillance with intent' for the purpose of: meeting acquaintances, earning an income, talking about life and surviving in Frankston.
- The AR/P realises that she needs to gain the trust of the 'station people' early on in the project to include their views and to operate alongside their regular activities in this area. She manages to do this as all the notable identities such as: 'Denz', 'Smokey', 'Zeb' and 'Tim' engage with the SPIV, promoting it to their friends and returning each day with updates. 'Denz' comes back to correct the spelling of his name, 'Smokey' talks about his future and the meaning of place, 'Zeb' brings new street kids to the SPIV each day and 'Tim' extends his friendship beyond the SPIV via mobile phone numbers written on the window panels and dropped through the cracks in the booth on small pieces of recycled paper.
- The AR/P writes to a Down Syndrome boy with long hair who is wearing headphones and is wearing a red t-shirt. It is difficult to communicate with him in writing as he repeats the same sounds that do not directly relate to the conversation. He is very excited by the SPIV and begins drawing images of male genitals and 'boobies' as he describes it. There appears to be a trend in Frankston for young people to draw pictures of male genitals, this image is so frequency seen. This boy starts yelling out aloud: "show us your boobies". A number of school kids around the SPIV are not sure how to respond to his comments but are nonetheless entertained by the commotion. The boy stays for about half an hour before a woman jumps out of a car and tells him that he must come with her (home). He reluctantly leaves the SPIV with a window

panel completely covered with very detailed and energetic sketches and commentary.

- A girl and guy that are Marilyn Manson fans ask the AR/P if she likes boots. The AR/P lifts up her leg to show them the boots she is wearing.
- Questions asked repeatedly to the AR/P are: where does she eat, where does she sleep, when does she drink, how does she go to the toilet.
- There are also many questions posed to the AR/P about how she breathes, e.g. "What happens when the air runs out?"
- There are various concerns expressed about the AR/P's wellbeing in the SPIV. So much so that one woman buys her a drink saying "Merry Christmas" and another woman demands that she get out of the SPIV immediately.
- There are many "Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year" comments.
- Young people write spontaneously on the SPIV, where as older people tend to answer questions posed by the AR/P first by speaking and then taking a pen to write.
- People say they will come back to talk more later, and they do.
- There are many people who return to the SPIV each day at particular locations around Frankston. As the week progresses, these individuals go out of their way to find the SPIV and update the AR/P on their situation.
- People would often engage with the SPIV and then call their friends to join them or come back later in the day with a new group of people.
- Three girls suggested other locations around the city where it might be good to locate the SPIV. The beach on a Thursday afternoon appeared to be a favourite. They were keen to disclose that: "we want to live in a place where you can be naked". The girls came back on several occasions throughout the week with different friends, making sure the AR/P still knew who they were.
- A few guys leave their phone numbers scrawled across the windows of the SPIV. Some ask for the AR/P's number.
- A few people ask the AR/Ps age and quite a lot of people ask the AR/P's name.
- A young guitarist writes about his travels busking around Australia. He is currently heading from the Northern Territory.
- The comment: "*Frankston is a hole*" is repeated many times. The AR/P asks locals why this statement/sentiment is so prevalent.
- Locals continue to say that: "*Frankston is dangerous at night, you get stabbed*".
- "*It's a nice place for family and friends*".

- The police arrive at the Train Station and question Alex (the photo/video documenter) about what is going on.
- A man describes his role as a volunteer in the fire brigade unit at Edithvale. He also talks about working at night at the Bayside SAFEWAY. He has worked there for a year packing shelves.
- A guy with a studded arm band and long curly hair (girlfriends anniversary date on dog tag) likes Frankston, but he is keen to move because of continual threats of violence directed towards him.
- People remember some of the past White Street Projects, (the photo booth project particularly) and ask if the SPIV comes from the same people. The AR/P describes the range of initiatives developed by the White Street Project and commissioned by the Frankston City Council. Over the course of the SPIV project the AR/P discusses the White Street Project and Frankston City Council with the public many times.
- An older man and his partner describe their journey travelling around Australia in a bus. The AR/P draws a map of Australia on the window, so that he can point out the various locations they have travelled to so far and where they are heading next.
- There are many school kids who engage with the SPIV.
- Many youth do tags on the SPIV window panels.
- Many kids do drawings all over the SPIV windows.
- Some boys ask if they can take the pens with them.
- A boy outlines his hand on the outside of the window. The AR/P then puts her hand up against it on the inside and draws an outline around her hand. There is an unusual sense of closeness, yet at the same time distance, between the AR/P and members of the public through the window barrier.
- Some guys say that they will push the SPIV onto street. This comment reoccurs throughout the week.
- A few people try to click off the breaks on the SPIV in order to move it away.
- The people on the outside of the SPIV once they know what the project is about repeat to other people standing around: *"she is trying to find out about Frankston, come and have your say"*.

Day 2: Wednesday 5.12.07 (Mall & Greater Union Entrance)

Assistant Notes DAY 2:

- *Schoolgirl: "My dream plan is to go to NYC, to study journalism. Because I like writing and feel that I am good at it. Frankston has got a lot of good opportunities for a wide range of people...."*
- *Schoolgirl (friend): "I want to travel next year and do something in Tourism".*
- **AR/P:** What is there to do for youth?
- *"A few things, not a lot".*
- *Woman approx 35y/o: "I wish people of all ages would just chill out and respect each other".*
- **AR/P:** Why?
- *"Because we are only here once".*
- *Guy approx 26y/o: "Frankston has changed over the years, it has become more modern and friendly".*
- *"I think it has changed from the 80's and old school".*
- **AR/P:** for the better or worse?
- *"It's much better with improvements to society, except 'pop' music with young folk".*
- **AR/P:** Like what's playing in the background now?
- *"Yes too false, no depth".*
- **AR/P:** Do you think this is specific to Frankston or similar in other parts of Australia and overseas?
- *"Fairly general. This is definitely Frankston – you can take the person out of Frankston but you can't take Frankston out of the person".*
- **AR/P:** What tarnishes them?
- *"Drugs!"*
- **AR/P:** More so here?
- *"Yes & No".*
- **AR/P:** Will you stay here?
- *"Yes".*
- **AR/P:** What are your feelings about the redevelopment in the local area?

- *"I think this has made it better, more jobs, cheaper way to shop, better than ten years ago".*
- **AR/P:** Do more people come here now?
- *"Everyone always comes here, because of Bayside, it gives Frankston its main name".*
- **AR/P:** Why 'a hole'?
- *"The next generation are told of what it used to be like but they haven't actually experienced the old Frankston, they just nickname it. They might feel obliged to say to say it is bad".*
- **AR/P:** Sounds like you are a positive advocate for this city, you should talk to the council more and see if you can work in some way with them on behalf of the community.
- *"If only they would let me".*
- *"I know there is a little bit of every type of person here but there seems to be a reflection of mainly younger generations. I actually think this new development is to push out old and bring in new generations. I know that the majority of the Frankston Council is upper class".*
- **AR/P:** You should put your ideas forward?
- *"I am going to show council my ideas and hopefully it will help everyone in Frankston. Also you say it, I am an artist too!"*
- *Older woman: "Bayside is killing the shops in the streets. Too many shops and loan sharks are setting up business. I think we should stop having so many drug programs in the city centre, this is bringing too many of these people from other places".*
- **AR/P:** Do you think there is a way we can solve this problem?
- *"It's very difficult".*
- *"Because Frankston is a really well known place and some people don't have a choice where they live".*
- *"Frankston is better than people think it is, there are lots of things to do".*
- *"Franga is unique in all sorts of ways. It makes people scared yet happy".*
- *"People don't come out at night much".*
- *"I hate the 'I love Frankston T-shirts'.*
- *"Frankston is a hole, it's scum".*

- **AR/P:** Can you differentiate between Melbourne and Frankston people?
- *Young girls x 2 eating ice cream: "There are more weirdos in Melbourne".*
- *"Frankston is great because there are so many people that come here".*
- *"It is the people in Frankston that make it a hole, not so much the place in general".*
- *"Maybe because a few people gave Frankston a bad reputation, everyone just goes by it because it's not like Melbourne".*
- *"Frankston is scary after dark".*
- *"There are a lot of scary/crazy drunks, high/stoned people".*
- *"Frankston has got a bad name".*
- *Man 40s: "Just because there are laws doesn't mean people abide by them".*
- *"There needs to be more jobs for young people, keep them off the streets and out of trouble. We need more police on the streets. We need to get rid of all of the drug dealers here".*
- **AR/P:** Do you think eradicating the dealers will solve the long term problem?"
- *"It will make me feel better".*
- **AR/P:** Have you had any personal negative experience with such people?
- *"Yes, I have had the effects down the line of such people".*
- *"We should increase the amount of police, trying doesn't hurt".*
- *"Never give up on the vulnerable young".*
- **AR/P:** So we should provide positive opportunities for the young, like more local jobs like you mentioned earlier?
- *"Yes, absolutely".*
- *"We can't change it because our laws are the reason why people rebel".*
- **AR/P:** Have smaller businesses suffered after the development of Bayside?
- *"No, not really. Wrong people in business should never have started in business without training, financial knowledge".*
- **AR/P:** Will it take the locals to make the change?

- *"It's mostly the locals that drink/run around the streets crazed at night".*
- *"It's just the nature of people in Frankston".*
- *"There are 15y/o smokers and drinkers and 12y/o drunks".*
- **AR/P:** Why are people here different?
- *"I dunno they're strange".*
- *Woman 30s with child: "We need to fix the roads here before we do anything else".*
- **AR/P:** Have you talked to the council about this?
- *"Yes, but nothing has changed".*
- **AR/P:** Are there many young families here in Frankston?"
- *"Yes some too young!"*
- *Woman 40s (with son green shirt, AR/P engages up the back of the crowd): "Frankston is diversity". (Draws a triangle with an eye in it and a cross)*
- **AR/P:** What do you think of the Bayside complex?
- *"We have beautiful surroundings here, the efforts have resulted in improvements".*
- *"Frankston meets my specific needs which are limited. Accessibility is excellent. Variety is considered. Well executed".*
- *"People here are friendly and honest".*
- *"Frankston is a good community".*
- *Tourism volunteer: "Frankston is exciting, diverse, multicultural".*
- *Woman 50s with shopping trolley: "Frankston people are great, cheeky. We have a great Lord Mayor".*
- *"This is awesome".*
- **AR/P:** What are the positives of this city?
- *Young girl: "The shops, the beach, the cinema".*

AR/P Notes DAY 2:

- Two guys meet up for the first time in ages via the SPIV, *"Hi, how are you!"*

- *"It's feral, it's a hole", comment repeated many times.*
- *"The beach is good", comment repeated several times.*
- *"Drugs", comment repeated many times.*
- The AR/P is able to point out to several people who are writing on the SPIV windows simultaneously, what other people are saying opposite them. This encourages individuals often with opposing views to discuss and debate their ideas.
- Equal amount of positive and negative comments made about Frankston.
- *"Get druggies off the street, more police".*
- *"There is a good sense of community here".*
- *"Friends and family is why I stay here".*
- A man bangs on the windows in a demanding manner saying: *"write to me, and answer my question, now".* The AR/P experiences more banging on the windows by locals wanting an immediate response than she has incurred at any other site.
- Girls from Holland, three guys/girl from France.
- *"People are nice here".*
- *"Frankston is good for youth".*
- *"There are lots of subcultures here".*
- *"Local bands play here".*
- *"We sometimes go to Melbourne".*
- *"Frankston is a diverse community".*
- *"I wouldn't leave here".*
- *"No way, I wouldn't stay, I'm out of here after school".*
- *"I wish I wasn't here, if I was not at uni, I would leave". I am doing French and Spanish and International studies".*
- *"I go to Melbourne quite often".*
- *"There are weirdos in Melbourne".*

- *"We have a festival once a year with a parade, we should have more festivals in the park, because it brings people together".*
- *"I come to the city to shop".*
- *"There is everything you need here".*
- *"People say Frankston is not nice, until they come here and realise it is ok".*
- A group of guys come up to the SPIV when the AR/P and assistants have moved away from it for a ten-minute break one day when it is very hot. The guys begin drawing and writing on the windows and talking amongst themselves. Once they have finished their stories they wipe the windows clean. The AR/P and assistants are very amused to see the general public still very eager to use the SPIV as a communication space regardless of whether the AR/P is inside or not. It is also good to see the respect that is shown for the booth, that is, it is kept in the condition that it was found.

Day 3: Thursday 6.12.07 (Mall & Thoroughfare)

Assistant Notes DAY 3:

- *"Well I've done lots of stuff, I had a serious car accident in Lakes Entrance and was in a coma, I died five times on the way to hospital".*
- *"No offence, this place is crap".*
- *"No, drugs, want some?"*
- *"Franga is alright, better than some places".*
- *"I live in Frankston by the way, I did not grow up here, but have just bought my first home nearby".*
- *"I hate Frankston, it sux! Everything about it".*
- *"I think Frankston sucks, honestly".*
- *"It's a hole but I come to shop and its close".*
- *"Great place needs more parking! Needs easier access to beach".*
- *"We are going to Maccas".*
- *"It has improved greatly, it will be great soon".*
- *"Demographic, beautification with attitude".*
- **AR/P:** There continued to be about equal positive and negative comments.

- *"Frankston very individual, different but the same".*
- *"Shopping like others but I'm very into what others do, weird".*
- *"Very creative artistic, but I am really from QLD, the environment state".*
- *"Melbourne is a very 'out there' sort of place even the fashion different from QLD, Sydney".*
- *"I lived in Sydney for eight years, my dad owns a business there. Sydney is very busy, I don't like it".*
- *"Next year I'm going to live in Brazil for a year and she is going to Switzerland".*
- *"Is very different if you like cultural difference".*
- *"Because of the people at night. It can become quite violent, druggies etc., although it is getting better. Like with the cinema development and the foreshore development. It's been fun talking backwards with you – John".*
- *"Love it!"*
- *"Definitely the diverse people".*
- *"Frankston is different, a lot of young mums, and 'Emos'".*
- *"My accomplice and I are in the Royal Navy, gsg peace in the Middle East (draws peace sign)."*
- *"I go to the beach with mates and just walk around".*
- *"Frankston has a bad name because of all the druggies that hang about, it's kinda scary!!"*
- **AR/P:** Do young people go to Melbourne?
- *"Yeah because there is a lot to see, more so than here I guess".*
- *"Apart from the junkies, good".*
- *"Well you're safe from needle marks in there (but same)".*
- **AR/P:** Has small businesses been impacted?
- *"Yes, but that is progressive".*
- *"Not really, flush the poyo people out".*
- *"They can do more but ok, phones are better to talk on".*
- *"I don't really like it much".*

- *Older woman: "Fine I love Frankston been dancing for two days".*
- **AR/P:** Has it changed?
- *"Yes, heaps, more buildings, gone up, great changes to foreshore".*
- **AR/P:** For the positive?
- *"Yes, one has to move with the times".*

AR/P Notes DAY 3:

- Woman in a wheel chair writes at the base of the SPIV window. The AR/P crouches down inside the booth to write at her level.
- Woman writes for a while about the positive aspects of the city.
- Man asks: "How do you write backwards and think forwards?"
- A young guy called Sam stays next to the SPIV all day. He describes his experience of a car accident and how he wants to be an actor. He asks the AR/P if she can try and hook him up with some of the girls standing around the SPIV. The AR/P tries a few times to encourage conversation between them. Sam returns to the SPIV in its second location of the day and ends up following the AR/P and assistants back to the WSP to talk more about the project. He describes a new kind of M-V design that could be made and the AR/P suggests that he draws it on a piece of paper. He spends about half an hour in the WSP drawing his communal vehicle for conversation. It interests the AR/P, as it looks very similar to one of her recent drawings for a future project. Sam repeats that he would like to be inside the SPIV. Due to his mixed ability, Sam writes very slowly and it is sometimes not entirely clear what he is implying. He tries to write backwards by wrapping his arm around the SPIV and watching what he is doing from the other side. The SPIV provided Sam with a space for conversation and interaction with locals, which was otherwise difficult for him. He returned the following day to continue the dialogue as he enjoyed the experience engaging with the SPIV.
- Girl returns (Maori / beach).
- Guys, many phone numbers.
- *"How can I get in the booth?"*
- *"It's a hole"* repeated again.
- Guy with dad (Akubra hat) says *"it's nice in Frankston, with family, beach and community"*. The AR/P asks him about the description by many locals of Frankston being a 'hole'. As the AR/P is discussing this, two girls write *"Frankston is a hole"*, on the window opposite. The AR/P points this out to him

and he laughs and then writes more comments about his experience. The AR/P explains to the girls why she pointed out their comment to the guy and they begin a conversation on the outside about their difference of opinion about Frankston.

- *"Good scale of city, redevelopment good".*
- Girl talks about travelling to South America and Switzerland.
- Many people say Frankston is great because it is near the beach.
- A man who appears under the influence of a substance, demands that the AR/P talks. She responds by writing that she will be able to speak with him directly in 5 minutes when she is due to exit the SPIV for the day.
- The young woman who was yelling at the station, comes back to say hi.
- Another woman who spoke yesterday about the state of the local roads, comes back to show her brother the SPIV project, as she said he didn't believe her.
- Girl wearing tracksuit from station comes back to chat. She is wearing a colourful dress. She mentioned going for modelling jobs the other day when she was wearing tracksuits, now in the dress, the AR/P tells her she looks great and good luck with the job hunt. The AR/P sees her again the next day dressed in completely different attire.
- Woman in wheel chair writes about her five kids, she has lived in Sydney for a year, in about five completely different parts of the city. She is keen to travel again when she can.

Day 4: Friday 7.12.07 (Library & across from Train Station)

Assistant Notes DAY 4:

- *"Compared to Dandy not bad".*
- **AR/P:** Has it changed?
- *"A little bit for the worse".*
- *"It has its good and bad points".*
- Young boy: *"Frankston is awesome".*
- *"There are upper and lower class differences, people are lower class here".*
- *"Varied thoughts, people, atmosphere, scenery, depends?"*
- *"I like certain areas, sometimes the people worry/scare me, especially their children".*

- *"It's a cool place, but not enough alternate shops around".*
- *"Sometimes I see a lot of people using drugs and it makes me sad".*
- *"I think it's more of the fact that a majority of people have tried drugs but most people don't want the help".*
- *"Frankston is a great place if you are not into drugs".*
- *"Send them to jail, clean up the streets".*
- *"As the main plaza is awesome but all you see when you come here is the station".*
- *"I think if we cleaned up the station we may have a positive outlook".*
- *"I think they need to be more aware, I think people need to step back and really open their eyes more than anything".*
- *"Need more entertainment in Frankston".*
- *"I think people who are critical are people who are scared themselves as my friend does drugs here and is critical of Frankston. I think it has to be people who care".*
- **AR/P:** Education, Council?
- *"I think they (the council) know what's going on, but they're silent".*
- **AR/P:** How do we solve the issues?
- *"By doing what you're doing, talking to the people".*
- *"Maybe ordinary people can do more, we know more as we are more aware of them".*
- *"I think everyone can have a voice including those who do 'drugs' and even the 'homeless'".*
- *"I think the station is a safe place for those people who are lost or alone".*
- **AR/P:** How do we solve this?
- *"By providing more safe zones in Frankston".*
- *"Drank a bottle of vodka at my party last week, we had a fight with mum and her boyfriend! Bit of a punch on! LOL!"*

AR/P Notes DAY 4:

- *"Frankston has a nice beach, shops, weather sunny, people".*
- Guy wearing purple circular glasses and beige overalls says *"it's a cliché that Frankston is bad, it's actually quite good, even though there is quite a lot of angst"*.
- As anticipated, engaging with the public via the SPIV in the library proves difficult. People are focussed on their quiet activities and there are not so many people passing through the space.
- A Librarian behind the counter talks about moving to Frankston two years ago. Her reasons being: *"the weather and the people"*. She also has family here in Frankston.
- A man with a patch over his eye writes on the windows but doesn't read the AR/P's response.
- A man with a red shirt at the information counter says that he has lived in Frankston for many years. He describes it as: *"a good place, with a not so good younger crowd"*.
- A guy on street that the AR/P talked to on a previous day asks the AR/P to read his future. She states that he will move to Melbourne and be in a band. He asks what the name of the band will be. The AR/P thinks of suggesting to him the name of a local Frankston street kid, but decides to let him decide for himself.
- A young guy with a black hoody (and an aunty in a fluoro top) hangs around the SPIV. He talks about wanting to find a connection to place and that he is still looking. After a long discussion he confirms that this sense of place and accomplishment is based on relationships with people and the development of particular emotions rather than a connection to a physical setting.
- Basketball school boys in red and blue want to go to USA.
- More drawings on window panels, more hand outlines, more mobile numbers.
- A group of two guys and one girl riding their bike from Canberra to Melbourne, talk about the project for a while. Then one of the guys asks if the AR/P can sign his t-shirt. The AR/P says yes. The guy takes his t-shirt off and gives it to her in the SPIV along with a permanent marker pen. The AR/P writes her message on the t-shirt backwards saying *"Good Luck, thank you for writing on the Surveillance with Public Intent Vehicle Astra"*.
- A girl says that Frankston has a bad image, but that we can change it to a more positive view, as there are a lot of good points.
- *"It's a hole, druggies"*.
- *"There is a different rougher crowd around the station"*.

- The station crowd all have a go writing on the SPIV. Friends get their friends to write, some from previous days. There are many hands around the back of the booth. One of the AR/P's assistants suggests pushing the SPIV back against the wall as all of the 'station people' are meeting up behind the booth for conversation and doing deals.
- The AR/P hears the public say to their friends on mobile phones that they are 'talking to a girl in a box' and that the friends should come to meet them. Often they read parts of the text from the windows to their friends. The AR/P consequently writes new messages for them to tell the person on the other end of the phone. Towards the end of the week the SPIV becomes the place to meet up with friends in Frankston, its presence increasingly well known and respected around town.
- Two women say that they both know the AR/P's work from the Melbourne Laneways project in 2006.
- An older man with a beard and a friend describes how Frankston is bad with druggies: *"I would need hours to talk about it"*. It was interesting that he was making these comments at the same time as the notorious 'druggies' were standing next to him on the other window writing their view about the city.
- A girl exclaims: *"you have more guts than me doing this outside the train station in Frankston"*.
- The girl and guy dressed in 'Manson' gear who spoke about 'boots' come back to talk further. Local writing on the windows are always happy if the AR/P remember them- *"does she remember me also"*, the girl says. The boy then runs after the SPIV as the AR/P and assistants arrive at the WSP. He yells out aloud: *"ah, I heard you speak, the girl in the box can speak!"* He returns to the SPIV the following day and tells everyone crowding around that the AR/P can speak.
- See 'model girl' again.
- Lots of guys try to push the vehicle away, and click off the breaks. A guy in a bright orange t-shirt appears quite hostile towards the project, being quite violent with his words and actions. He then returns later and quietly asks the guy next to him who is writing: *"what should I write, I don't know what to write, what are you writing?"*
- Lot's of people banging on the windows wanting attention.
- The AR/P is asked many times if she smokes, and how she can breathe.
- A group of guys ask *"where is the beach?"* The AR/P gives them directions. They wander off but soon come back to talk more through the SPIV.
- Sam, the guy who had been in a car accident returns. He says that he had specifically come to the city to spend time with the SPIV, but that he must have

just walked past it on his way to the mall. He describes how he had then gone to the WSP to see if the SPIV was there and then walked the streets of Frankston until he found it. When he arrived at the train station the SPIV project was almost finished for the day. He eagerly wrote more on the windows and tried to chat to some of the girls who were standing around writing on the opposite side. Some of them asked him what he was doing, writing on the outside of the SPIV all day. As the AR/P and assistants moved away, he yelled out an offer of an ice cream. He also reiterated that his phone number could be given to any interesting girls that may engage with the project in the days to come.

- A guy yells out of the car: *"oh it's the box girl"*.
- Another guy yells out of the car: *"can I get in the box"*.
- Another man says: *"oh you are getting back in there today are you?"* Then, *"oh you can talk!"*
- After hearing so many comments about Frankston being a "hole", the AR/P started playing word games with the various concepts around a 'w(h)ole' lot of Frankston.

Day 5: Saturday 8.12.07 (Mall at Entrance to Bayside)

Assistant Notes DAY 5:

- *"Frankston has its problems like every suburb except the rich and connected. The train station is a pimple on Frankston's true being"*.
- *"It's got a lot of great things about it"*.
- *"It's a bit rough at times, but very colourful"*.
- *"When I grow up I wanna be just like you!! If I grow up!"*
- *"I think they have not really thought through well. The foreshore in particular could have been very much more attractively done"*.
- *"What can I say it's Frankston, it's a crazy messed up place!"*
- *"Pretty cool, it's the coolest place around"*.
- *"Cos there's a beach and movies and food and everyone's hot!"*
- *"It's a bit small"*.
- *"Frankston is underrated. I moved here when I was 9, no complaints"*.
- **AR/P:** Good place?
- *"Definitely, most of my friends live in St Kilda/Fitzroy"*.

- **AR/P:** Developments?
- *"Those places are nice".*
- *"Like what they have done at the beach, I think I missed the separated Quayside and Bayside. Our school used to play concerts there".*
- *"Apart from the drugs and violence, but that's not exclusive to here".*
- **AR/P:** Station people different?
- *"They can be, everyone I know (myself included) has had problems, fights at the station".*
- **AR/P:** Change?
- *"Almost impossible it's become almost a type of oral culture".*
- **AR/P:** Working with it in adverse place.
- *"Absolutely, it's the same all over the world. People in the UK have the same view about places like Brixton or some parts of Manchester. Undeserved reputations. Actually it's a nice places to live nowadays".*
- *Salvos man: "People of Frankston are tremendous, have a happy Christmas, God Bless You".*
- *"Shopping at beach are positives. Drugs and violence are the negatives".*
- *"Too many smackies".*
- **AR/P:** Change?
- *"Move to city".*
- *"Is this meant to be symbolic? Society should think outside of the 'square'".*
- *Father, counsellor in Frankston: "Drug addictions are a problem, only detox, no programs".*
- **AR/P:** How can we solve this?
- *"Authorities, the Council. I've been trying to do this for the past twenty years!!!"*
- *"The council do not listen".*
- *"Kids get bored in Frankston. Drugs are a problem. They need kid centres".*
- *"Not really, people won't listen".*

- *"Franga, hangas".*
- *"Umm, well sometimes its scary but usually good".*
- *"People want babies".*
- *"People here don't wash, they all smell".*

AR/P Notes DAY 5:

- Girl with a father who is a local counsellor, talks about the drug problems in Frankston. They describe the need for programs not just detox centres. The father comes back later to ask if the AR/P is dyslexic, due to her ability to write backwards.
- Woman with kids says: *"we need more things for children, to keep them entertained."*
- A little girl writes perfectly backwards. She asks many 'grown-up' questions. Her two parents stand watching behind.
- There were hundreds of young kids writing on the SPIV in the mall on the final day. It was challenging for the AR/P to keep up with the three to six conversations at once.
- A woman said: *"we need more support for youth here".*
- Many more mobile numbers were left on the windows along with the typical Frankston image.
- Many pictures were drawn on the SPIV over the course of the week to describe how people felt about Frankston. These ranged from: flowers, to devil ears around the AR/P's face, to a window where the AR/P could metaphorically break through to escape, hands, ghosts, rocket people, little girls, Christmas trees, and black 'holes'.
- The locals Zeb, Smokey and Tim, as well as the 'Manson' boy and girl come back to say hi.
- A girl says it's the authorities responsibility to deal with the problems.
- A man working for the Salvation Army writes a few points on the SPIV. He then stays standing near the SPIV shaking his coin collection bucket due to the large crowd gathering around.
- A guy from Germany writes on the back of the SPIV.
- Two guys discuss issues in their life. They start writing numbers all the way down one of the window panels. Firstly starting with 1. Money, followed

closely behind by 2. God, and so on. For the Money issue, the AR/P suggests that they think of something innovative and then make it their own.. and so the conversation continues.

- There is a lot of banging against the SPIV, with a number of locals wanting to wheel it away, or making joking comments.
- Similar questions about: "is their air, do you smoke, where do you go to the toilet, where do you eat and drink etc.?"
- Quite a lot of people who interact with the SPIV, say that the council knows there are a lot of problems but they do not do anything about it. These individuals argue that it is the Council's responsibility to deal with the pressing social issues of Frankston.
- More terms such as: "*druggies, smakies, ferrals*" used to describe the troublesome locals and longer descriptions about violence and fights.
- Comments that the beach and shops are good are repeated many times.
- The local redevelopment is generally considered to be good for Frankston.
- A woman talks about the local youth with bad behaviour. She says that "*you can't fix it, because they won't listen, they are too full of themselves these days*".
- Woman comes up and says "*that's not how you spell place with an 'S'*". One of the AR/P's assistants mentions to her that the AR/P did not write that word and that "*anyway I don't think it's a spelling test*". The woman says "*I'm a school teacher, that's why I notice these things*".
- A woman wearing an off the shoulder brown summer dress with a bourbon can in her hand, is the last person the AR/P speaks with on Saturday. She comes up to the SPIV and the AR/P asks how she is going. She shrugs her shoulders looking unhappy and says she is just OK. The AR/P asks her why this is the case and she begins writing her story as tears stream from her eyes. She describes how her son had been taken away from her today and would likely be with his father in QLD for the next two to six months. He was in hospital at the moment and she would need to deal with lawyers to get him back. She said that she was hoping to stay in Frankston with her son when and if she got him back. She wrote that she shouldn't be drinking this (alcohol) but was visibly very weak and upset. At the end of the conversation, the woman wrote "thank you" many times stating: "*it's good to talk to someone who I don't know*". The AR/P got out of the SPIV shortly after to wheel it back to the WSP space and the woman came back to give the AR/P a hug. This was a very touching and special interaction, witnessed by many locals who had been watching the story unfold.
- The AR/P appears is attributed various roles within the SPIV project as: a researcher, a friend, a local information provider, a counsellor, a matchmaker, a clairvoyant, an entertainer and a careers advisor.

4. Concluding Remarks

The availability of the White Street Project space proved beneficial for the AR/P to work in before and after the SPIV deployment each day. Having a space available to quietly transcribe the recordings of the day, to download the footage and evaluate the ideas that had been generated through the SPIV project proved invaluable. The proximity of the WSP space in central Frankston nearby the various locations where the SPIV was deployed each day was efficient.

Having the WSP space available also encouraged the AR/P to think of new ways to represent the research material in an exhibition format. New ideas for future projects were also inspired by the deployment of the SPIV in Frankston in terms of new methods of re-telling stories and visual representations of conversations and data.

The SPIV project inspired discussions about the city, which may have otherwise not occurred, particularly as it engaged with people who may not have felt comfortable disclosing their views in a different surveying format. The interactions and friendships that developed between strangers through the simple act of writing on the SPIV was significant. Many locals who wrote comments on the SPIV, said they would approach Frankston City Council to continue their discussions.

There was also a strong sense that locals wanted to challenge and ultimately change the negative stereotypes about Frankston, instead reflecting the positive experience that many citizens genuinely had within the city. How such discussions could be facilitated long term (beyond the scope of the SPIV project) was worth considering.