

Regional Arts Impact Australia.

That's a fact!

REGIONAL
arts
AUSTRALIA



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From Albert Namatjira to Djuki Mala, Joy Hester to Gwynn Hanssen Pigott, Australian artists at the cutting edge have always sought out the regional and remote places, not because they are in the middle of nowhere, but because they are places where people feel at the centre of everything – that's a fact!

Artists and arts workers in regional and remote places use art and culture to build strong communities, generate jobs, reimagine places and build innovative infrastructure.

One in three people in Australia live in regional and remote places¹ and their arts and cultural contributions have a national impact. Culture comes from place; it is an important part of creating communities. Regional arts link people to broader community life through economic opportunities, improved quality of life and social connection.



1. Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011 *Australian Social Trends*, June 2011, cat. No. 4102.0.

Community

Artists in regional and remote places don't have access to services in the same way as metropolitan Australians.

This is a challenge, not a disadvantage.

Regional people work more closely together, rely on each other: you have to nurture relationships when there is only one framer in town, you need to plan ahead when the barge only deliver goods once a week.

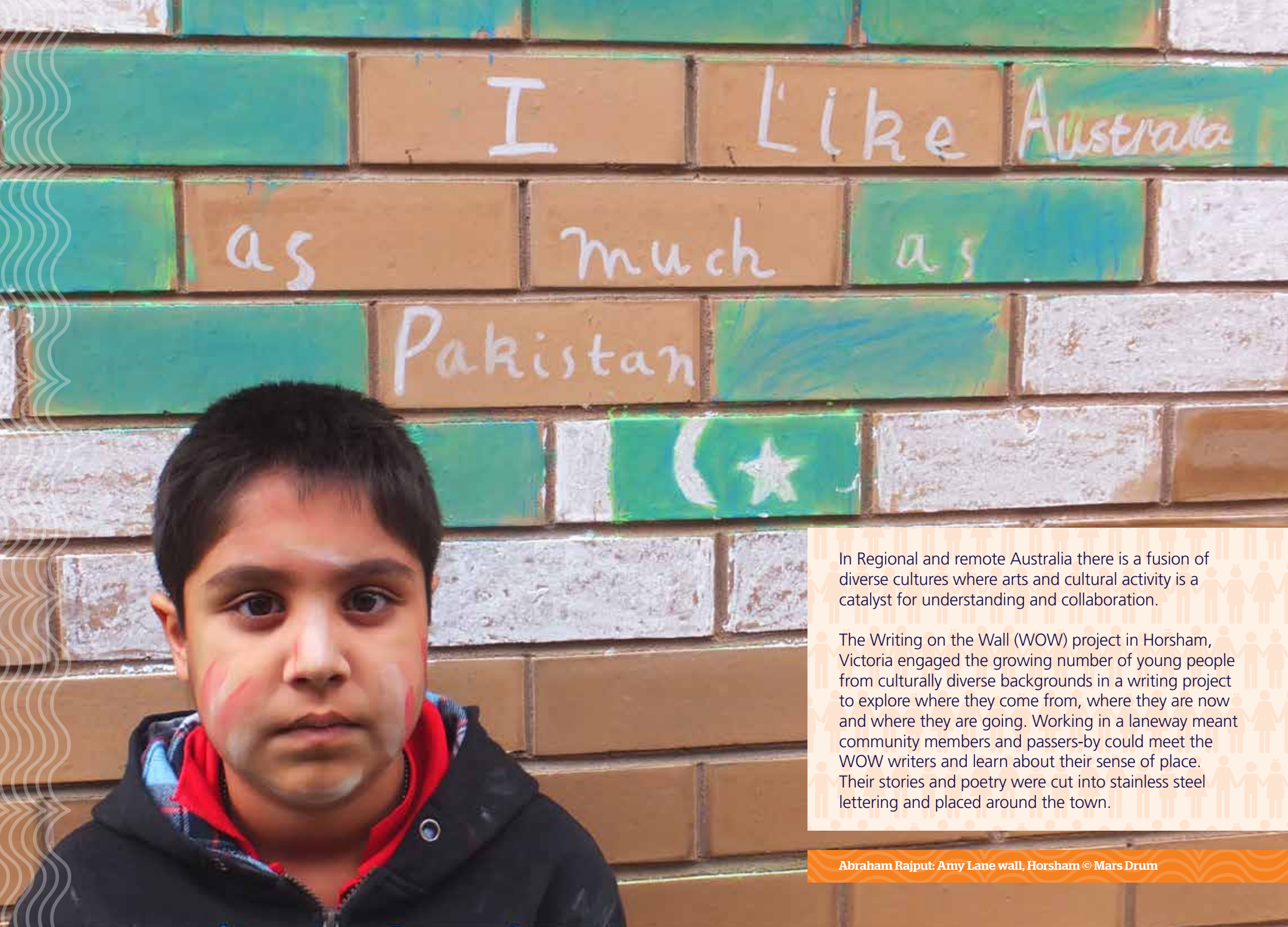
Regional arts bring people together.



300

**ancestries call
regional and remote
Australia home.**

SOURCE Australian Bureau of Statistics. Australian Social Trends, 2008.



I Like Australia

as much as

Pakistan



In Regional and remote Australia there is a fusion of diverse cultures where arts and cultural activity is a catalyst for understanding and collaboration.

The Writing on the Wall (WOW) project in Horsham, Victoria engaged the growing number of young people from culturally diverse backgrounds in a writing project to explore where they come from, where they are now and where they are going. Working in a laneway meant community members and passers-by could meet the WOW writers and learn about their sense of place. Their stories and poetry were cut into stainless steel lettering and placed around the town.

Abraham Rajput: Amy Lane wall, Horsham © Mars Drum

Volunteers

Active participation in regionally relevant, high quality artwork can be a transformative experience that propels a community to creatively re-imagine itself.

In the southern Fleurieu Peninsula in South Australia, the multi-year cross-arts program Just Add Water, a three-year partnership between the Australia Council, Country Arts SA and Alexandrina Council, is having plenty of positive effects.

Just Add Water trained volunteers to support three local arts venues: places where people can connect with each other and with art and ideas. There are now more arts and cultural events and activities that people can go to, and there are more opportunities for artists and arts workers in the region.

For example, four volunteers at Centenary Hall one Saturday night in June 2015 meant that 60 enthusiasts could pick up their ukuleles and perform in front of an audience of 180, some of whom travelled 400 km.

In addition, the Just Add Water volunteers are broadening their own horizons with greater access and exposure to the arts within and beyond their community.

“

I love live performance, and being part of that happening smoothly and professionally as a volunteer gives me a lot of personal satisfaction... Being involved in the arts builds social capital and makes the community stronger, and that is really important to me.”

Heather, volunteer
Centenary Hall
Goolwa, SA, 2015

Some 56% of Australians believe that the arts significantly help them deal with stress, anxiety and depression.

The National Arts and Health Framework and the peak bodies National Rural Health Alliance, Arts and Health Australia, Rural Health and the Institute for Creative Health all advocate the benefits of engaging with arts and cultural activities. Some 56% of Australians believe that the arts significantly help them deal with stress, anxiety and depression.²

The National Gallery of Australia's Art and Dementia program (formerly Art and Alzheimer's) includes an outreach program, which went to four regional locations in 2014. The impact of this program in regional centres has been measured by strong ongoing interest from regional galleries and the diversity of galleries with programs for people living with dementia, as well as positive feedback from the participants.

In 2015 the National Gallery of Australia will deliver the Art and Dementia Outreach Program training workshop in Bunbury Regional Art Gallery, Mandurah Art Gallery and Geraldton Art Gallery in Western Australia, as well as the Rockhampton and QUT Galleries in Queensland.

“One of the most enjoyable aspects of the program is meeting regional educators and sharing expertise. It is also great to be able to connect arts and health professionals in regional communities many of whom have never visited their regional gallery.”

Adriane Boag,
NGA, June 2015

Education & Training

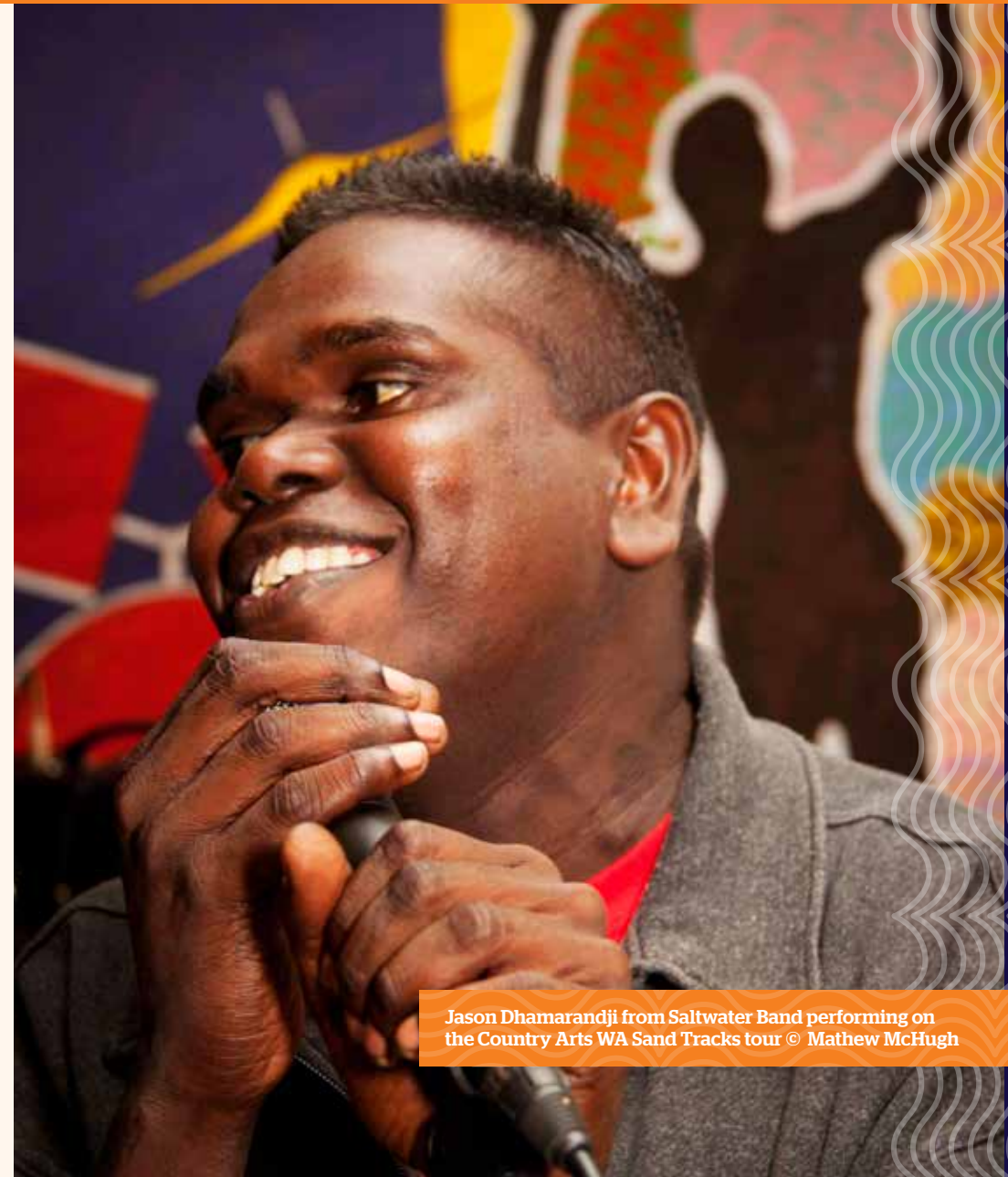
Creative capacity in communities is increased through arts education and training.

Sand Tracks is a music program that tours to remote areas of WA, SA and the NT. Sand Tracks is produced by Country Arts WA and involves cross border partnerships with Music NT in Darwin and The Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA) in Alice Springs.

High profile bands tour with, deliver workshops to and provide on the road mentoring for emerging bands.

“ You can't underestimate the power of young Aboriginal people seeing people just like themselves as rock stars.”

Philippa Maughan, Manager
Performing Arts Touring
Country Arts WA



Jason Dhamarandji from Saltwater Band performing on the Country Arts WA Sand Tracks tour © Mathew McHugh



Members of the weekly "After School Strings". © Emily Price

“Stringalong is now a recognised title in our community. We’ve taken it slowly and it has built its own exciting momentum.”

The Stringalong Club operates in schools in the Burnie district of Tasmania and encourages children to play stringed instruments as part of their education. The Stringalong Club participates in master classes supplied by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, the University of Tasmania Conservatorium and the Australian Chamber Orchestra involving students from years four to ten.

Lynne Price, President
Burnie Arts Council

Economy

The national figures for the economic impact of the arts are impressive.

Cultural and creative activity is estimated to have contributed \$86 billion (6.9%) to Australia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on a national accounts basis in 2008-09.³

That's more than agriculture, fisheries and forestry (\$29 billion), more than food services (\$28 billion), and more than water, electricity, gas and waste (\$27 billion).⁴

Local shires and councils support arts to the tune of \$1 billion dollars a year! Australia's 565 local governments make the largest investment in arts and cultural activities of any level of government.⁵

Art is a key element of many local economies. It influences employment, volunteering, tourism, partnerships and investment.

3. Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Australian National Accounts: Cultural and Creative Activity Satellite Accounts, Experimental*, Feb 2014, cat. 5271.0
4. *Arts Nation: An Overview of Australian Arts*, Australia Council for the Arts, 2015, p. 36.
5. National Cultural Policy 'Creative Australia', March 2013, pp 34-5.

\$86 billion Culture and the creative activity

\$29 billion Agriculture, fisheries & forestry

\$28 billion Food services

\$27 billion Water, electricity, gas & waste

Culture and creative activity contribute more GVA* than agriculture, fisheries & forestry; food services; or water, electricity, gas & waste.

****Gross Value Added activity is the value of goods and services produced (outputs) minus the value of consumption (inputs). GVA enables comparison of different industries' contribution to the economy by removing the distortion caused by taxes and subsidies.**



The regional and remote arts and cultural economy is made up of direct and indirect employment, audiences and tourists, earnings through export, touring, sales, intellectual property and the built and natural environments. Victorian state government research undertaken by Deloitte in 2006-07 found that the economic benefits of arts businesses include that they:

- are significant generators of new ideas and work;
- attract and engage new and diverse audiences and participants to the arts, including disadvantaged groups;
- stimulate economic activity;
- provide significant employment opportunities for artists and arts workers;
- promote professionalism in the arts, providing training and skills development opportunities; and
- make a significant contribution to cultural export and tourism.⁶

6. *Small Arts Organisations Research and Evaluation: précis of research conducted by Deloitte for Arts Victoria, September 2007.*

**\$16.3 million to
the local economy**

**Grace Kelly
exhibition
152,500 attendees**

**Bendigo
Pop. 100,000**

**152,500 people visited 'Grace Kelly:
Style Icon' at the Bendigo Art Gallery
in a town of 100,000 generating
\$16.3 million to the local economy.**

SOURCE KPMG Economic Impact of the Victorian Arts and Cultural Sector (2013)

Regional Art Prizes

Many regional and remote towns host regional art prizes as part of a strategy to position themselves as cultural destinations.



L-R Mary Gibson, Jubia Jackatee, Tjukaparti James, Nyinku Kulitja, Pantjiti Mackenzie, Patricia Orgula, Rosalind Yiparti and Yvonne Yipati. Kangkuru Punu Minyma Kutjara at the Museum of Contemporary Art Alex Davies ©Tjanpi Desert Weavers, NPY Women's Council

Regional art prizes provide financial returns, employment, and professional development opportunities for exhibitors, and have flow-on benefits to local businesses through attracting visitation.

The rebranding of the Shepparton Art Museum into SAM has included the promotion of its Sidney Myer Fund Australian Ceramic Award. The \$50,000 prize attracts statewide and national visitors and draws international attention from the ceramics scene.

Regional art prizes around Australia model collaborative business practices and partnerships. Tasmania's Glover Art Prize brings together more than 20 partners from media, tourism, local business and government, and capitalises on the tourist attractions of the host town of Evandale, which is National Trust listed. The acquisitive prize and exhibition showcases hundreds of contemporary landscape paintings while building an important local archive.

Other regional art prizes include the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards held at the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory in Darwin, the Paul Guest prize at the Bendigo Art Gallery, the Cossack Art Award (the richest acquisitive art award in regional Australia, 1600 kilometres north of Perth), the Whyalla Art Prize and the Broken Hill Regional Gallery's Outback Open Art Prize.

Sponsors, partners and investors look for a shared story and to grow their audience and often find that regional art prizes can achieve these outcomes for them.

Creative Businesses

Artists demonstrate creative thinking and problem solving, innovation and collaboration in their practice and also in their diverse 'day jobs'.

Many artists use their creative skills to build small and medium sized enterprises.

Aboriginal art and cultural centres across Australia generate income that is the lifeblood of the communities where they operate: 14,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists living and working in regional and remote locations earned \$30 million between 2008 and 2012.⁷

Co-working spaces, design studios and creative businesses are blooming in regional Australia. With gains in technology, people are able to base their businesses in remote and regional areas. Their businesses apply creativity and innovation to freight and logistics, communications, banking, online sales and human resources.

'Creative Unlimited' a cooperative in Gympie, Queensland, was established to connect people and build a dynamic, creative community and increase the wealth and vitality of the Gympie region.

“Creativity is not limited to the arts. Thinking creatively or coming up with new ways of doing things. In our region we have innovators using nut shells to generate power, for example, and engineers inventing award-winning low loaders.”⁸

Creative Unlimited is supported by Gympie Regional Council, CoolArts Gympie, the Queensland Government, businesses and the community.

7. Acker, T and Woodhead, A. 2014 *The Art Economies Value Chain Reports: Art Centre Finances* CRC-REP Research Report CR006, Ninti One Limited, Alice Springs, p. 8.

8. <http://www.creative-unlimited.com.au/about-us> accessed 24/6/15.

Place

SITES OF EXCELLENCE

There are places of national and international significance in Australia's smallest rural hamlets.

Nestled amongst the potato farms of East Trentham in country Victoria, Gold Street Studios shares the vicinity with just a handful of houses, the pub and a bed and breakfast. Gold Street Studios is a pioneering gallery and studio dedicated to photography. On any given day a tutor from Australia, the USA or the UK will be onsite passing on skills and expertise to workshop participants who travel from across Australia and internationally: travelling on the VLine train, staying in local accommodation and spending time and money in the community, possibly eating a local spud or two. New York based photographer Jerry Spagnoli, a world expert in the daguerreotype process, is near impossible to do a workshop with. He conducts very few and only in select locations, one of which just happens to be in regional Victoria, at Gold Street Studios.

Non-metropolitan areas are home to an array of festivals, biennales, expositions and gatherings. The Mildura Palimpsest, the Ballarat International Foto Biennale, Desert Mob in Alice Springs, the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, Barunga Festival and the Byron Bay Blues Festival and its Writers Festival bring many thousands of visitors and are places where conversations around local and global concerns happen and new ideas are activated.



BUILDINGS

Regional Australia is home to hundreds of regional galleries, museums, art centres, keeping places, societies and associations housing important works and providing access to cultural resources for education and research.

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The Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historic Museum in the Central Goldfields of Victoria holds an important collection of modernist works, many donated by community members, which is of national and international arts significance.

Maintaining the infrastructure of regional galleries creates employment and supports businesses in restoration and renovation. Major projects such as the \$10.5 million reinvention of the Albury Regional Art Gallery into MAMA, the Murray Art Museum Albury, employed hundreds of people in the planning, development, building and the launch and staffing of the new facility. MAMA is now equipped to host major national and international exhibitions, which will increase cultural tourism to Albury, bringing flow-on economic benefits to many businesses.

Regional Australia houses some of the most popular arts incubators and artists-in-residence programs in the country:

- Bundanon in Nowra, NSW where artists of all disciplines and nationalities gather on the site dedicated by Arthur Boyd
- Hill End artist-in-residence program in Bathurst NSW
- The Launceston City Council artist-in-residence program in Tasmania
- The Tanks Arts Centre multi-arts residency in Cairns, Queensland
- Veruna House for Writers in the Blue Mountains, NSW
- The Cad Factory, Narrandera, NSW
- The Bogong Centre for Sound and Culture, Mount Beauty, Victoria
- Artsource in Perth, which assists regional artist residencies in WA at sites including Albany, Beverly, Dwellingup, Ellenbrook, Esperance and Guilford.

At any given time, hundreds of national and international artists are creating new works at such sites dotted around the country.

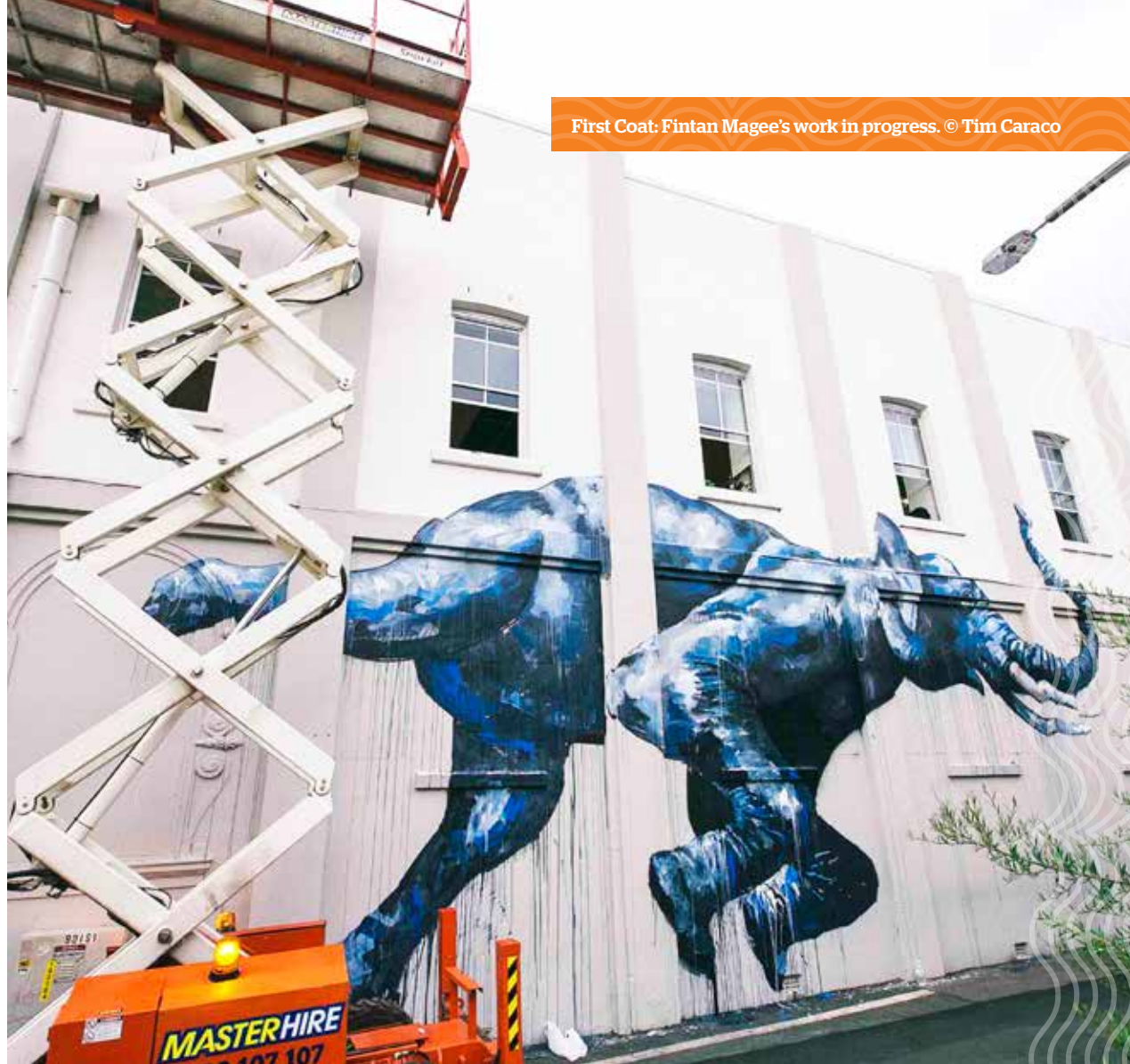
PUBLIC ARTWORK

Public art projects around Australia bring together a range of participants, provide employment, build community pride and celebrate place.

The Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) supports public art through its programs such as Culture, Arts, Tourism and Community Heritage (CATCH). In 2010, FRRR's CATCH program, supported by John T Reid Charitable Trust, helped fund the small community of Blyth, South Australia, to build a panelled fence surrounding the Padnaindi Reserve, a valued community gathering place. The fence comprises sixteen laser-cut panels, which depict the historical way of life of both Blyth farmers and the community.

The project was a true community effort, with residents coming together to erect the panels over several working bees. In addition, the local primary school was involved in creating three mosaic murals depicting the district's fauna and flora. This public artwork has transformed Padnaindi Reserve into a popular picnic spot and playground, used by locals and tourists, and for civic events.

First Coat is Queensland's largest street art festival. In 2014 First Coat engaged Australian and international artists to create large scale murals in Toowoomba's central business district.



“

I love Toowoomba. It would be the easy option to move to Brisbane or Melbourne, but to give something back to my town and to show people things that can happen here, that's exciting. I want to make this place somewhere I would want to stay; I would want to live in.”

Grace Dewar
Artistic Director
First Coat

There are not many (if any) Australian regional areas that have not been the subject of, framed, challenged or touched by art and artists: from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture stretching back to time immemorial, the first non-Indigenous artists such as John Lewin, writers and poets including Banjo Paterson and Miles Franklin, icons Joy Hester, William Dobell and Sidney Nolan, from the innovators at the Heidelberg School, to contemporary creative producers at Tracks Dance in Darwin, Northern Territory and Punctum in Central Victoria, to students and makers of all ages, stages and cultural backgrounds.

Regional arts impact Australia – that’s a fact!

Regional arts drive new ideas that ignite community imagination and attract visitors, some who stay! Seeded in the local arts ecosystem, regional arts are exported to major exhibitions and festivals locally, nationally and globally, contributing to the cultural, social and financial capital of the country.

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Watersong, Just Add Water, Goolwa 2012. Image courtesy of Country Arts SA.