

Bushfire Recovery through arts and culture

28 new Regional Arts Fund projects valued at \$568,165 supported

The Australian Government's Regional Arts Fund (RAF) will support 28 new projects across New South Wales and South Australia, with activity starting from January 2021.

Regional New South Wales and South Australia were hard hit by the 2019-2020 bushfires and recovery is a prominent theme of the second Project Grants round. Projects in Kangaroo Island, Deniliquin, Jingellic, Mount Adra, Thathra and Port Macquarie will all have specific bushfire recovery themes.

Through these projects, local artists and communities will engage with each other and begin the recovery process. Regional Arts Australia's Executive Director Ros Abercrombie said:

"Arts and culture play a critical role in contributing to the creativity and diversity of Australia's regional and rural communities and have the potential to lead social, economic and community recovery."

The practice of having professional artists embedded in and working with communities to produce work that is relevant to 'place' is also predominant in this round. In South Australia a suite of music created with and for kindergarten children in Mt Gambier, a series of visual arts workshops for people with a lived experience of domestic abuse and family violence in Whyalla and a skate park mural with Aboriginal youth in Renmark all received funding.

Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, said that it was great to see the Government's Regional Arts Fund was supporting recovery for artists and communities following the bushfires of last summer.

"Through this targeted funding we are helping artists to develop new works and performances, and create opportunities to engage with their local communities," Minister Fletcher said.

"We know our regional and remote communities have been hit hard this year, and these new projects across NSW and South Australia will support economic, social and cultural development in their communities."

In NSW, 5 projects that are First Nations-led and specifically benefit First Nations people and communities have been supported. There will be an artist development and culture camp in Corindi, cultural murals in Coleambally, and the Condo SkyFest in Condobolin in 2021. In Narrandera, the Ngarru Miimi Spring Fashion Parade and a performance spectacle to celebrate the unbelievable story of Lismore-born Aboriginal circus performer, Con Colleano in Lismore will be realised.

In terms of support for artforms, visual arts and cross artform are well supported, with 74 per cent of the funds going towards these art practices.

As we continue to navigate the challenges of 2020, the Regional Arts Fund is providing access to resources across all States and Territories alongside the targeted Covid 19 Recovery Boost funding. Program announcements and funding timelines are different in each state and territory. Please refer to the Regional Arts Fund administrators' websites for details and timelines in each State and Territory.

For the full list of funded projects, visit <https://regionalarts.com.au/regional-arts-fund/about-regional-arts-fund> and download the National Recipients List '2020 - community grants - round 02'.

To explore our visual data narrative of the national regional arts landscape, displayed by electorate, project type, artform, beneficiary and funding value visit regionalarts.com.au/regional-arts-fund/raf-projects-and-data.

Examples of outstanding projects:

en plein air Films, Kangaroo Island, SA

\$30,000

Church Road

Church Road is a storytelling project with local residents focusing on the events that occurred during the Kangaroo Island fires in January 2020. Newly formed production group, en plein air Films, will make a short film in response to the impact that the fires had on the natural environment and the lives of the people on the island.

Jennifer Bourne, Port Augusta, SA

\$14,998

Design and Yardage Screenprinting Mentorship

Emerging textile artist Jenny Bourne will undertake a mentorship in yardage screen-printing with textile artist Rae O'Connell. Jenny will invite other regional artists to take part in workshops with the artist's rare screen print yardage table, as a way of revitalising an art form that is at risk of dying out.

SeedArts Australia, New Italy, NSW

\$30,000

River Crossing: a community highwire event exploring place and identity

River Crossing will be a site-based performance spectacle to celebrate and bring to life the unbelievable story of Lismore-born Aboriginal circus performer, Con Colleano in a 'death defying' 85 metre long highwire crossing suspended over Lismore's Wilson River. Featuring four emerging Aboriginal leaders and two professional wire artists, the event will be presented in August 2021, alongside Karla Dickens' large-scale outdoor visual art tribute to Con Colleano featuring local emerging and professional Indigenous artists.

Fiona Smith, Bourke, NSW

\$30,000

From Bourke with Love

Inspired by Allan Clarke, who left his remote NSW town of Bourke to become an award-winning journalist, young people in the community of Bourke will take part in a structured, staged cultural program which will encourage, mentor, teach and train them to interview, film and create stories of their town. These recordings will become a series of multimedia projects, expressing the young people's creativity and combining First People's oral traditions with multimedia storytelling.

For media comment please contact:

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