

NEW RESEARCH INTO VALUE OF CULTURAL TOURISM INVESTMENT

Regional Arts Australia (RAA) and Culture Counts have released new research findings on cultural tourism demonstrating the major influence that arts and cultural events have in driving tourism to regional and remote Australia.

The *RAA Cultural Tourism Accelerator Program 2021-2022 Research Project* indicates that arts and cultural activity in regional and remote Australia creates significant economic impact and community connection.

Culture Counts evaluated 321 events and activities supported by the Australian Government's Cultural Tourism Accelerator Program during 2021 and 2022.

Key findings from the research report show:

- 70% of visitors indicated that the supported event influenced their decision to travel to the local area, with 29% indicating this was their first visit to the area.
- The direct economic impact generated by attendees surveyed was over \$304.8 million, 60 times the total investment in the Cultural Tourism Accelerator Program.
- 91% of survey respondents said they would come an event like this again.

In addition to the research project findings, RAA have released a suite of cases studies from the Cultural Tourism Accelerator Program, including participants in an extension of the Program, the Cultural Tourism Generator. The Generator supported small to medium sized organisations to develop cultural tourism projects through sector mentorship. Each recipient was allocated an industry expert to develop capacity to deliver a tourism and audience-focused project.

One case study features 'The Fish on a Bike Returns', an Eyre Peninsula showcase event which saw a 500% increase on anticipated visitation.

Grant recipients, Eyre Arts Action Incorporated shared "The event assisted in filling a cultural gap in visitor marketing and has reinforced the potential benefits for the local economy to reach out to foster stronger links with the wider Peninsula arts communities."

RAA Executive Director, Ros Abercrombie, says “This research project demonstrates the value of investment into cultural tourism for regional, rural and remote communities. RAA is committed to supporting the continued development of strategic sector development activities and programs, building community capacity and leveraging cross industry partnerships.”

The Cultural Tourism Accelerator Program was an Australian Government initiative delivered through the Regional Arts Fund to help strengthen local visitor economies. The Program sought to increase tourism visitation in regional, rural, and remote communities across Australia, by providing financial support for the promotion of arts and cultural activities.

Grants through the Program ranged from \$2,500 to \$15,000 and assisted artists and arts and cultural organisations to deliver targeted marketing campaigns, develop industry partnerships, create new visitor experiences and work with tourism sector mentors.

The full report and case studies are available on the Regional Arts Australia website: regionalarts.com.au/publications/cta-research

About the Regional Arts Fund

The Regional Arts Fund supports cultural development in regional, remote and rural communities in Australia. The program is managed by Regional Arts Australia and organisations in each state and territory on behalf of the Australian Government. On 30 January 2023, the Government announced an increase to the Regional Arts Fund of \$8.5 million over four years as part of *Revive: a place for every story, a story for every place*.

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