

Regional Arts And Social Impact
<https://research.qut.edu.au/raasi/>

PROJECT UPDATE

March 2020

The ARC Linkage 'The Role of the Creative Arts in Regional Australia: A Social Impact Model' addresses the challenge to effectively target regional arts funding to programs and activities that build capacity and have lasting impact for communities. It delivers a framework for evaluating the arts, to argue for the arts to be included in a broader understanding of national wellbeing and success.

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Research Project Manager: Sasha Mackay Doctoral Researcher: Kevin Wilson

Firstly, we would like to extend our well wishes to our project partners during this time of uncertainty. We know organisations and communities are experiencing increased pressure and new challenges due to COVID-19. We hope that your families and communities remain well.

Thank you again for participating in a formal interview this month. So far we have conducted 12 interviews with our seven partner organisations, plus Blackall/Tambo Regional Council and Burnie Arts Council. Your time and considered responses provide valuable insights into the varied ways the arts connect and strengthen regional communities, and existing processes and challenges associated with impact measurement. As one interviewee said, ***'how do you catch air?'***

Other thoughts that have emerged through interviews so far: the arts facilitate *cross-sectorial collaborations* to address complex problems, and enable communities to define and represent identity; existing evaluative frameworks and measures are urban-centric and don't reflect impact in regional communities, which may not be immediate but emerges over years; *remote and very remote communities emphasise wellbeing and liveability in understandings of impact*; despite prevailing narratives of hardship, some rural and regional communities are less socially and financially disadvantaged than urban suburbs; grants/funding cycles do not always reflect community timeframes or support community needs; the ways we talk about 'regional art' unhelpfully homogenises regionality; non-participation is not necessarily a sign of low-impact; *the economic value of arts must remain part of the story, but it isn't the whole story*. We look forward to sharing more insights after all interviews have been conducted and fully analysed.

What we're reading: we're listing some of the literature we've reviewed on evaluation models, cultural measurement and participation on [the RAASI website](#) - do take a look.

Welcome to Kevin Wilson



Kevin Wilson recently commenced as the PhD researcher on this project, and he will join us on some of our visits to communities over the next three years. Kevin has had an extensive career, initially as an artist exhibiting in Australia and overseas and then as a gallery director in Melbourne, Albury, Noosa and Brisbane. In the last 7 years he has been principally a curator developing a range of innovative and audience focused social history, fine arts and craft and design exhibitions at the State Library of Queensland, QUT Art Museum and artisan. Kevin has also worked extensively in a regional context developing innovative residency, workshop and action research projects. He instigated two key national programs still running today – the [Linden Postcard Show](#) and [The Floating Land](#) art and environment biennial.



Upcoming Partner Meetings

- Monday **May 11th, 11am - 1pm** (AEST) via Zoom <https://qut.zoom.us/j/418796042>
- *Placeholder:* Sunday **September 6th, 9:30am - 11:30am** (AEST) Launceston, Grand Chancellor Hotel Board Room. Morning tea will be provided.

News from our partners



Katherine Connor has been newly appointed as Executive Director of [Performing Arts Connections \(PAC\) Australia](#). Katherine has, most recently, been the Producer & Programs Manager with PAC Australia, developing industry leading programs and initiatives. In her new capacity as Executive Director, she will lead the management and delivery of the organisation's flagship annual event, the newly re-branded Australian Performing Arts Exchange (APAX). A big congratulations to Katherine, and a warm, official welcome to the RAASI partner team and advisory committee. It will be wonderful to have your expertise on the team and we're looking forward to working with you.

Red Ridge travelled to Melbourne Fashion Festival in early March to showcase a spectacular collection of garments designed and created by central western Queensland artists Anpanuwa Joyce Crombie and Aulpunda Jean Barr-Crombie. Ignited by the success of the [‘Dress the West’](#) community project, this work reflects the colours and stories of Wangkangurru/Yarluyandi country around Birdsville and realised Anpanuwa Joyce's vision for her art on fashion. [See the ABC News Breakfast segment on the project.](#)

Additionally, The Sun Woman Dress from ‘Dress the West’ (pictured) is featured in the [SPOKEN](#) exhibition at State Library of Queensland. SPOKEN celebrates Queensland Indigenous languages and the Sun Woman Dress showcases the expression of language and culture through art. The dress is currently on loan from the artists and the Central West Aboriginal Corporation. If you are in Brisbane, we highly recommend visiting SLQ to see it.



The [Remote Area Planning & Development Board](#) (RAPAD) developed an interactive digital report for their Cluster Fencing Project, a Queensland Feral Pest Initiative that protects 1 million sheep and a land area larger than Hong Kong from wild dogs. The interactive evaluation report ‘Not just a fence’ (www.notjustafence.org) communicates the social and economic impacts of this project for the central western Queensland region through photos, digital storytelling and infographics, and has been very popular. ‘Not just a fence’ is a beautiful and innovative approach to telling the impact story in a way that's engaging and accessible.

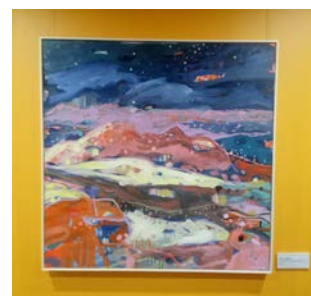
A reminder that as a result of the Administrative Arrangement Order introduced on 5 December 2019, the functions that were previously the responsibility of the Department of Communications and the Arts have been transferred to the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications as of 1 February 2020. The Arts Division of DoITRC is the Office for the Arts: www.arts.gov.au.



The [Regional Australia Institute](#) is hosting its next regional art exhibition. Art Word Place is developed and curated by Arts North West for Artstate Tamworth. The exhibition “focuses on the interplay between text and image. Writers from the Arts North West region were commissioned to create a short poem based on their home landscape. Selected artists have then drawn on this composition as the basis and inspiration of a new work capturing the identity and sense of place of the New England North West. There are recurring themes – of rivers, plains and sky, of drought, of adversity, but also of optimism” (Arts NSW).

More information on the exhibit, including a full catalogue of the works, is available [here](#). The exhibition will be in the Regional Australia Institute offices for 3 months (9 March to 4 June). **Project partners and members of the public are welcome to say hello and enjoy the exhibit during office hours (Mon-Thurs 8:00-5:00.)**

Image above: Angus Nivison, *But in the Dry*, 2019, acrylic on canvas. Image right: Paula Jenkins, *Deep Time Dreaming*, 2019, oil on canvas.



[Artlands 2020](#) will take place from 2-6 September in Lutruwita on Palawa country, Launceston. **Regional Arts Australia welcomes proposals for papers, presentations and workshops** – please [find more information here](#). Artlands has been a strategic, national regional art gathering for over two decades. From 2020 onwards, Artlands will be curated alongside existing festivals and creative programming in regional Australia, and will comprise an ongoing, continually developing program of events and activities online and in various locations around the country. This new delivery model seeks to provide greater accessibility, continuity and connection. Artlands 2020 will be delivered alongside Junction Art Festival in Launceston from Sept 2-6.

Australia Council's recent [Domestic Arts Tourism research report](#) identifies the North West region of Tasmania as a strong region for domestic arts tourism. It highlights [Burnie's Maker's Workshop](#) as space that offers a variety of visitor experiences. This research draws on data from Tourism Research Australia's national survey and shows the contribution arts and culture make to Australia's national tourism priority. One finding is that **“the destinations where tourists are especially likely to engage with the arts are in regional Australia”** (see p.30). The North West region of Tasmania, encompassing our project site Burnie, is the second most visited region in Tasmania for the arts, following Hobart (p.76). [More here](#). (Image: [Paper on Skin, Burnie](#), 2018.)



Arts sector impact assessment and industry response to COVID-19

Regional Arts Australia is partnering with PAC Australia to distribute [a survey](#) compiled specifically for Performing Arts Centres in Australia. The National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) is also disseminating [a survey](#), and the [#lostmygig database](#) is collecting information about event cancellations and postponements. RAA encourages as many artists, organisations, venues, galleries, small halls, touring outfits, events to complete relevant surveys or registrations: *"It is vital to collect as much data as possible so that we have the most comprehensive information to put to the Minister on the impact of covid19 across the arts, culture and entertainment industry. We are working fast to collect an immediate response and will reissue surveys over the coming weeks to map ongoing and increasing impacts."* [See the full media release.](#)



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