



ARTS NORTHERN
RIVERS

ANNUAL
REPORT

20

for all
things arts + culture



ANNUAL REPORT

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ARTS N R



chair's report

Welcome to the 2020 Annual Report for Arts Northern Rivers.

2020 was one of the most challenging years we have faced – as an arts organisation, as a region and as a country - as I write this, we still face significant uncertainty and challenges as we live through this once in 100-year pandemic that has brought much of our world to a standstill.

The arts sector was one of the first casualties of the pandemic and with the restrictions that became a necessary part of life, Arts Northern Rivers quickly refocused our services to concentrate on delivering the most effective support possible to our local creatives. In simple terms this was about money – with so many in our industry ineligible for job keeper and cut off from audiences and markets, we repurposed our budget to offer micro grants to artists and creative businesses. We supported them to restructure their practices and adapt to these new and strange times of social distancing, lock downs and border closures. We then lobbied for increased support for the sector and were successful in securing additional funds. This meant we could expand our micro grants campaign, enabling us to distribute over \$35,000 in small grant support in the early days of the pandemic. I would like to acknowledge our local MLC the Hon. Ben Franklin – Parliamentary Secretary for the Arts, for his role in helping to secure this extra funding. Ben's ongoing support for the arts in our region and across the state has been as genuine as it has been generous.

As the pandemic wore on and our 'new normal' took shape it was clear that we needed to continue to identify opportunities and lobby for further support for our sector. I'm pleased to report that our Executive Director along with our dedicated staff and supported by the Board, secured numerous stimulus and support grants throughout 2020. These grants have focused on hard hit sectors such as the music industry as well as generally supporting artists and their practice. As restrictions have slowly lifted, we have recommenced a number of projects that were on hold including our outreach services for First Nation artists; and our artist led and community focused project with the community of Rappville, who were so severely impacted by the devastation of the bushfires in 2019. Whilst these projects will be fully delivered in 2021, it is pleasing that we were able to make some headway with them as 2020 came to a close.

2020 has been incredibly challenging, but it has also been rewarding to see how effective Arts Northern Rivers is in supporting our arts and creative industries during times of crisis. I am deeply grateful and give my thanks to our dedicated team and my fellow Board members for delivering such meaningful work. We are a small but effective regional arts organisation and with the ongoing support of our Councils we look forward to continuing to support the arts and creative industries across the Northern Rivers as we move into the future.

Cr Elly Bird
Chair

executive director's report

2020 was a year of challenges for all of us. On the back of the devastating bushfire crisis that engulfed large parts of regional NSW a global pandemic sent us into our homes and isolated us from our loved ones, our community and our work. For the arts and creative industries, the impact of locking down and imposing strict but necessary social distancing rules was immediate. With so many in our industry relying on audiences and the gig economy the financial impact was devastating.

In response, Arts Northern Rivers quickly found new ways to do business and engage with our regional arts community - like the rest of the world Zoom became our new best friend! Our priority was to refocus and retool our programs and budgets to provide immediate assistance to artists and creatives as they navigated their way through this 'new normal'. This assistance included a micro grants campaign as well as online consultations offering advice and guidance to navigate the many government assistance packages and other opportunities that were announced throughout the year. Our work in this regard is on-going and we remain responsive and ready to assist wherever we can.

As restrictions began to ease, 2020 began to fill with other challenges and opportunities including Create NSW's review of the Regional Arts Network. The review was an opportunity for the Network to respond to a number of proposals that sought to examine the way regional arts support is delivered in NSW. Two significant proposals recommended an increase in funding to the 14 Regional Arts Development Organisations (RADOs) achieved through a redistribution of the current budget allocation for Regional Arts

in NSW as well as a recommendation that the Country Arts Support Program (CASP) become a self-managed fund enabling the RADOs to provide small grants for regionally based projects. After consultation with our Board of Directors and with key cultural stakeholders from across the region, Arts Northern Rivers supported the redistribution of regional arts funding and the redesign of funding programs such as CASP to make them more responsive to local needs and importantly led by the regions.

As part of this redistribution of funds, Regional Arts NSW has seen a decrease in its funding, which will necessitate a re-design of how the service organisation supports the Network moving forward. While Arts Northern Rivers acknowledges the long history of Regional Arts NSW and the significant contribution it has made to the development of regional arts in our state, we see this reallocation of funding as an opportunity for the Regional Arts Network to create a stronger role in determining how regional arts are supported and developed in NSW and look forward to exploring this opportunity further with the Network and Create NSW.

We finished the year with an announcement from Create NSW that we would be allocated a \$130,000 stimulus grant to inject into the community through the support of artists and projects across the region. We are delighted that we were able to support so many creatives throughout the challenges of 2020 and we're pleased that the State Government has recognised the importance of RADOs such as Arts Northern Rivers to connect with and support local regional creatives - we look forward to continuing this important work.

Peter Wood
Executive Director



+ our vision

A diverse, vibrant and resilient arts and cultural community, valued in our region and recognised nationally and internationally

+ our mission

As the peak arts organisation for our region we deliver services and projects that foster artistic innovation and excellence and work to ensure access and engagement with arts and cultural activity

+ we do this by

Developing quality programs in collaboration with our stakeholders. Extending our reach across the region to encourage participation in and promotion of our vibrant arts and cultural sector. Ensuring we remain viable as an organisation through good governance practice and financial management



who we are | what we do

As the peak arts body Arts Northern Rivers works with individuals, organisations and government to generate, promote and advocate for the arts and creative industries in the Northern Rivers region of NSW.

Arts Northern Rivers is supported by Create NSW and six local Government areas in our region who work with us to ensure access to arts and cultural activity for everyone. In addition we receive support through the Federal Government's Indigenous Visual Arts & Industry Support program (IVAIS).

We love what we do because we love what you do. We are committed to supporting the visibility, viability and vibrancy of this incredible region.

To achieve this we deliver an annual program of skills and professional development workshops, a dedicated strategy for supporting and sustaining Indigenous art and culture and offering support and advice for individuals in our region.

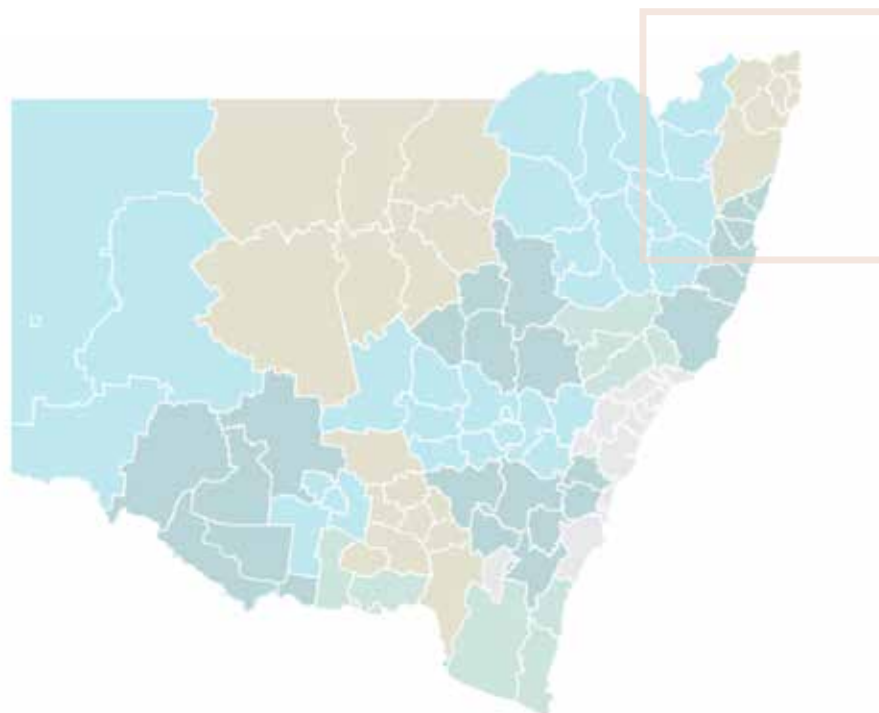
our region

The Northern Rivers is home to the highest concentration of arts and creative industries practitioners outside of metropolitan centers and we recognize the enormous contribution they make to the cultural, economic and social wellbeing of the Northern Rivers (and to the nation!)

RADO network

There are 14 Regional Arts Organisations in NSW, each providing strategic direction for sustainable arts and cultural development in their region.

Their Boards include representatives from local government, tourism, education, arts councils and other community arts organisations and community members. Each employs an Executive Director and other staff who coordinate a cultural development program across the contributing local government areas in their region.



communication | engagement

Communication Platforms

Arts Northern Rivers digitally communicates with individuals, organisations and government across a suite of channels including website, e-news and social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Vimeo) to generate, promote and advocate for the arts and creative industries in the Northern Rivers region of NSW.

An up-to-date What's On directory and monthly What's On e-news delivered to Arts Northern Rivers subscribers ensures access to arts and cultural activity for everyone. In addition to the monthly What's On newsletter and project news, Arts Northern Rivers delivers a quarterly Soapbox newsletter featuring guest writers and promoting key projects and opportunities.

Northern Rivers Creative

Northern Rivers Creative celebrates the region's thriving creative diversity, featuring a range of categories including creative services, visual arts, design, Indigenous arts, literature, music, performance and screen. The creative directory the Northern Rivers is built to support creative ambition and increase professional opportunities for creatives by connecting them to local and global markets.

Northern Rivers Creative regularly promotes creatives through physical activity, in local and national print publications, as well as all digital platforms including website, e-news and social media (Facebook & Instagram).

Subscribers - 4,626
Facebook - 5,525
Twitter - 1,632
Instagram - 2,981
Sessions with website 22,421

Subscribers - 501
Facebook - 875
Instagram - 2,981
Sessions with website 9,744

TOTAL
ENGAGEMENTS

51 286

projects

ANR delivers a diverse program of activity through both core and project funding. This activity is shaped by the priorities outlined in the ANR strategic plan and is a direct response to the needs of the wider arts community.

Auslan Creative

Arts Northern Rivers began delivery of Auslan Creative, a major project working with the Northern Rivers Deaf community and multi-artform partners. In 2020, the project delivered a creative development program aimed at exploring models for collaboration and practice development between artists of mixed abilities and cultures.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Auslan Creative program was partially delivered in 2020 and will continue in 2021, culminating in a forum that will inform future funding applications to expand on the project and continue to engage and offer opportunities for creative and emerging leaders in the Deaf community.

Your Big Idea

Your Big Idea project called for ambitious ideas to be developed into contemporary arts projects and received an overwhelming response, emphasising the creative talent residing in the Northern Rivers. The winning idea received \$5,000 seed funding and each of the six finalists shared in an extra \$15,000 in seed funding.

Selection panel guests included Emily Sullivan, Curator at Kaldor Public Art Projects, Virginia Hyam, Head of Programming at HOTA [Home of the Arts] and Stephen Garrett, Head of Art and Design at Southern Cross University, who moderated a panel discussion. The winners were Peter Castaldi and Arianna Bosi from Dashboard Animals, who in addition to receiving the winning prize, will work closely with Arts Northern Rivers in 2021 to hone their project ready for further funding.



Rappville Creative Recovery

Responding to the devastating bushfires which impacted the Rappville community in late 2019, Arts Northern Rivers received funding through Create NSW Arts and Cultural Funding Program to deliver a creative recovery project in Rappville.

After initial community consultations in 2020, Arts Northern Rivers will continue to deliver this artist-led creative recovery project throughout 2021. The project will deliver a series of public engagement events designed

to build sustainable cultural tourism in the town, delivering ongoing benefits for the local community and wider creative sector of NSW.

The project has engaged Charlotte Haywood and Lyndall Phelps, two renowned multidisciplinary artists who have a strong track record in delivering innovative and community-based work. The two lead artists will work collaboratively with the Rappville community to develop a creative response to the devastation, resilience and future of this tight-knit community.

Pg 12: *Ritual Workshop*, Image Kate Holmes, 2020;
Pg 13 *Myrtle Creek*, Image Imbi Davidson, 2020



Indigenous art projects

Indigenous arts development is one of our strategic priorities. Since 2005 ANR has employed an Indigenous Arts Development Officer tasked with supporting and developing projects that support Aboriginal artists across our region. The role is funded through the Federal Government's Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support program (IVAIS).

Outreach

Kylie Caldwell started in the Indigenous Arts Officer (IAO) role in March 2020, two weeks before COVID lock-down. Throughout 2020, Kylie supported and encouraged Indigenous artists to take up opportunities to create, strengthen and expand their profiles, developed the Aboriginal Cultural Practitioner | Artist and Creative Survey to find areas of impact due to COVID-19 and ranges of interest for creative and professional development, as well as providing an outreach service to support Indigenous artists, cultural practitioners and creatives.

Outreach provided by the IAO has been individualised to work directly with Aboriginal artists across Northern Rivers and support is extended to all artists and groups seeking further support and guidance.

Professional development assistance was given to artists as well as five successful Create NSW Small Project Funds applications. Further, initial confirmations were sought to create the Arts Northern Rivers Aboriginal Arts and Culture Advisory committee to be pursued in 2021.

Byron School of Art Scholarship

In October 2020, Arts Northern Rivers initiated the inaugural First Nations Visual Arts Scholarship in partnership with Byron School of Art (BSA). The scholarship strengthens the ongoing relationship with BSA and provides support and access for local aspiring and established Indigenous Visual Artists to receive an individualised creative learning pathway based on their practice and interest.



Supported by the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support (IVAIS) funding as well as the ANR Gift Fund, the scholarship sponsors a First Nations artist to participate in a year-long foundation course, designed to provide extensive grounding and experience in the Visual Arts. The 2020 scholarship was awarded to Belle Arnold, an active community member and multidisciplinary artist, who focuses on local community engagement, empowerment

Bundjalung Weaving

Informed by the successful delivery of Bundjalung weaving workshops held in 2019, in partnership with the Indigenous Languages and Arts Program, funding was secured in

2020 to create the publication ‘Weavers Of The Bundjalung Nation’. Although delayed in 2020, the publication will be completed in 2021.

Documenting weaving techniques specific to the Bundjalung region, the book will record stories of elders, research historical and archival material and record traditional plant species and harvesting techniques from across the Bundjalung region. Written by Indigenous writers, the book will feature an introduction by Miles Franklin Award winner Melissa Lucashenko and engage internationally renowned photographers Brian Hodges and Kate Holmes to work with elders and weavers to professionally capture the world of Bundjalung plants, people, culture and country.

Pgs 13 & 14: *Weaving Workshop*, Image Kate Holmes, 2020



if these halls could talk | ten days on the island

Our 2016 project 'If These Halls Could Talk', expanded into a collaboration with Tasmania's renowned festival, Ten Days on the Island in 2020.

Originally funded through Create NSW's Regional Partnerships program, If These Halls Could Talk was an acclaimed region-wide collaboration with regional galleries, museums, historical societies, and libraries in the Northern Rivers.

The success of the project led to the investigation of opportunities to extend its reach beyond the region. Involved in this process was Lindy Hume, who in her former role as

Artistic Director for Opera Queensland was part of the original project. As Artistic Director of Ten Days on The Island, Lindy reached out to Arts Northern Rivers explaining:

"Arts Northern Rivers' process speaks to the ingenuity of regional thinking in Australia. We are delighted to co-produce If These Halls Could Talk with our friends at Arts Northern Rivers, adapting and expanding it to 10 halls around Tasmania as a special project within the Festival's 20-year anniversary program. It's exciting to reimagine the audience's journey from hall to hall as a distinctively Tasmanian experience."



responding to crisis

In 2020 our region was faced with two significant crises – the devastation of the 2019/20 Bushfire Emergency, which was then closely followed by the COVID-19 Pandemic that continues to impact on the creative sector of our region and our country.

Arts Northern Rivers rapidly responded to both and joined with the Regional Arts Network to develop a survey that would reveal the nature of these impacts on the arts and creative sector and to identify areas of urgent need and best responses.

Not surprisingly the surveys revealed a need for urgent financial assistance to help artists continue their practice. In the case of the Bushfire Crisis this was all about replacing

lost equipment and tools while the COVID-19 crisis revealed a need for support to re-imagining their practice and the way they connected with their now socially distant markets.

In both cases Arts Northern Rivers was able to provide a quick response / micro grants initiative that delivered over \$30,000 in support for artists in our region. Towards the end of 2020, we were thrilled to advise our stakeholders that we were to receive a \$130,000 grant via NSW Treasury and Create NSW to help stimulate the local economy through creative projects and that would help to put money into the pockets of creatives as they delivered creative programs across the Northern Rivers.

Pg 16: *Dawn Gathering - Ten Days on The Island*, Image Brodie Weeding, 2020;
Pg 17: *Myrtle Creek*, Image Imbi Davidson, 2020





strategic funding achievements

ANR amplifies its work by joining with other organisations and individuals to develop, present and promote a range of innovative programs, targeting various sectors within the arts and creative industries.

Micro-Grants

\$30,000 was distributed to artists and creatives across the region. \$10,000 was allocated from the company's reserves with an additional \$20,000 secured through a strategic fund supported by the NSW Minister for the Arts the Hon Don Harwin.

Regenerate

Regenerate was a Create NSW initiative that targeted the music sector and was aimed at providing live performance opportunities when it was safe to do so. Arts Northern Rivers secured \$10,000 to deliver our Up Next project – a live performance opportunity for early career and emerging musicians in the region – including business development workshops and studio recording time (to be delivered in 2021).

Arts Restart

At the end of 2020 Arts Northern Rivers was successful in securing \$130,000 in stimulus funding from Create NSW and the NSW Treasury. In consultation with our Board, we identified projects across the region, that could respond quickly to this funding opportunity to pay artists and deliver creative programs.

Micro-Music Festival

Arts Northern Rivers secured a \$20,000 grant from Create NSW to support a Micro-Music Festival in the region. Working with organisers of the inaugural Byron Bay Music Festival, we were able to provide this cash injection that would pay for the engagement of local musicians. The Festival will take place in 2021.

Pg 18: *Dashboard Animals, Your Big Idea Winners*, Image Peter Cataldi, 2020;
Pg 19: *Drawn Together - Drawing Workshop Grafton Regional Gallery*, Jody Graham, 2020



thankyou

Arts Northern Rivers would like to recognise the many organisations and individuals who have supported us throughout 2020, from our key funding partners to our sponsors, board of directors, staff, and volunteers. An enormous thank you to...

Principal partners

Create NSW, Office for the Arts, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications – Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support, Indigenous Languages and Arts, Regional Arts Fund

Contributing Councils; Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Clarence Valley, Kyogle, Lismore City and Richmond Valley

Sponsor

Thomas, Noble, Russell, Chartered Accountants/Auditors, Lismore

Philanthropy

WWW Foundation, USA

Media supporters

Paradiso Magazine, Byron Art Magazine, ABC North Coast

Project partners 2020

Regional Arts NSW, Ten Days on the Island (Tasmania), Findhorn Bay Festival (Scotland), Accessible Arts NSW, Museum of Contemporary Arts (MCA), Screenworks, NORPA, Lismore Regional Gallery, Southern Cross University, Creative + Business







staff

Executive Director
Indigenous Arts Officer

Project Manager
Communications Manager
Administration Coordinator
Finance Manager

Peter Wood
Mark Cora (until January)
Kylie Caldwell (from March)
Natalie Bull
Ingrid Wilson
Phoebe Rose
Grant Binns

board

Ballina Shire Representative
Byron Shire Representative
Byron Shire Alternate
Clarence Valley Representative
Kyogle Shire Representative
Kyogle Shire Alternate
Lismore Representative
Richmond Valley Representative
Richmond Valley Alternate
Co-opted Member

Cr. Sharon Parry
Cr. Jan Hackett
Cr. Jeanette Martin
Cr. Deborah Novak
Ruth Tsitimbini
Chris White
Cr. Elly Bird
Hayley Hancock
Cr. Jill Lyons
Wayne Halcrow





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