

Annual Report 2016-2017 Regional Arts Australia



REGIONAL
arts
AUSTRALIA



Australian Government
Regional Arts Fund

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Regional Arts Australia acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country across the nation, and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respect to them and their culture; and to elders both past and present.

FROM THE CHAIR

It has been a bumper year of fantastic artistic activity right across our big country.

There is a stunning breadth and depth of cultural conversation that happen between audiences, artists and arts organisations in our regional communities. These conversations take place in image, in movement, in live performance, in unexpected encounters and through words. Throughout the past twelve months I have been delighted and moved by these conversations and am always very proud of the well-targeted investment we are able to make into these on behalf of the Australian Government through the Regional Arts Fund.

These artistic, cultural and intellectual conversations - the ones that sizzle and sparkle and snap in all regional places from our most remote communities to our big regional cities - have been at the heart of my professional life for the past decade. Many will know this will be my last annual report as I step back from the role of RAA Chair in coming months.

Arrangements for securing a new Chair are well in hand and so my reflections on the past year have included considering how we are placed for the future.

Over the past year the RAA Board has worked hard to build the underlying strength and capacity of the organisation to meet new challenges and create new strategic opportunities. I want to acknowledge several important achievements of the year. First among these is Artlands Dubbo. As the peak body and support agency for arts and cultural development in NSW, Regional Arts NSW presented the 2016 event, under its new branding as Artlands, in partnership with RAA and Dubbo City Council.

Artlands Dubbo was extraordinarily successful and testament to the determination and dedication of the Artlands team; the Regional Arts NSW staff, contractors, volunteers, board members and all the people from the regional network who worked extremely hard both in the lead up and delivery of the event.

Through the Regional Arts Fund we have made substantial and strategic investments on behalf of the Australian Government. Throughout this report you will find details of these investments and see examples of the diverse and superb work which this investment enables.

RAA has also taken enormous strides in its advocacy work, building on its important relationships with the federal government. The Minister for Communications and the Arts Senator Fifield has demonstrated his strong support for the regional arts and culture sector on a number of fronts and his engagement has been heightened through Artlands Dubbo and through ongoing conversations with RAA.

We have also established stronger entrée to Parliament House for promotion and profile building for regional arts through the establishment of the Parliamentary Friends of Regional Arts. I particularly want to thank the Deputy Speaker Mark Coulton MP and Warren Snowdon MP for their leadership of this group. Our relations with the Department of Communications and the Arts are both resilient and productive, not just in the management of the Regional Arts Fund, but also in discussions about strategic issues affecting the regional arts sector.

FROM THE CHAIR (cont.)

In my report to you at the last Annual General Meeting I mentioned that in the light of the decision by the Australia Council in May 2016 that four-year operational funding for RAA would not be provided for 2016 – 2020, the Board would take a deliberate approach in assessing the strategic direction of the Company. This work has been undertaken with great care, diligence and consideration of due process and consultation with members across both the strategic and operational elements of the organisation. More specifically, the Board has chartered a course to reposition RAA as an organisation capable of dealing more effectively in a new fundraising environment. These developments have been pivotal in bringing new direction and fresh approaches, which we see as imperative for a sustainable, well-managed, well-governed, contemporary national cultural organisation.

This year we welcomed Natalie Jenkins to the Board replacing Amber Perryman who relinquished her position in May 2016. Natalie is the Executive Director of Black Swan State Theatre Company in Perth and has enlivened the Board with her wealth of governance, fundraising and art sector experience. In recent months Jo Duffy has left the Board to take up further responsibilities in Tasmania. Shortly we will be going out to the arts sector in Tasmania to seek a new Tasmanian Director at a time when Tasmanian artists and arts organisations are looking for new leadership.

I want to thank my fellow Directors for their dedicated work, and I particularly want to thank the CEOs of the state regional arts organisations who have all provided essential advice, particularly about our advocacy and fundraising initiatives.

My thanks also go to our dedicated staff and a special welcome to Esther Gyorki who joined us this year as Communications Manager. Her work will become increasingly important as we ramp up further our fundraising and advocacy work in the coming year.

In closing I would like to say that I am forever grateful for the trust shown in me by the RAA board and staff in supporting me as their Chair. Electing me was a leap of faith; faith in a leader from a different generation, faith in our organisation's capacity to evolve, and faith in our sector's appetite to reach for a new, confident and forward-looking future. I have had many mentors, many guides and have learnt many things from the intelligence, experience and good humour of those around me. I have also had the honour to mentor and encourage some of our emerging cultural leaders; I can't wait to see them shape our sector in coming years.

Just hours after I was elected to the role I stepped on stage at the 2014 Arts & Edges Summit to be introduced as the new RAA Chair. The roar of applause which greeted me - and what it told me about our sector's willingness to embrace change and strive for brilliance - is a memory that I am deeply humbled by and will treasure for the rest of my life.



Kate Fielding



REGIONAL ARTS AUSTRALIA

Regional Arts Australia (RAA) is the key national body representing those working with and for the arts in regional, remote and very remote Australia.

Our vision:

Arts and culture enrich the lives of regional Australians, and build innovative and creative communities across regional Australia.

Our mission:

We provide national reach and national impact to resource and promote regional arts and culture in collaboration with our members, the state-based Regional Arts Organisations.

Our values:

- o We conduct our business with rigour and integrity
- o We are committed to a vibrant regional arts and culture sector
- o We appreciate the richness of a diverse and pluralist society
- o Collaborative partnerships are fundamental in our operations.

REGIONAL ARTS AUSTRALIA

Membership

The following Regional Arts Organisations were the members of Regional Arts Australia in 2016/2017:

- o Country Arts SA
- o Country Arts WA
- o Regional Arts NSW
- o Regional Arts Victoria
- o Tasmanian Regional Arts

In addition, Regional Arts Australia is in partnership with Arts NT and Arts Queensland for the delivery of the Regional Arts Fund in those jurisdictions.

2016/2017 Current Directors

Kate Fielding | Chair
Martin Paten | Deputy Chair
Louise Partos | Secretary
Morri Young | Treasurer
Jo Duffy
Michael Luchich
Kay Mays
Peter White
Natalie Jenkins



Image: Regional Arts Australia Board Members and Staff.
Photo by Morri Young

ADVOCACY

In 2016/17 RAA has continued to build on its work raising awareness and growing the profile of regional arts and culture and contributing as an active participant in the national arts agenda.

Parliamentary Friends of Regional Arts

Formed in the past 12 months, this bi-partisan group provides a forum for Members and Senators to meet and interact to gain an understanding about the importance of arts and culture as a driving force in maintaining robust and sustainable communities in regional areas.

Key interest areas include:

- o Indigenous economic and cultural advancement through the arts;
- o Arts and Health;
- o The role of the arts in education as part of the curriculum in schools.

This group is coordinated by the Deputy Speaker Mark Coulton MP and Warren Snowdon MP, who are both passionate supporters of arts in the regions.

The inaugural meeting of the group was held in Parliament House in March 2017 featuring guest speaker Lindy Hume with a keynote address based on her Currency House Platform Paper- *Restless Giant: Changing Cultural Values in Regional Australia*.

ADVOCACY

Australia Council Partnership Activities

RAA has strengthened its relationship with the Australia Council, setting out the groundwork for developing a collaborative relationship between the Australia Council and RAA so that both organisations can identify strategic initiatives and work collaboratively in achieving outcomes that will benefit the arts in regional Australia. This work is grounded in developing a deeper discussion about regionalism and looking for ways to increase the capacity of the national arts infrastructure and institutions such as local government to service regional artists and communities to achieve better arts and cultural outcomes.

The objectives include:

- o To develop greater understanding about the distinctiveness of regional arts
- o To place the arts more centrally as a driver of good outcomes for people in regional communities
- o To build respect for regional community aspirations and regional ways of operating
- o To use available resources in more effective ways.

The Australia Council has established an internal regional working group and involved RAA in the deliberations of the group with a particular focus on regional research.

ADVOCACY

Arts Front

In November 2016 RAA joined with a wide range of arts organisations in establishing the Arts Front movement.

Arts Front is a four-year project supporting artists to take the lead in shaping the future of culture and the arts in Australia.

Arts Front is a chance to think and act beyond our current systems: what could culture and the arts in Australia look like in 2030 and how do we go about making our visions a reality?

Arts Front is also building a national network of collaborators leading change in the arts and cultural sector and broader community. It is connecting all art form areas and all parts of the arts and cultural sector to mobilise and campaign around shared goals and objectives.

- o How do we ensure First Peoples culture and arts underpins everything we do?
- o How do we improve the awareness of the public value of the arts in the community?
- o How do we ensure young and independent artists have a voice in determining the future?

Communications Manager

RAA has devoted additional resources to the employment of a Communications Manager. Esther Gyorki has joined our staff and is placed in Melbourne with the generous support of Regional Arts Victoria. Esther's previous work with the Australian Cultural Fund at Creative Partnerships Australia brings a significant new skill set to support RAA's promotion and fundraising activities.



Image: Echo in Our Walls, Outback Theatre for Young People, 2016, NSW. Photo by: Victoria Anderson

KEY ACTIVITIES

The Regional Arts Fund

The Regional Arts Fund is designed to benefit regional and remote arts practitioners, arts workers, audiences and communities.

Regional Arts Australia played a vital role in establishing the Regional Arts Fund twenty one years ago, in 1996. With its member organisations, RAA has managed the fund since 2001 on behalf of the Australian Government. In partnership with the Department of Communications and the Arts, RAA and its member organisations provide resources for hundreds of arts projects each year.

A new Funding Agreement was signed in July 2016, with the Fund now administered directly through RAA. Member organisations still administer the grant in their jurisdictions, but RAA is now directly responsible for all reporting to Government.

Under the new Agreement the objectives of the fund were reviewed and simplified. The objectives of the Fund are to support and promote participation in, and access to, Australia's arts and culture in regional and remote Australia by:

- o Encouraging and supporting sustainable economic, social and cultural development in regional communities
- o Developing partnerships and networks which leverage support for projects and encourage ongoing collaboration
- o Developing audiences and broadening community engagement with the arts
- o Increasing employment, professional development opportunities and profile of regional and remote artists.

KEY ACTIVITIES

The Regional Arts Fund cont.

RAF Community grants are intended to assist cultural development projects that meet the objectives and eligibility criteria of the Regional Arts Fund.

Quick Response Grants are intended to assist regional artists, arts organisations and communities to take up professional or skills development or small project opportunities.

In 2016-17, 327 projects were funded, with a total funding pool of \$2,686,940.43.

- o 145 Community Grants, valued at \$1,981,786.30
- o 172 Quick Response Grants, valued at \$355,154.13
- o 8 Cultural Worker positions, valued at \$250,000
- o 2 Strategic Projects, valued at \$100,000.

Estimated audience numbers- over 4 million people (including 3 million who saw the Tiwi Island sister girls in the Mardi Gras Parade).

Estimated participants - 32,566 people participated in RAF projects.

Total funding awarded was \$2,686,940

A further \$3,169,464 was leveraged from applicants own contributions and a further \$6,977,860 from in-kind and cash contributions through other funding, local business, sponsorship, donations and generated income. For a spend of \$2.6 million, a further \$10 million was leveraged.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Artlands Dubbo | 2016

Part Conference | Part Festival | All Arts

27- 30 October 2016



In 2016, the name 'Artlands' was launched as the new brand for RAA's biennial national regional arts conferences that have held a key position as RAA's signature event since 1998. Artlands is branded as Australia's largest regional arts conference, offering a unique blend of conference and festival. It brings together hundreds of people from across the country who work in, are involved in, and are interested in supporting vibrant cultural life in regional and remote Australia.

Artlands Dubbo, held in October 2016 and produced so ably by Regional Arts NSW, continued the important traditions of an event that delivers on the key objectives of this important national conference, namely that:

- o The arts from across regional Australia are profiled and celebrated nationally;
- o The value of the arts in regional communities is promoted nationally;
- o Networking and professional development opportunities are provided for artists, arts workers and volunteers;
- o Ideas and strategies about arts projects and programs are exchanged.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Artlands Dubbo | 2016 cont.

Artlands Dubbo drew on the skills of the Regional Arts NSW Board and the vibrant network of NSW regional arts development organisations providing a resource with extensive knowledge of and experience in national and NSW regional arts, research and development, contemporary arts, and Aboriginal arts sectors along with international connections. It involved the support of the three levels of government through Arts NSW, Destination NSW, Department of Communications and the Arts and the Australia Council for the Arts as well as the Dubbo Regional Council.

This was a truly great achievement that delivered an important legacy for our future work in First Nations engagement and emerging arts and health practice. Sincere thanks go to the Board of Regional Arts NSW, Elizabeth Rogers CEO, Regional Arts NSW and Executive Producer Artlands Dubbo, along with Dr Greg Pritchard, Regional Arts NSW Cultural Program Director, and the entire Artlands Dubbo team.



Image: Artlands Dubbo Staff and Volunteers

KEY ACTIVITIES

Artlands | Review

A generational review of Artlands has been supported by all stakeholders. Each Artlands conference has delivered great successes and also presented significant challenges. There are enormous benefits for the regional arts sector, but there is also significant organisational and financial risk involved.

The review focussed on:

- o the benefits of Artlands across the regional arts sector and beyond
- o the model for delivering Artlands, including partnership arrangements and production platforms
- o future efficiencies that might be achieved

This review, conducted by consultants Natalie Fisher and Rod Ainsworth, revealed that Artlands is valued highly by its key stakeholders and should continue to be supported. Yet, Artlands has the potential to play a more important and significant role than it currently does.

A recommended new model addresses the range of issues associated with the current model of delivery, whilst acknowledging the values of Artlands that should be retained. It builds on the strategic work that RAA has commenced, allowing the organisation to further enhance its standing as a leader in the regional arts sector. It is intended that a new model of delivery should come into operation following Artlands Victoria in 2018.

KEY ACTIVITIES

National Webinars

In 2016/2017 Regional Arts Australia continued its popular webinar series. The series attracted 451 registrations from over 120 locations across Australia.

Webinar 3 | Access & Opportunity - Arts & Culture for Regional Australians

Moderator: Ben Eltham

Hosts: Frank Panucci, Rick Heath & Karen Hethey

Webinar 4 | The Import & Export of 'Excellence' to and from the Regions

Moderator: Ben Eltham

Presenters: Lindy Hume, Louise Partos & Karilyn Brown

Regional Arts Australia has now committed to an ongoing program of webinars, part of its mission to increase its engagement and grow its regional audience.

The webinar series is also an opportunity to explore a range of issues important to regional arts and increase Regional Arts Australia's advocacy role.



REGIONAL arts AUSTRALIA

Winter Webinars

Igniting and fuelling conversations about arts and culture in regional and remote Australia.
FREE - May, June, July & August

Click through
For more information and to register

KEY ACTIVITIES

National Touring

RAA is a member of the Performing Arts Touring Alliance (PATA) Council.

PATA is the key agency monitoring progress on the National Performing Arts Touring Action Plan 2013-2016. Steve Saffell and John Oster presented at the PATA National Performing Arts Touring Forum held in the Sydney Opera House in October 2016.

The purpose of the national forum was to:

- o Discuss issues that impact access to the performing arts for audiences across Australia, and the presenters, producers and tour coordinators involved in touring
- o Review progress of scoping the PATA National Performing Arts Measurement Framework and consult on options for implementing the Framework.

Key recommendations included:

- o Development of a national Market Overview
- o To initiate discussions with the Australia Council and with the Ministry for the Arts about Playing Australia and the National Touring Status Program and complementary funding for audience development.

KEY ACTIVITIES

National Touring (cont.)

RAA also coordinates the Regional and Remote Touring Advisory Group (RRTAG) set up to assist and advise the RAA Board on matters relating to its role as a national advocate for performing arts touring in regional and remote Australia.

This year the group has taken particular interest in:

- o Developing a policy position regarding the Playing Australia Fund
- o Monitoring performing arts showcases
- o Development of proposals for new national guidelines for regional engagement.

RAA is deeply grateful for the time and commitment given by RRTAG members, especially those who represent kindred organisations which work independently from RAA.



Image: Caravan, Tracks Dance, 2016, Darwin, NT. Image by Callum Flinn

KEY ACTIVITIES

National Events



RAA considers it vital that the organisation is represented at important national arts events.

This year the Executive Director attended the Adelaide Festival, the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair, Desert Mob and the Telstra Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Awards. It is critical that RAA is deeply involved in the First Nations art sector.

Increased First Nations engagement was a key recommendation from Artlands Dubbo.

There has been marked growth in the business capacity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art centres. The sector has worked hard since the downturn experienced as a result of the 2007 global financial crisis. Art centres have come back by creating more diverse products including low cost items such as fabrics and prints as well as higher value fine art. Important festivals and art fairs in Cairns, Darwin, Perth, Alice Springs, and more recently in Adelaide through the Tarnanthi Festival, are catalysts for industry promotion and market development.

KEY ACTIVITIES

National Events (cont.)

RAA has developed a more active interest in arts and health, again building on a foundation established at Artlands Dubbo. The combination of arts and health disciplines provide critical benefits for community resilience. The National Arts and Health Framework has been developed to enhance the profile of arts and health in Australia and to promote greater integration of arts and health practice and approaches in health promotion, services, settings and facilities.



Image: Creative Upskilling | Waringarri Textile Project 2016

RAA is a member of the Health Arts Action Leadership Project coordinated by the Institute for Creative Health. A national summit was held in June 2017 at the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital in Brisbane to develop new work in line with the National Arts and Health Framework and develop stronger leadership capacity in the field.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Culture and Related Industries | Industry Reference Committee

RAA has been a member of the Culture and Related Industries Industry Reference Committee (IRC) responsible for national training package qualifications relevant to the following job roles: actors, dancers, community arts and cultural development practitioners, musicians, composers, visual artists, craft practitioners, and writers. The Culture and Related Industries IRC is supported by PricewaterhouseCoopers Skills for Australia.

The IRC has undertaken significant work reviewing Units of Competency in the following areas:

- o Professional writing qualifications
- o Legal rights and obligations
- o Arts access
- o Industry-relevant workplace health and safety
- o Identified issues with live production qualifications
- o Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Cultural Arts qualifications.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Regional Arts Delivery

During the year Tasmanian Regional Arts worked through a liquidation process and ceased operating on 30 June. The efforts of the Chair, Annette Downs, and CEO, Alison Copley, should be acknowledged for taking the organisation through an ordered and well-managed process. It is regrettable that the closing of Tasmanian Regional Arts follows closely the demise of Artslink QLD in the previous year.

Both Arts Tasmania and Arts Queensland respectively have generously agreed to manage the Regional Arts Fund on an interim basis pending a process to identify a non-government agency in those jurisdictions to take up the fund. It is a matter of some concern that in four of the eight states and territories the Regional Arts Fund is now managed by a government agency. RAA is taking an active role to resolve these matters in both Queensland and the Northern Territory.

In July 2016 RAA joined the Regional Arts Working Group in Queensland for strategic consultation about regional arts delivery. It is also notable that in the 2017 Budget the Queensland Government committed to an investment in regional arts with \$6.5 million over four years for Indigenous and regional arts initiatives, employing regionally-based arts officers and providing increased community and indigenous arts activities across the state.

RAA has established a commitment with Arts Tasmania for an extensive consultation with artists and arts organisations in Tasmania through 2018 to establish a delivery model in that state.

KEY ACTIVITIES

Networks

RAA has continued its role coordinating key groups underpinning the performance of the Regional Arts Fund.

These include the Regional Arts Fund Managers network and the Regional Arts Promoters Network. Both of these forums are important meeting places for improving the operational management of the fund nationally, and for promoting the outstanding results of the Regional Arts Fund for arts and culture across regional Australia.



FROM THE TREASURER

On behalf of the Board, I am pleased to present the financial statements for the 2016/2017 financial year. Through a very active year, we have negotiated financial challenges which have also presented significant new opportunities for the organisation.

Members will note that we are reporting a deficit this year of \$31,730. This represents 0.9% of annual turnover. This is the first year in which we have felt the effect of losing \$140,000 of annual operational support from the Australia Council. Generating new income streams is our most pressing challenge. The Board has embarked on this challenge with renewed vigour by working assiduously to establish a sound organisational platform to underpin new development and fundraising capacity.

Over the past year the RAA Board has laid the foundations for an expansion in program activity designed to raise RAA's profile and relevance in the sector, as well as increase the resources of the organisation.

This process has been reinforced by extensive consultation with members and external professional advice. A new relationship with Creative Partnerships Australia along with learnings from the University of Melbourne fundraising strategy informs this work.

Building a credible and sustainable RAA fundraising strategy involves strategic shifts for the organisation, recognising that RAA has limited past experience as a fundraising organisation. To this end, the Board has embraced fundraising strategy as a central pillar of its remit.

FROM THE TREASURER (cont.)

The Position Description for the Executive Director has been enhanced to include new responsibilities for fundraising. Professional development opportunities have been taken up already and will continue to build the skills of both the RAA Board and RAA staff. This strategy opens up new opportunities for the organisation's work in advocacy and sector development.

It is fundamentally important to recognise that RAA remains in a strong and resilient financial position that would be envied by many small to medium arts organisations. Our substantial portfolio reserves are well managed. In addition, robust and effective budget and cash flow management has meant that the organisation has not needed to draw down funds from portfolio earnings over the past two years.

The financial foundations of RAA remain strong, which allows us to actively and demonstrably pursue our mission of representing the organisation, including strong advocacy for regional and rural arts development.

I want to express my thanks to our financial management team at Clarity NT for the work they have done to enhance the detail and transparency of financial reporting to the Board. I also acknowledge the work of Deloitte as the company auditor.

I commend the financial report to members.



Morri Young



Financial Statement

Arts Council of Australia Ltd
Trading as Regional Arts Australia
ABN 45 000 525 182

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2017

	2017	2016
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	269,774	338,186
Trade and other receivables	223,214	-
Other current assets	17,918	13,830
Total Current Assets	510,906	352,016
Non Current Assets		
Financial Assets	681,918	693,463
Plant and Equipment	1,285	1,928
Total Non Current Assets	683,203	695,391
Total Assets	1,194,109	1,047,407
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities		
Trade and other payables	482,421	305,949
Provisions	9,168	7,208
Total Current Liabilities	491,589	313,157
Total Liabilities	491,589	313,157
Net Assets	702,520	734,250
EQUITY		
Retained earnings	734,250	749,321
Surplus / (Deficit) for the year	(31,730)	(15,071)
Total Equity	702,520	734,250

Financial Statement

Arts Council of Australia Ltd
 Trading as Regional Arts Australia
 ABN 45 000 525 182

Statement of Comprehensive Income

INCOME	2017	2016
Total Revenue	3,532,562	876,802
EXPENSES		
Depreciation & Amortisation	643	964
Salaries & Related Costs	206,785	181,954
Project Expenses	3,181,515	629,237
All Other Expenses	202,020	62,361
Total Expenses	3,590,963	874,516
Surplus (Deficit) for the year	(58,401)	2,286
Net fair value gains/(losses) on available-for-sale financial assets	26,671	(17,357)
Total Comprehensive Income for the year	(31,730)	(15,071)





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