

Regional Arts receive a recovery boost

Regional Arts Australia acknowledges that the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, Minister for Communications, Cyber Safety and the Arts recognises the importance of the contribution of regional arts practice to the sustainability of the Australian economy and community wellbeing by today announcing the federal government's investment of \$10 million into the regional arts sector.

The scale of loss of activity and income across the cultural and creative sector, as a direct result of COVID-19, is unprecedented and devastating both culturally and economically. This is particularly felt across regional Australia, where many industries and communities are yet to recover from the impacts of the bushfires, floods and drought.

The creative industries are a crucial element in the future of sustainable and liveable Australian regions and are central to thriving and healthy communities across regional, rural and remote Australia. Arts and culture activities will be vital in the recovery and renewal process of the Australian COVID-19 response.

As the national voice for arts in regional Australia, Regional Arts Australia will invest in programs that support the short and long-term recovery that inspires regional culture, drives regional livelihoods and supports arts and culture practice in regional, remote and rural Australia.

Regional Arts Australia manages the Regional Arts Fund currently valued at \$13m over 4 years on behalf of the Federal Government. The fund is an extensive national regional arts grants program, delivered in partnership with state and territory members and regional program administrators. For many years, it has been, and continues to be, one of the most successful avenues for delivering targeted programs, devised by, and meeting the needs of regional Australian communities.

Chair of Regional Arts Australia, Dr Simon Spain says "Regional Arts Australia and its state and territory members and partners have significant experience in the management of arts-based recovery and renewal programs in their regions. With this additional investment, we will prioritise a program that will respond to the immediate needs of regional artists, organisations and communities across the country. In addition these funds provide an opportunity to explore new ways to build a robust and sustainable regional arts sector for the future. We will continue to connect with creative institutions, First Nations organisations and build cross-industry partnerships in health, education, tourism and jobs, to contribute to the wellbeing and cultural vitality of regional and remote Australia."

Regional Arts Australia believes in strong partnerships between government, industry and not-for-profits and advocates to work more effectively across policy sectors to build diverse, robust and more sustainable regional, remote and rural Australia.

Regional Arts Australia looks forward to working with our national colleagues, as we co-design and support ongoing creative practice, renewal and recovery across regional and remote Australia. We thank the Federal government for partnering with us to achieve this.

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