

CONNECTIONS

REGIONAL ARTS FUND 2016-2021



REGIONAL ARTS AUSTRALIA
ACKNOWLEDGES THE
TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER CUSTODIANS OF
COUNTRY THROUGHOUT
AUSTRALIA AND PAY OUR
RESPECT TO THEM, THEIR
CULTURE AND THEIR
ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND
FUTURE.

Regional Arts Australia is the national voice for arts in regional Australia.

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WELCOME

In 2016 the Australian Government and Regional Arts Australia entered into a funding agreement for the delivery of the Regional Arts Fund over five years. Regional Arts Australia worked with Regional Program Administrators in each state and territory to deliver a total of \$17.6 million through a devolved funding model.

The Regional Arts Fund is an Australian Government program that supports sustainable cultural development in regional and remote communities in Australia.

Over the following pages we highlight some of the outcomes and impacts of the Regional Arts Fund over the period between 1 July, 2016 and 30 June, 2021.

The delivery of the Regional Arts Fund resulted in 1716 grants invested in over 700 cities, towns and villages across regional and remote Australia.

It has to be said that 2016-2021 provided the country with some major challenges, nationwide bushfires events, flooding and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Time and time again, what we discovered, within all that vulnerability was the strength and resilience of both regional and remote Australia and the arts sector.

These challenges also drew attention to the adaptability of the delivery model of the Regional Arts Fund, as well as its administrators, demonstrating responsiveness to both urgent and longer-term needs of the sector.

Regional Arts Australia recognises that regional Australia is not a homogenous place and encourages programs that support a creative ecosystem that is interconnected and integrated across art forms, across communities and across landscapes.

The cultural and creative industries play a critical role in contributing to the creativity, diversity and prosperity of Australia's regional and rural economy. They are a crucial element in the make-up of future liveable regions and are central to thriving and healthy communities and sustainable social and economic growth.

Regional Arts Australia's guiding principle is that 'place' is central to creative practice. It provides profound practical and emotional links between the economies and synergies of artistic and cultural practice.

Place-based programs such as the Regional Arts Fund seed longer-term cultural and economic sustainability, boosting local capacity, diversifying audience engagement and increasing accessibility and connection.

Regional Arts Australia is immensely proud of the outcomes of the Regional Arts Fund, and we whole-heartedly thank the Australian Government, the Regional Program Administrators who were responsible for delivering the Community Grants rounds, Quick Response Grants, Cultural Worker Position funding and delivering a number of National Strategic Projects, and the thousands of artists who made the projects happen. We look forward to the continued future impact of the Regional Arts Fund.

Ros Abercrombie
Executive Director
Regional Arts Australia



OBJECTIVES

OF THE REGIONAL ARTS FUND 2016-2021

The Regional Arts Fund (RAF) is an Australian Government program that supports sustainable cultural development in regional and remote communities in Australia. The objectives of the Regional Arts Fund between 2016-2021 were:

1

ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

2

DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS WHICH LEVERAGE SUPPORT FOR PROJECTS AND ENCOURAGE ONGOING COLLABORATION

3

DEVELOP AUDIENCES AND BROADEN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ARTS

4

INCREASE EMPLOYMENT, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND PROFILE OF REGIONAL AND REMOTE ARTISTS



KEY OUTCOMES

2016-2021

\$17.6M
INVESTED

10K +
PEOPLE
EMPLOYED

1716
GRANTS

8.3M+
AUDIENCE

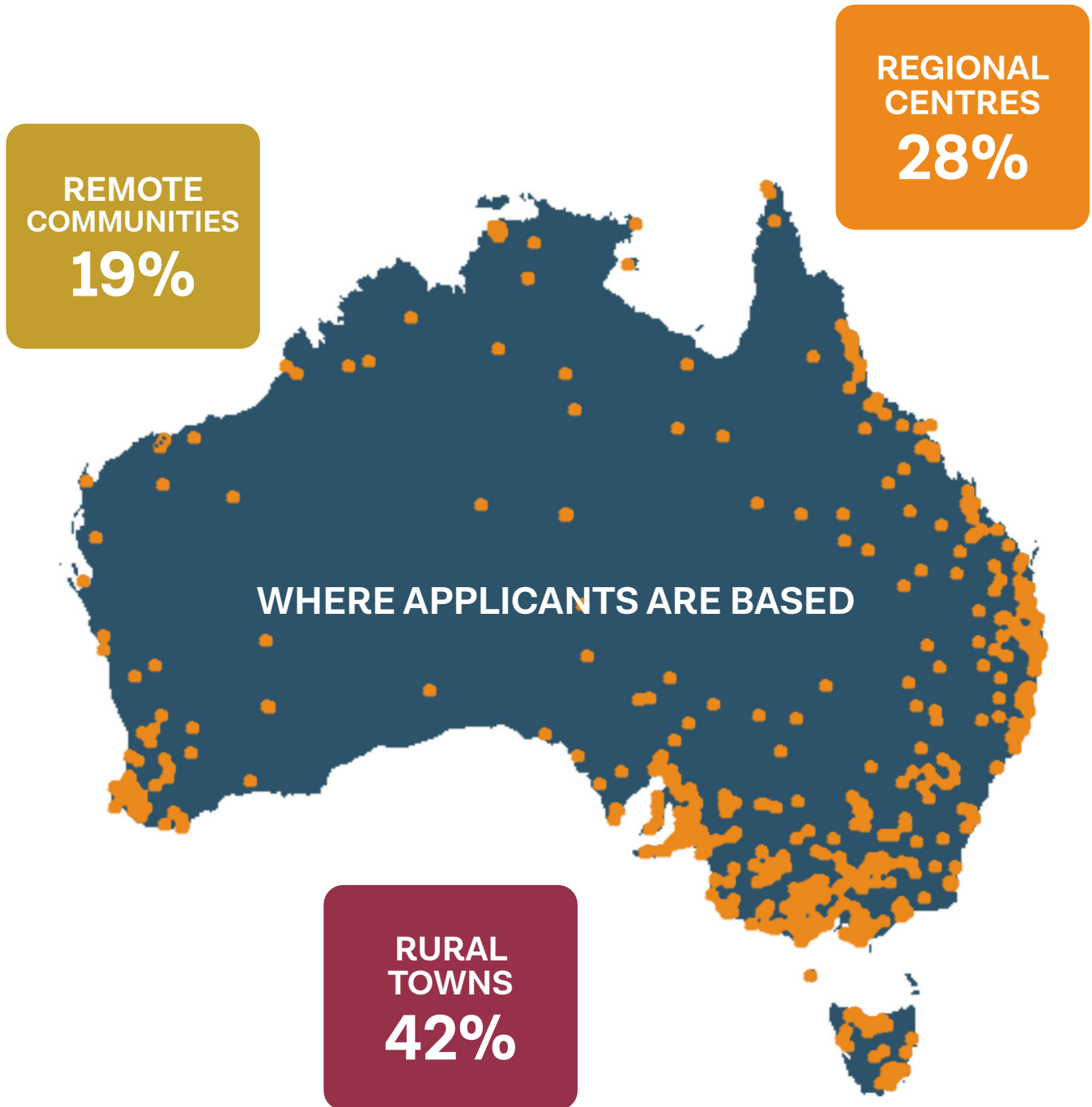
700+
LOCATIONS

96K+
PARTICIPANTS

\$27M +
LEVERAGED

LOCATION

The Regional Arts Fund is supporting regional stories and new cultural works to be expressed, playing an important part in Australia's cultural life. During 2016-2021 the Regional Arts Fund supported cultural activity in over 700 locations across regional and remote Australia.



Eligibility to the Regional Arts Fund is based on applicant location under the Modified Monash Model. Applicants based in MM1 - Metropolitan Areas are ineligible to apply. Projects can be delivered in MM1 areas by applicants based in MM2-MM7 areas. The majority of projects delivered in MM1 were applicants taking up professional development opportunities in metropolitan areas.

CASE STUDY

RAISING THE PROFILE OF REGIONAL ARTISTS

LILLARDIA BRIGGS-HOUSTON | NGARRU MIIMI SPRING FASHION PARADE



A textile design studio space was set up by Lillardia Briggs-Houston to create a couture fashion range under her First Nations ethical fashion label Ngarru Miimi. The collection was inspired by Lillardia's cultural heritage that expresses original designs in printing, painting, jewellery and accessories. Originally, the collection was to be presented at the Ngarru Miimi Spring Fashion Parade 2021 that was planned as a streamed digital event in Narrungdera on Country. However, Covid-19 lockdowns, community vulnerability risks and vaccine restrictions impacted the outcome of having either a live or digitally streamed event.

Through this period Lillardia worked on the couture collection with the support of the project funding. She was then invited to be part of both the National Indigenous Fashion Awards and Australian Fashion Week 2021. This high-profile showcasing garnered her a major audience both live and digitally, and was quickly followed by national press coverage of both Lillardia and her collection, leading to the collection being sold out. The funding supported a major step in Lillardia's couture fashion business development that she feels will lead to its sustainability in the future.

Lillardia continues to benefit from the showcasing in 2021 through an ongoing national profile. Her clothes have been featured in major fashion publications and the mainstream national media. In April 2022 her work made the cover of Vogue. Lillardia continues to be a progressive role model and public figure for her ethical First Nations fashion work that promotes the Australian First Nations cultural significance.

\$26K
PROJECT GRANT

760
LIVE AUDIENCE



\$13K
LEVERAGED

15K+
DIGITAL AUDIENCE

NARRANDERA
NSW

CASE STUDY

INCREASING EMPLOYMENT, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SECOND ECHO | THE BRIDGE, THE CHAIN, DRY YOUR EYES

Founded in 2005, Second Echo Ensemble is a Hobart-based dance and performing arts company, made up of both artists living with disability and artists who are not. It has premiered twelve major works, toured within Australia and internationally.

During the funding period, Second Echo received three Project Grants and one Quick Response grant supporting them to strengthen their connections to community, develop ongoing partnerships and networks and raise the profile of artists with disability.

In 2019, a \$5,000 Project Grant enabled creative development community workshops for *Let Me Dry Your Eyes*. The work is based on the friendship forged between 10-year-old dancer Alma Faludi and Dave Montgomery. Further development in 2021, saw the work evolve into site-specific work programmed by Mona Foma.

In 2020, two Project Grants supported works by director, musician and performance artist, Luke John Campbell.

The ability to fund creative development and research through the Regional Arts Fund has allowed Second Echo to be more expansive and creatively adventurous in the early stages of their works, to develop partners and provide ongoing creative and career development of artists with disability.



\$16.5K
OVER 4 GRANTS

1000
LIVE AUDIENCE



\$86K
LEVERAGED

3
NEW WORKS

**HOBART
TAS**

TYPES OF GRANTS

During the period of the Funding Agreement, a total of 1716 grants were allocated to the value of \$14.8 million. These were awarded under the following four streams. Regional Arts Australia oversaw the Regional Program Administrators delivery of competitive grant rounds in the Project and National Strategic Project programs.

COMMUNITY PROJECT GRANTS

Project Grants were awarded through competitive funding rounds to artists and not-for-profit organisations for high-quality arts projects benefitting regional or remote artists, arts workers, audiences, and communities.

602
GRANTS
\$9.3M

QUICK RESPONSE GRANTS

Quick Response Grants assisted regional artists, arts organisations and communities to take up professional or skills development or small project opportunities that arose at short notice.

1074
GRANTS
\$2.2M

CULTURAL WORKERS PROGRAM

Regional Program Administrators could apply to allocate a portion of its grant funding to support regional Cultural Worker positions, and facilitate the development of local arts programs and initiatives.

10
GRANTS
\$1.3M

STRATEGIC PROJECT GRANTS

Regional Arts Australia coordinated a National Strategic Program that facilitated opportunities to strengthen artistic and creative practice and increase the access and participation of artists and organisations working in regional communities.

30
GRANTS
\$2.1M

PEOPLE

AUDIENCE, PARTICIPATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Over the course of the funding period applicants to the Regional Arts Fund reported over 10,725 employment opportunities, 96,309 active participants and over 8.3 million live and digital attendees. Professional development remains a significant feature of the Regional Arts Fund with 730 projects (42%) focussing on professional development.

730
PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT
PROJECTS

96K+
PARTICIPANTS

267
FIRST NATIONS
PROJECTS

10K +
PEOPLE
EMPLOYED

146
YOUTH
PROJECTS

53
CALD
PROJECTS

CASE STUDY

BROADENING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ARTS

NORTHERN TERRITORY TRAVELLING FILM FESTIVAL WORKSHOP PROGRAM



The Northern Territory Travelling Film Festival's (NTTFF) workshop program was uniquely designed in each community in partnership with key local arts and community organisations, local filmmakers and schools. Desired new skills and experiences were identified within three key groups – emerging filmmakers, established filmmakers and young people; current local equipment was audited and a film professional development facilitator identified. Based on this, a bespoke program of workshops, industry knowledge sharing and masterclasses were created and delivered in the lead up to the festival. The outcomes were then screened on the big screen at the NTTFF.

Program participants created new content and completed existing ongoing community film projects that required specialist skills.

They built connections with industry, maintained and created creative partnerships and pathways for creation and screening of NT film content.

Community benefits were especially important for young people. Being part of a workshop program and screening allowed them to explore a new creative media for sharing their stories. The opportunity for young people to participate in high quality facilitated workshops with their peers also develops a community environment to test and explore individual abilities. The program encourages positive group dynamics, helps participants build self-esteem, and builds trust amongst participants that has long lasting effects for young people's social and family dynamics.

\$20K
OVER 4 GRANTS

3300
LIVE AUDIENCE



7
REMOTE
COMMUNITIES

250
PARTICIPANTS

**NORTHERN
TERRITORY**

CASE STUDY

DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS WHICH LEVERAGE SUPPORT

ANNETTE CARMICHAEL | THE BEAUTY INDEX

\$62.5K
PROJECT GRANT

\$174K
LEVERAGED

20+
ARTISTS
EMPLOYED

1500+
AUDIENCE



**DENMARK
WA**

Annette Carmichael is a choreographer and dance artist based in Denmark, Western Australia. After establishing her own company, Annette Carmichael Projects, she received funding to create a trilogy of dance works, *The Beauty Index*, involving activities across regional areas in WA with amateur dancers and community members.

In 2017 the first work *The Beauty Index* brought together 17 men from different backgrounds, many of whom had never danced before. The participants, including 'men from old families, the football club, the local high school, a physio from Albany, many who were unemployed, men with differing abilities and physical traits' were trained over 23 weeks before performing the work to the Denmark community as part of a local festival, Brave New Works.

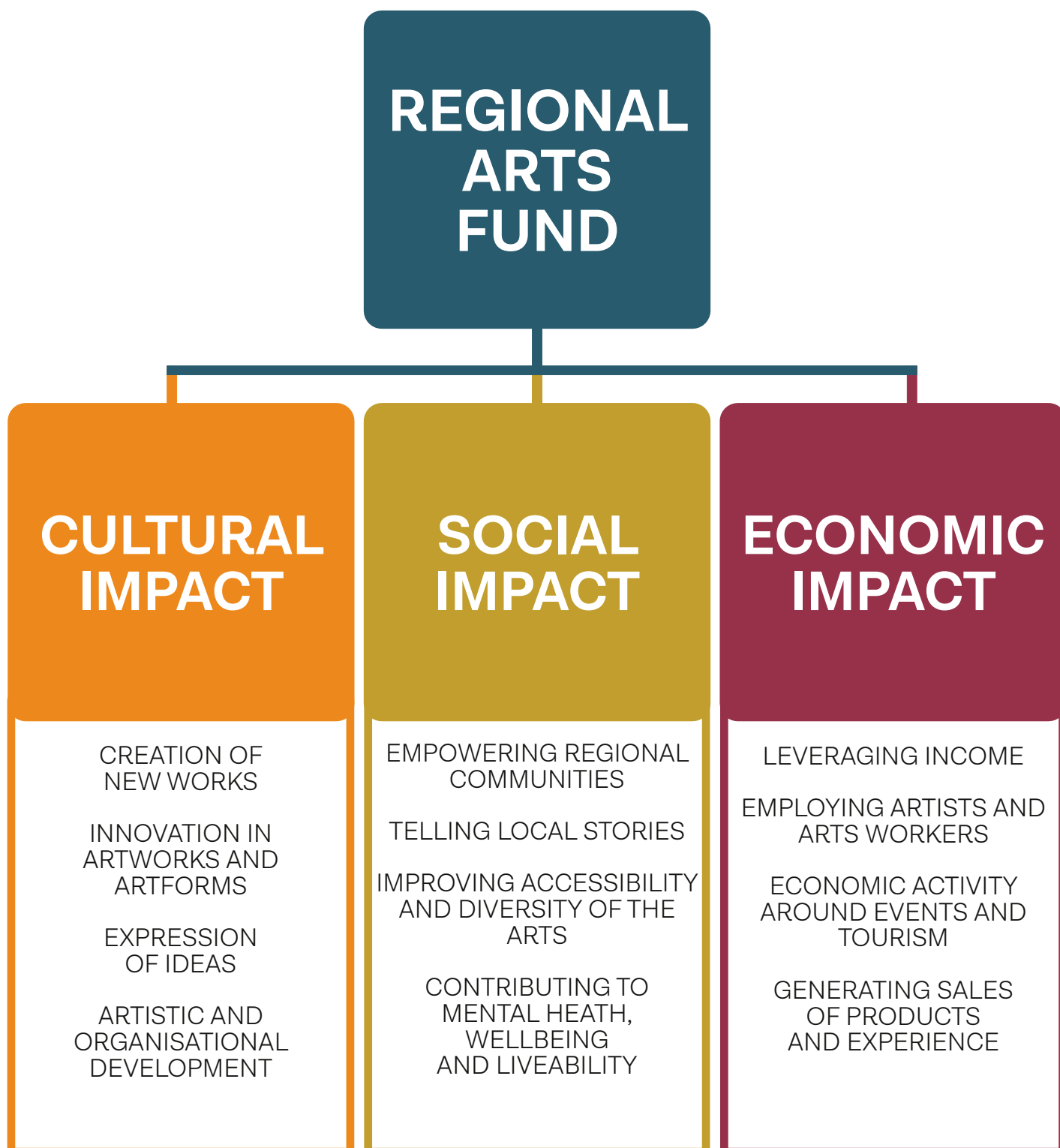
In 2019, \$29,900 in Project Grant funding was provided to support *Chorus*, the third work in *The Beauty Index* trilogy. An exploration of family violence, *Chorus* was based in 4 communities across WA – Denmark, Ravensthorpe, Albany and Bunbury – with a local artist training the performers in each community. Finally, the 150 participants came together in Denmark to perform for an audience of over 1000 people.

Both projects played a vital role in the development of Annette's career. She has gone on to receive further funding for Distributed 15, a project aimed at developing producers in the regions, as well as WA State Government Regional Artist Fellowship to write a book about *The Beauty Index: Why Men Who Dance are Happy*.



IMPACTS

Analysis of data from almost 1,700 projects, 35 stakeholder interviews and 8 case studies in the *Regional Arts Fund 2016-2021: Impact Analysis* (Patternmakers, 2022), demonstrates that 'The arts are having cross-sector impacts – and there is an increasing awareness of the non-artistic outcomes of regional arts.' There is evidence that all funded activities (whether that be grants or strategic initiatives) have cultural, social and economic outcomes.



CASE STUDY

SUPPORTING SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

ADELAIDE HILLS COUNCIL | WEAVING STORIES

After a four-week residency in Lobethal, Vic McEwan from the Cad Factory created a performative installation sharing the stories of the people who made the famous Onkaparinga blankets. Dramatic, large-scale projections, performances and installations presented the experiences of former workers and celebrated the 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Onkaparinga Mill.

Adelaide Hills Council has developed an Arts and Heritage Hub on the site of the former Onkaparinga Woollen Mill in Lobethal. The Hub is called Fabrik and is set in the striking industrial buildings of the former Onkaparinga Woollen Mill. Their visions for the future include gallery spaces, artist studios, workshops, artists in residence, a retail store and a heritage display celebrating the history of the Mill.

This project aimed to facilitate meaningful engagement with the community by connecting with a significant theme and by activating the Mill's heritage space. As one of the first major projects since Fabrik was announced, *Weaving Stories* aimed to demonstrate ways artists will be at the centre of Fabrik's activities and development, working across disciplines, providing high level outcomes and engaging closely with community issues, even difficult ones.

The public showing of these stories was a powerful experience for viewers, contributing to community pride and a sense that the stories of former Mill workers are respected and celebrated. With its use of spectacle and scale, the project introduced the community to the potential of the arts for interpreting and presenting historical themes.

\$16K
PROJECT GRANT

\$36K
LEVERAGED

7
ARTISTS

515
PARTICIPANTS

2
ARTISTS
EMPLOYED

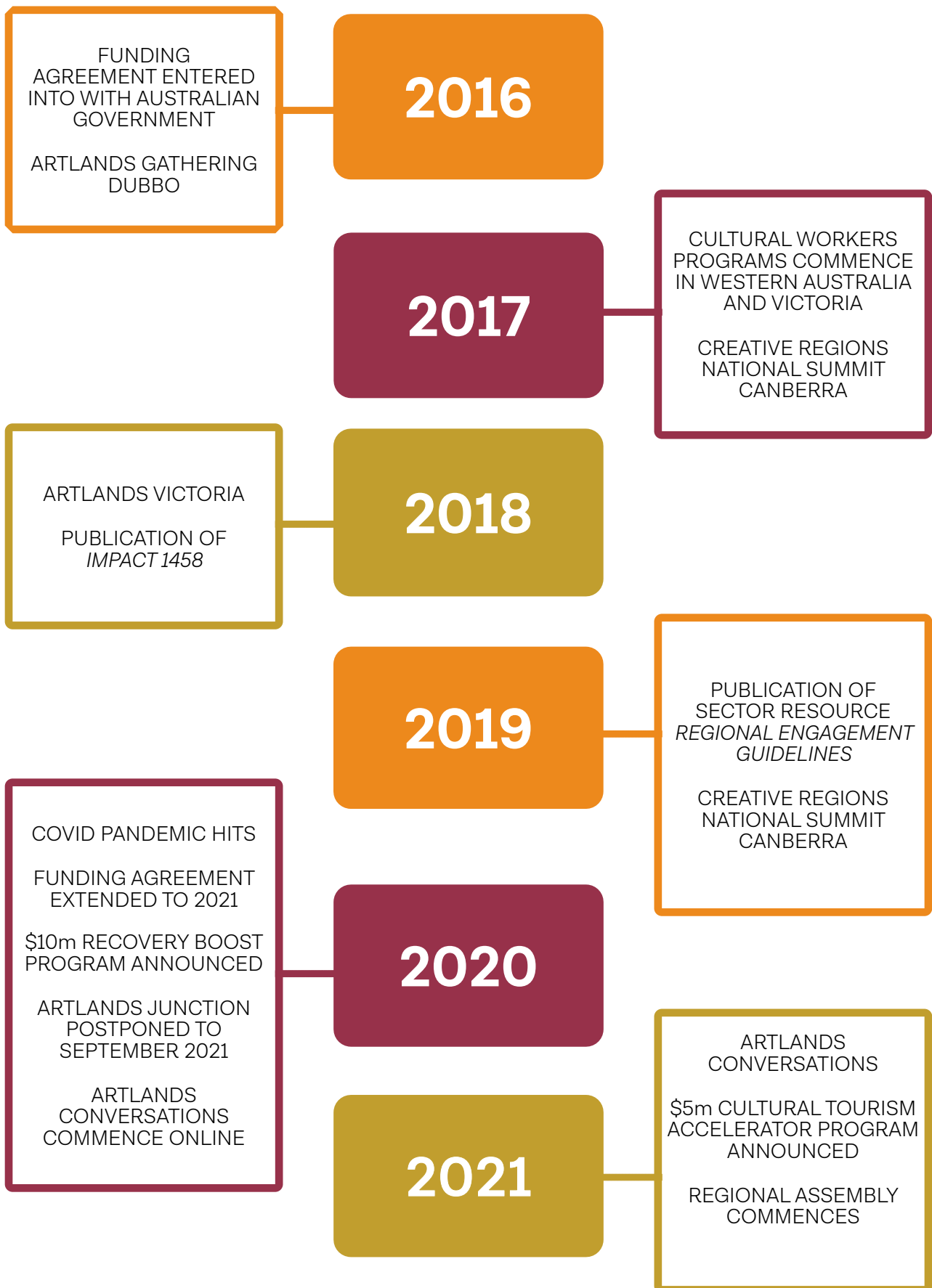


LOBETHAL
SA



TIMELINE

KEY HIGHLIGHTS



CASE STUDY

DEVELOPING AUDIENCES

JULIE HIGGS | A DIFFERENT KIND OF WONDERING

Artist Julia Higgs invited the community of Bowen in Queensland to experience a normal day a little differently, through the visual arts.

Five different, wearable, sculptural creatures were created in wire, papier-mâché and second-hand fabrics and were worn by five different people. The creatures traveled around Bowen and interacted with people at various locations. The creatures did things at multiple sites such as hanging out at Horseshoe Bay, going to the park, and walking down the main street. People came up to the wearable creatures with intrigue and delight. They were excited to see the wearable creatures in a familiar place. The creatures were bright, flamboyant and moving, and this attracted much attention.

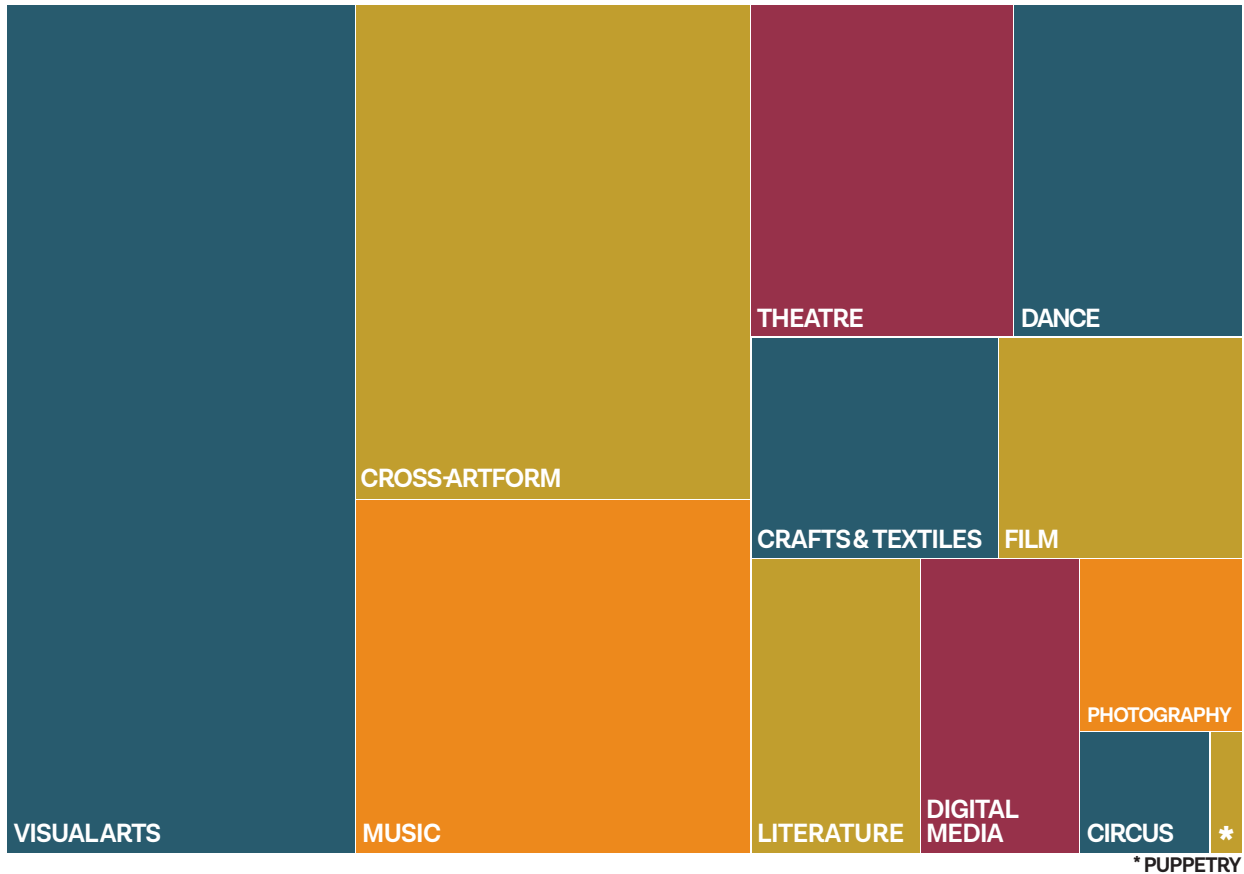
This project aimed to add fun, spontaneity, play and curiosity in Bowen through the arts and performance encouraging positive group dynamics, helping participants build self-esteem, and building trust amongst participants that has long lasting effects for young people's social and family dynamics.

This project used common public spaces to connect people together in a fun and engaging manner. By using and presenting this work in public spaces it fostered and strengthened the town's identity, celebrating place, and igniting community imagination through the arts. *A Different Kind of Wondering* brought art to familiar spaces, engaged in community connection, people and place, and allowed for a new type of experience in a regional town.



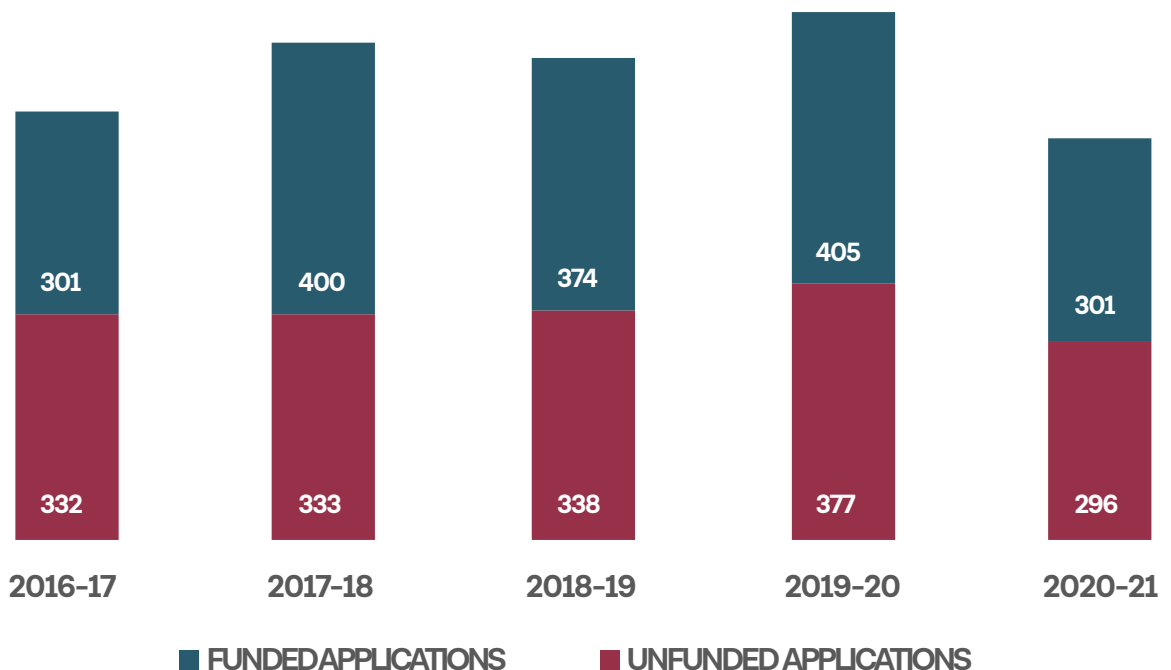
ARTFORMS

Applicants are asked to identify the main artform of their project. The visual arts were consistently the most successful artform funded across 2016-2021 along with cross-artform and music.



The demand for the Regional Arts Fund competitive grants is illustrated below. The graph represents the number of eligible applications funded and unfunded during the period 2016-2021.

DEMAND



STRATEGIC PROJECTS

As the national voice for arts in regional Australia, Regional Arts Australia supported high quality practice through professional development opportunities and cross-sector projects. With the support of the Regional Arts Fund, Regional Arts Australia coordinated a National Strategic Program that facilitated opportunities to strengthen artistic and creative practice and increase the access and participation of artists and organisations working in regional communities.

Key projects delivered by Regional Arts Australia included the publication of the Regional Engagement Guidelines, travel support for artists to attend Artlands in Dubbo, Bendigo and Launceston, the National Regional Arts Fellowships (2020 and 2021), Artlands Launceston, online Conversations series and the Creative Regions National Summits in Canberra (2017 and 2019).

Key projects delivered by the Regional Program Administrators include South Australia's Engaging Young People in the Arts Framework and Darwin Community Arts' RAF in the Bush.

The objectives of our National Strategic Program were to:

1

Elevate and build the practice of artists and arts workers across regional and remote Australia.

2

Raise the profile of artists and arts workers across a range of artforms, stages of career, duration and geographies.

3

Provide professional and industry development opportunities.

4

Build connection and generate exchange.

5

Generate strategic, collaborative relationships for the benefit of arts and creative practice across the country.



CASE STUDY

BROADENING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH THE ARTS

DARWIN COMMUNITY ARTS | RAF IN THE BUSH

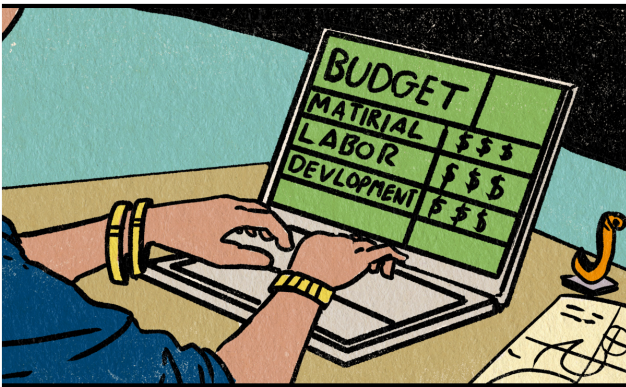


In the Northern Territory Darwin Community Arts delivered the RAF in the Bush Strategic Project.

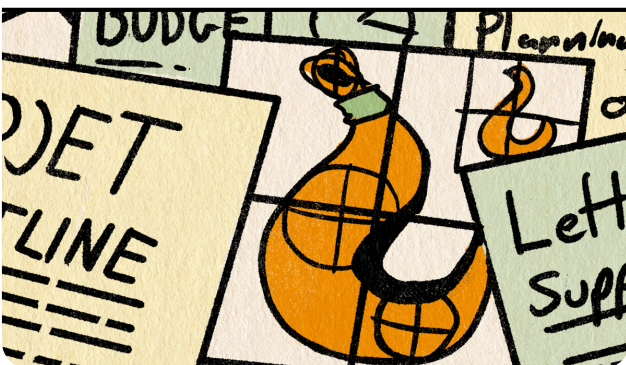
As the Regional Program Administrators in the NT, they devised a strategy that aimed to increase participation in the Regional Arts Fund by Indigenous Australians. The program was co-designed with and delivered by Indigenous Australians.

A program of capacity building was supported through:

- the Remote Roadshow traveling to four remote art centres to share information about the Fund.
- Community Outreach sessions at prominent events that involve Aboriginal people from remote areas of the NT.
- Improve the accessibility of the language used in the application for people with English as a Second Language.
- Information, education and communication materials including posters and flyers that explain the RAF application process in images and language



Since delivering the project Darwin Community Arts has reported meaningful increase in the number of inquiries and applications from First Nations individuals and organisations. They note that there is ongoing work required to keep building the relationships with remote communities to increase awareness and capacity to engage with the Fund.



\$25K
STRATEGIC
PROJECT

4
REMOTE ART
CENTRES

5
PEOPLE EMPLOYED

5000+
DIGITAL AUDIENCE



**REMOTE
NT**

CASE STUDY

INCREASE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

REGIONAL ARTS AUSTRALIA | NATIONAL REGIONAL ARTS FELLOWSHIPS

Regional Arts Australia delivered two rounds of Fellowship programs in 2020 and 2021 as part of the National Strategic Program.

The National Regional Arts Fellowships were an investment in the development of artistic and creative practice for artists and practitioners working and living in regional, rural and remote Australia.

The programs were recipient-led, cross-disciplinary and supported multiple art forms. It addressed the need for creative development, career pathways and supported individuals in time and place to develop their work, skills and networks.

Puppet-maker extraordinaire Sky River received a National Regional Arts Fellowship in 2021. As an applicant-led program, Sky designed a Fellowship of Experimental Puppet Making, allowing her the time and space to explore new methods and materials in puppet production.

Throughout the Fellowship, Sky learnt from international industry experts, including Handspring Puppet Company (South Africa), Brian and Wendy Froud (England) and Jim Henson's Creature Shop (America).

"The National Regional Arts Fellowship program provided a powerful and creative launch pad, leading to broad community engagement, experimental space for my practice to evolve, while opening doors into the world of building my new puppet show"

**\$170K
GRANTED**

**11
FELLOWSHIPS**

**90+
APPLICANTS**

**5
FIRST TIMERS**



**ACROSS THE
COUNTRY**



CULTURAL WORKERS

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

Regional Program Administrators in Western Australia and Victoria allocated a portion of their RAF funding to support regional Cultural Worker positions.

Regional Arts Victoria delivered the Regional Cultural Partnerships program which was a network of long-term relationships with state and local governments, as well as the local community. It promoted a state-wide focus on arts and cultural strategy at the local level, while also promoting a dedicated focus on artists and arts organisations through the work of their Creative Arts Facilitators. Through the arts and via collaboration with all levels of government, the work of the Creative Arts Facilitators is invaluable in building stronger regional communities.

In 2020-2021 Regional Arts Victoria employed Cultural Workers in partnership with nine local government areas to deliver a program of strategic support for arts development across the state.

Creative Arts Facilitators each worked with their respective partner organisations to connect artists and communities, facilitate creative expression, and encourage a sense of identity and belonging through the building and maintenance of cultural relationships, projects, and events. They identified and strategically responded to the needs of each region in which they were based through a close engagement with local government, local community organisations and a state-wide and national network of artists and arts organisations. They were supported in their roles through the corporate knowledge and experience of other Regional Arts Victoria staff, its Board of Management, and the wider networks of Regional Arts Australia but they also acted as a crucial link to regional Victoria with on the ground knowledge of their regions.

Changing the way the regional arts sector talks to each other, **Regional Arts WA** formed the Regional Arts Network. In this initiative, Regional Arts WA has partnered with strategically aligned regional organisations to become a Hub for their local community and be an active member of an emerging state-wide Network. Local Hub Coordinators are employed as Cultural Workers to respond directly to their local communities by providing on-ground support for their communities' needs. Their role is to increase local decision making by strengthening relationships with local governments and stakeholders, whilst seeking development opportunities for artists and arts workers within their communities.

The Regional Arts Network acted as voice for the regional arts sector as well as increasing the capacity in each region to support arts practice and engagement in their communities.

It also provided increased professional development for arts workers, artists, and local leaders. Supporting Hub Coordinators embedded in organisations across the state of Western Australia increased the capacity of arts organisations to deliver activities that were relevant, specific, and appropriate to their unique community.

Hub Coordinators worked to a Deliverables Framework to ensure that activities fell within the guidelines of the service agreement.

In 2019-2020 Regional Arts WA employed seven Cultural Worker positions which worked in partnership with five regional Western Australian areas to deliver a program of strategic support for arts development across the state.

\$1.3M
INVESTED OVER
5 YEARS

8-11
POSITIONS
ANNUALLY

20+
FINANCIAL
PARTNERS -
LOCAL & STATE
GOVERNMENT AND
PHILANTHROPIC
ORGANISATIONS



**REGIONAL
VIC & WA**

THE REGIONAL ARTS FUND WAS DELIVERED ACROSS THE COUNTRY BY THE FOLLOWING REGIONAL PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
ACT	ACT Government				
NSW	Regional Arts NSW				
NT	NT Government		Darwin Community Arts		
QLD	Arts Queensland		Flying Arts Alliance		
SA	Country Arts South Australia				
TAS	Tasmanian Regional Arts	Arts Tasmania	RANT Arts		
VIC	Regional Arts Victoria				
WA	Regional Arts WA				

REGIONAL ARTS AUSTRALIA ACKNOWLEDGES THE REGIONAL PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS



THE REGIONAL ARTS FUND IS AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PROGRAM THAT SUPPORTS SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN REGIONAL AND REMOTE COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA.



Australian Government

Regional Arts Fund

IMAGES

Cover: Burrundi Theatre premieres *Warangesda* on Wiradjuri Country. Image: Camille Whitehead.

Page 2: *Old and New Exhibition* at Museum of the Riverina. Image: Jack of Hearts

Page 3: Image: Gratisography

Page 5: Textiles and Garments by Lillardia Briggs-Houston (Wiradjuri Gangulu Yorta Yorta). Image Marley Morgan

Page 6: Luke at Tasdance residency. Image: Second Echo

Page 9: Northern Territory Travelling Film Festival. Image Oliver Eclipse

Page 10: Annette Carmichael *Beauty Index*. Image Nic Duncan

Page 12: Adrienne Lovelock performing during *Weaving Stories*. Image Sam Oster

Page 14: Julie Higgs *A different kind of wondering*. Image: Mitchell Higgs

Page 16: Artlands Bendigo. Image Diana Domonko.

Page 17: RAF in the Bush resource. Illustration by Jonathon Saunders

Page 18: Sky River and puppets. Image provided by the artist

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REGIONAL
arts
AUSTRALIA