

# INTRODUCTION



*Dust* Writer,  
Director and  
Producer,  
Donna Jackson

The inspiration for this book 'arrived' while I was having lunch and a glass of wine with five women at a café in Melbourne. These women have three things in common: they are funny, they are brave and all five have lost their husbands from exposure to asbestos.

Over several years Nicki Hanslow, Lorraine Faulkner, Diane Harris, Win Smythe and Barbara Peck have met to support and advise me as I attempted to write a theatre show about a widely-used mineral which can cause cancer. They look like pleasant middle-aged, well-dressed ladies. However, if you ask them about asbestos their eyes as a group turn to steel and you can feel anger swell to fill even the largest restaurant.

It was Lorraine's idea to extend the life of *Dust* by making a version of the script available in a book. She said, "We should get the play made into a book so it can be presented in schools and studied. It could also be performed by choirs and community groups". For this purpose, the book contains the theatre show script and a concert version of the show. We invite you to explore them, perform them, use them and pass them on.

In the development of the book it became apparent that an explanation of the thinking and processes behind the work was necessary. For that reason we have treated *Dust* as a case study. You can read this book from cover to cover or explore sections of it.

**The Journey to *Dust*** contains articles on the inspiration and influences used to create the style and content of the work. The method used to develop and structure it, is also presented.

**Creating *Dust*** contains articles from eight colleagues who discuss the way they work and/or their experience on the project.

**The Impact of *Dust*** features articles from Lindy Allen, the evaluator of the last two seasons of *Dust*. She discusses her framework and the processes she used to prove that *Dust* did create social change.

**The Script** contains the script of the theatre show.

**Resources for Use** comprises the concert version of the show, a recording of the songs by Mark Seymour and a copy of the half-hour ABC documentary *Making Dust* by Malcolm McKinnon. Here you will also find the song scores, learning resources, and a bibliography.

This case study is a unique opportunity to examine a large-scale arts project from conception to execution and to hear from a wide range of protagonists and participants. It offers a model and methodology, which can be transferred to other arts projects. The evaluation can be used to argue for the important role the arts can play in social change. The book is offered as a stimulus for study and debate and as a resource.

Nicki, Lorraine, Diane, Win and Barbara inspired me and extended my arts practice. I hope you find some of that as you explore this book.

**DONNA JACKSON**