

# Honk if you're having fun

AGRON LATIFI 21 Jan 2017, 3:30 p.m.

Community music activist Linsey Pollak isn't easily impressed.



MUSICAL CELEBRATION: Young and old musicians from far and wide dropped by the Arts Precinct in Wollongong to perform in the Honk! Oz festival.

Picture: Adam McLean

But the man best known for turning a carrot into a clarinet during a Ted X talk – which has had more than six million YouTube views since 2014 – couldn't help but be inspired by his fellow street musicians in Wollongong on Saturday.

About 150 musicians gathered in the Arts Precinct to perform en masse the 'Honkski Oro' piece Pollak and fellow Queensland composer Tunjii Beier wrote specifically for the Honk! Oz Festival.

The large scale musical composition officially brought to a close the third annual festival, which started on Wednesday and saw dozens of bands

roaming the city streets to perform free gigs from January 19-21.

Pollak, who is no stranger to the city, having performed and run workshops in all three festivals to date, felt the 2017 edition was the best on record.

“You can see there is an increased quality in all the different bands I’ve seen each year,” he said.

“They are definitely improving by being inspired by this festival and seeing other bands growing in that way. But more importantly there is a good community feeling. It is like family coming back together each year.”

Pollak said the beauty of the festival was that it brought musicians and the community together.

“Music connects us all and it can bind people together,” he said.



**COLOURFUL:** Community activist Linsey Pollak was front and centre for the Honkski Oro performance on Saturday in Wollongong. Picture: Adam McLean

“But in a way in our society we have lost that a little bit. We are all listening to iPods and downloading music.

“This [Honk] is a way of getting music to be something we create and do

ourselves.

“And this style of music is very infectious. It’s very funky and just gives people a big smile on their face and it brings people together.

“The Honk festival is a phenomenon that started in the States [US] but is something that is going to grow here hopefully. Each year it gets a little bit bigger and most importantly it binds the community together.”

Pollak credits Con Artists’ leader David Rooney for a lot of Honk’s success in Wollongong.



**KING OF THE KIDS:** David Rooney leading the kids Honk band in performance. More than 70 kids took part in the Honk! Oz festival. Picture: Adam McLean

Rooney himself felt one of the major festival highlights was the Eat Street Market collaboration.

“It was very busy and the street bands were surrounded by people and that’s what we want,” he said.

“The rain affected things on Friday a little bit but the musicians kept playing and were all very positive.

“One of the other highlights of this year was the kids Honk band which had 70 kids in it playing pieces that they learned over two sessions and they performed twice in the festival. It’s been great.”

The story [Honk if you’re having fun](#) first appeared on [Illawarra Mercury](#).