

Eastern Riverina Arts

2021 Annual Report



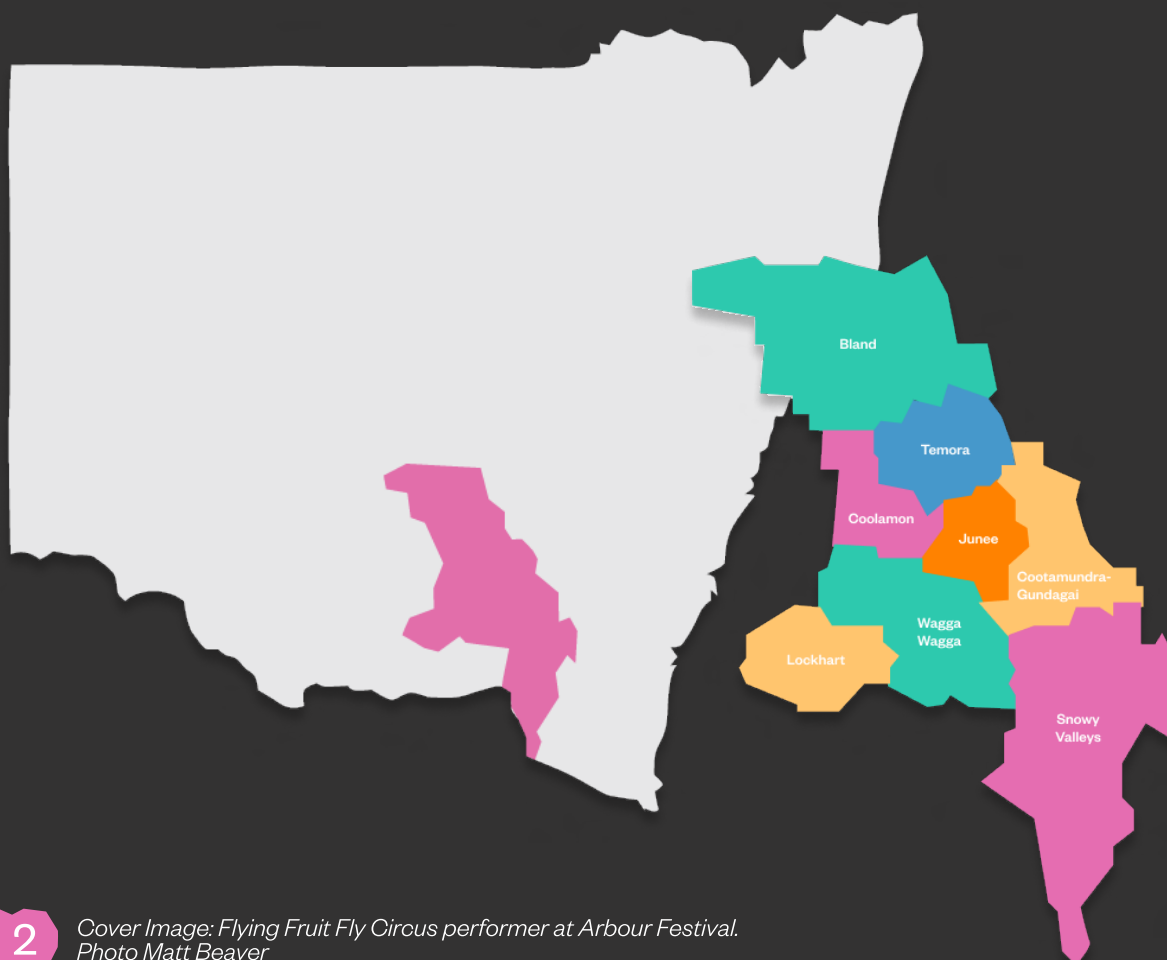
About Eastern Riverina Arts

Eastern Riverina Arts (ERA) is a small organisation providing big opportunities to artists and creative people in our region.

We work in collaboration with the eight Councils of Bland, Coolamon, Cootamundra-Gundagai, Lockhart, Junee, Snowy Valleys, Temora and Wagga Wagga. Eastern Riverina Arts works within these communities to support creative practitioners, stimulate creative activity and enterprise, and increase participation in the arts.

We support and connect artists, organisations, communities and Councils to ensure that arts and culture contribute to the vibrancy, wellbeing and uniqueness of communities across our region.

Eastern Riverina Arts is funded by the NSW Government through Create NSW. We are part of a statewide network of Regional Arts Development Organisations and are a member of Regional Arts NSW.



Chair's welcome



2021 was different! It demanded some very creative thinking on the part of Eastern Riverina Arts to ensure services continued to be available and accessible. So successful was that creative thinking that 2021 emerged as the busiest year to date! The blend of some bold and inventive strategies with well-established practices saw truly exciting projects initiated and delivered, more than can be captured in this report.

At the heart of this organisation is a very small but committed team - one that has developed strength and capability under the leadership of the Executive Director, Tim Kurylowicz. The smooth workings of this team, the ability of individuals to adapt at short notice to changes and external pressures meant that ERA delivered very solid outcomes yet again!

There were changes in the team, Tim officially took on the role of Executive Director at the commencement of the year. Marcus Wright left to take up a role with Museum of Contemporary Art, Scott Howie also left and was later appointed (Interim) General Manager of Regional Arts Australia, Claire Harris took on the leadership and management of RENEW, Ashleigh Adams was welcomed to the team as Administration Officer. At the end of the year our communications officer Kate Howarth signalled her intention to leave to pursue other career interests. I commend the team members for their resilience and thank them for their outstanding commitment to supporting artists and artistic endeavours in our region. I thank the members of the Board of Directors for their very generous support of this team, and of the organisation.

We acknowledge the financial support of the NSW Government enabling us to deliver a range of services and programs, some of which were targeted specifically to meet the challenging impacts of COVID. During the year we also strengthened our resources base by implementing further efficiencies and well-informed business and governance practices.

Towards the end of the year, we were presented with the revised Regional Arts NSW operating model. The organisation has adopted a range of exciting strategies which will see it concentrate on regional sector advocacy and support and sustainable business practices. We welcome this new direction and look forward to working with RANSW during 2022.

We really value our relationships with our eight member councils. Their ongoing support underpins our ability to raise the profile of artists and creative practices across this region. I add thanks from those artists who have benefited from the services we have been able to provide because of the collaboration and support of these members.

We reflect with pride on 2021, a year that delivered some tough challenges but also some great achievements, and I commend this report to you as a snapshot of that year.

Anne Lowe

Chair of the Eastern Riverina Arts Board of Directors

Executive Director's Report



We commenced 2021 in the thick of delivering the Arbour Festival, a 50-event festival in a bushfire zone. Despite the team having wrapped months of work on the Artstate Conference in Wagga Wagga only weeks prior, we stepped up to deliver a project as beautiful as it was challenging, with professionalism and care.

What would follow was a year of unparalleled scale for Eastern Riverina Arts. We supported and delivered more than 60 projects across our region through Arts Restart, a Covid response funded by the NSW Government. This was also the year we broke new ground with the Renew Wagga project, helping dozens of artists and creatives grow creative businesses and bolster local retail and experience economies.

The signing of a new funding agreement with CreateNSW in October 2021 gave Eastern Riverina Arts expanded capabilities for the foreseeable future, and we have wasted no time expanding the work we do around our region.

As I reflect on the year I can't help but notice our subtle but significant evolution from an organisation that in many ways revolved around the Executive Director, to an organisation that reflects the best and combined work of a team. So many of the outcomes catalogued in this report are only possible thanks to the commitment and hard work of Ash, Kate and Claire, and I'd like to acknowledge each of them for their stellar work ethic and unflagging optimism during a year that was nobody's favourite.

I am also proud that amidst the flurry of project delivery, we were able to strengthen ERA's operations, and achieve some of the big aspirations of our Strategic Plan as well. Lots of work has gone into improving our systems and processes, training staff, strengthening our policy and governance and formulating new projects and priorities.

I'm so looking forward to the opportunities that are ahead, and excited for Eastern Riverina Arts' future. Thanks for being part of our story, and for the role you'll play in our future.

Tim Kurylowicz
Executive Director

“ 2021 gave Eastern Riverina Arts expanded capabilities for the foreseeable future, and we have wasted no time expanding the work we do around our region. ”

2021 by the numbers

\$500,000

in artist fees, production fees and worker salaries distributed across our region above and beyond the core services we are funded to provide.

22

Artists commissioned through the A4 Art Commission project.

32

Artists who we supported to sell their work through the Christmas Markets and the Creative Riverina Christmas campaign.

33

Micro Grants provided for creative and cultural projects across our region.



Advice and support provided to:

135 artists and creative businesses

80 community groups

84 council projects

Testimonials



“Eastern Riverina Arts provided me with a wealth of support and direction during a recent project of mine. The expertise, knowledge and community links were immensely valuable for me as an Aboriginal artist - supporting fair and equitable access to resources and guiding best practice in the arts.”

Amanda Hinkelmann

Because of my Four



“Managing an art project was not something that I had ever done before. Thankfully, Eastern Riverina Arts was there to help me negotiate everything from what type of contract to use through to when to step back and allow the artist to exercise their poetic licence in the design. What resulted was an amazing collaborative project.”

Tony Wennerbom

Wing Commander,
Royal Australian Air Force



The support provided to my business by Eastern Riverina Arts over the past 5 years has been pivotal in our resilience, success and growth. The organisation is full of outstanding creative professionals, each with their own experience and skills, but all eager to share advice and contacts to help the sector grow together.”

Adam Bannister

Pyrus Event Services



“Through the help of Eastern Riverina Arts I have been able to gain a national profile as a comedian while continuing to live in the Riverina with my friends and family. During the pandemic they helped me to navigate funding opportunities to help me stay afloat during a really tough time, and over the years they have helped me grow as an artist in knowledge and experience in lots of different ways.”

Dane Simpson

Comedian



“The Australia Council hosted several key events and leadership programs in Wagga Wagga in 2021. This would not have been possible without the local knowledge, commitment, and guidance of Eastern Riverina Arts. Tim and the team were a dream to work with and we thank them for their critical work advocating for the arts and the Eastern Riverina region.

Kevin du Preez

Previously Director
Capacity Building, Australia
Council for the Arts



“Renew Wagga is giving artists like me a start. Today I am open for business, my art is on the walls and I have already made several sales. I actually have accounting software and thanks to Eastern Riverina Arts and the Business Enterprise Centre realise that a business plan involves more than “paint the pictures, sell the pictures, buy more paint”! This is literally a dream come true.”

Maggie Deal

Owner, Little Yellow House
Gallery

Our Core Services

Growing local culture in 2021

Despite the challenges of Covid, our work continued without pause in 2021. We held more than 135 individual meetings with artists, and 80 with community and cultural groups. We provided advice and support 84 times to council projects.

We overhauled and expanded our Creative Riverina database, and extended its coverage across the service areas of Western Riverina Arts and South West Arts. This means the whole of NSW's Riverina region is now represented within this vibrant creative database and online community.

We toured the Old:New exhibition to Lockhart, Coolamon and Temora, and through the Lagoon project facilitated Aboriginal tools workshops in Batlow, Gundagai and Wagga Wagga.



We assisted 21 artists and community groups with requests for auspicing and wrote 52 letters of support for projects within our region. We provided significant assistance to recipients of past grants whose projects had been delayed by bushfires and Covid, clearing an auspicing backlog and helping get money into communities to reactivate towns and keep artists working during the pandemic.

We set up a Public Fund and applied for Deductible Gift Recipient status. We held an Art auction and raised over \$3000 to support future art projects in our region.



Top: Old:New Exhibition Image: Patrick Ronald
Left: Freeraom Theatre



Arbour Festival Finale Concert Image: Matt Beaver

Connecting a vibrant and creative region

Highlights



We were able to deliver and support so many outcomes across our region. Here are a few of our favourites:

- A youth arts project in Bland shire that put artwork from local youth on empty shopfront windows.
- Funding provided to support production costs for a community production of Macbeth in Temora.



- The purchase of hanging equipment to support future Up2Date art and photography exhibitions in Coolamon.

- Commissioning an Aboriginal Mural in Cootamundra, coordinated by the Cootamundra Development Corporation and the Cootamundra Aboriginal Working Group.
- Professional photography of cultural attractions in Lockhart shire to promote tourism.
- Coordinating a mural (and online audio experience) on the Tarcutta Memorial Hall honouring local soldiers.
- Aunty Lorraine Tye and Hands on Weavers commissioned to produce a new woven artwork as part of the Wirramurri project.
- Bringing the Flying Fruit Fly Circus to perform at the Arbour Festival, and provide circus workshops in 3 local schools.
- Funding a live music showcase at the Loco Hotel and a free community concert on Broadway, Junee
- Supporting a live gig in the historic Moonbucca station Woolshed in Temora Shire
- Transdisciplinary artist residency pilot program delivered in aged care facility, and development of training resources.
- Partnering with the Riverina Comedy Club to present “Access All Areas,” a showcase of comedians with disability and associated workshop for comedians with disability from across NSW in Wagga Wagga

Left: Riverina Comedy Club
Top: Jugiong Writers Festival



Major project: RENEW Wagga

Renew Wagga breathes life into vacant city buildings and unlocks new opportunities for creative people in Wagga Wagga.

In 2021 we facilitated short term usage of empty CBD spaces by artists and creative entrepreneurs, activating 627 square metres of prime shopfront space in Wagga Wagga.

Creative businesses make a city more vibrant, unique and profitable for everyone. With bespoke professional support, we're helping local creative people establish sustainable businesses that will thrive into the future and grow the local creative ecosystem.

Other highlights of the Renew Wagga project included the provision of comprehensive professional development program to support artists to develop sustainable and profitable businesses. This includes ART Work monthly sessions and individualised support.

This work culminated in the Renew Wagga Christmas Markets, a thriving shopping event featuring the work of 32 local creatives.

In 2022 the Renew Wagga project will establish a Creative Industries Hub within Wagga Wagga to support and grow our unique creative economy.

“ As a new creative business owner, I can attest to the immediate and significant impact of the Renew Wagga program administered by Eastern Riverina Arts. After facing financial and administrative barriers for over eighteen months, my business partner and I were able to launch our business and begin trading in just five weeks. This was only made possible by the Renew Wagga project and the ongoing support of Eastern Riverina Arts. ”

Dr James Farley, Artist, Curator, Photographer
f.Stop Workshop



Renew Wagga is supported by the NSW Government through the Stronger Country Communities Fund.

From top left: RENEW Wagga launch Image: Brittany Hefren
Millie Hocking (The Shy Fox) in Middlemost Image: James Farley
f.Stop Workshop shop Image: James Farley
f.Stop Workshop display Image: Brittany Hefren
Bella Ingram at RENEW Wagga launch Image: Brittany Hefren



Major project: Arbour Festival

The Arbour Festival comprised a festival of more than 50 separate events, exhibitions and workshops spanning 50 days, as well as a series of ephemeral artworks installed in the Pilot Hill Arboretum for the festival duration. Front and centre of the Arbour Festival's programming were bushfire-affected local creatives.



Woodland Film Festival

A locally-curated festival of short films submitted locally and from around the country including performances from a regional band.

Arbour Festival Finale

A concert featuring performances from the Flying Fruit Fly Circus, and Riverina musicians Fanny Lumsden and the Thrillseekers, Montgomery Church, William Crighton (special guest William Barton) and Rory Phillips

Remembering the Sugar Pines

An intimate dawn ceremony featuring music, readings and an original movement piece from local artists, musicians, writers and performers to commemorate the 1 year anniversary of the loss of the iconic 'Sugar Pine Walk'.

Ephemeral Art Installations

Commissioned installations by Riverina Artists: Robyn Sweeney, Sulari Gentill, Juju Roche, Helen Newman, Andreas Buisman and Marlene Pearce.

Exhibitions

3 Exhibitions of artworks responding to the Dunns Road Fire were mounted in 3 Snowy Valley towns and ran for the duration of the Festival.

*Opposite from top left: Robyn Sweeney with her work Containment Lines
Image: Jack of Hearts
Circus Performer, Arbour Finale. Image: Matt Beaver
Arbour Festival Finale Concert Musicians. Image: Matt Beaver
Circus Performer, Arbour Finale. Image: Matt Beaver
Aboriginal Weaving Workshops. Image: Jack of Hearts
Above: Arbour Festival Finale Concert
Image: Matt Beaver*

Impact and Recognition

- Increased visibility and recognition of local artists
- Sold out events platforming LOCAL professional musicians, writers, visual artists, etc
- Significant economic activity increases in Batlow, Tumut and Tumbarumba through cultural tourism and increased street activity
- Successful community participation from residents impacted by bushfire
- Recognition from recovery agencies and NGOs for the delivery of programming that successfully and professionally engaged a traumatised community

As well as positive mentions on Radio National and ABC Statewide, Arbour Festival received more than 60 mentions/stories in media throughout the project, including The Australian, Filmlnk, About Regional and a swathe of local/regional outlets. The festival was featured as Season 2, Ep 1 of the Creative Recovery Network's Creative Responders Podcast.

Arbour Festival was a project of Eastern Riverina Arts, supported by the NSW Government through CreateNSW.



National Impact

National Leadership Programs

It's not every year that we can boast about arts leaders gathering from all over the country at the Up2Date Store in Coolamon or the Art Gallery in Wagga Wagga.

In 2021 Eastern Riverina Arts worked closely with the Australia Council for the Arts (AusCo) to facilitate covid-safe gatherings of their flagship leadership programs in the Riverina.

For AusCo, this meant gathering dispersed cohorts of four separate week-long residency programs in and around Wagga Wagga – the first time all three programs have run in the same place, bringing over 100 arts leaders into the Riverina.

We were delighted to partner with AusCo and three neighbouring Regional Arts Development Organisations to deliver the Riverina Arts Leaders Program, with 25 participants from across Southern NSW receiving a free leadership training over 4 sessions.

“ We partnered with AusCo and three neighbouring Regional Arts Development Organisations to deliver the Riverina Arts Leaders Program. ”

National Recognition

Also in 2021, Tim Kurylowicz joined Arbour Festival Artistic Director Vanessa Keenan on a panel about Creative Recovery at Artlands, Regional Arts Australia's National conference. Tim was also invited to present at the Powerhouse Museum's Regional Stakeholder's Forum in December.

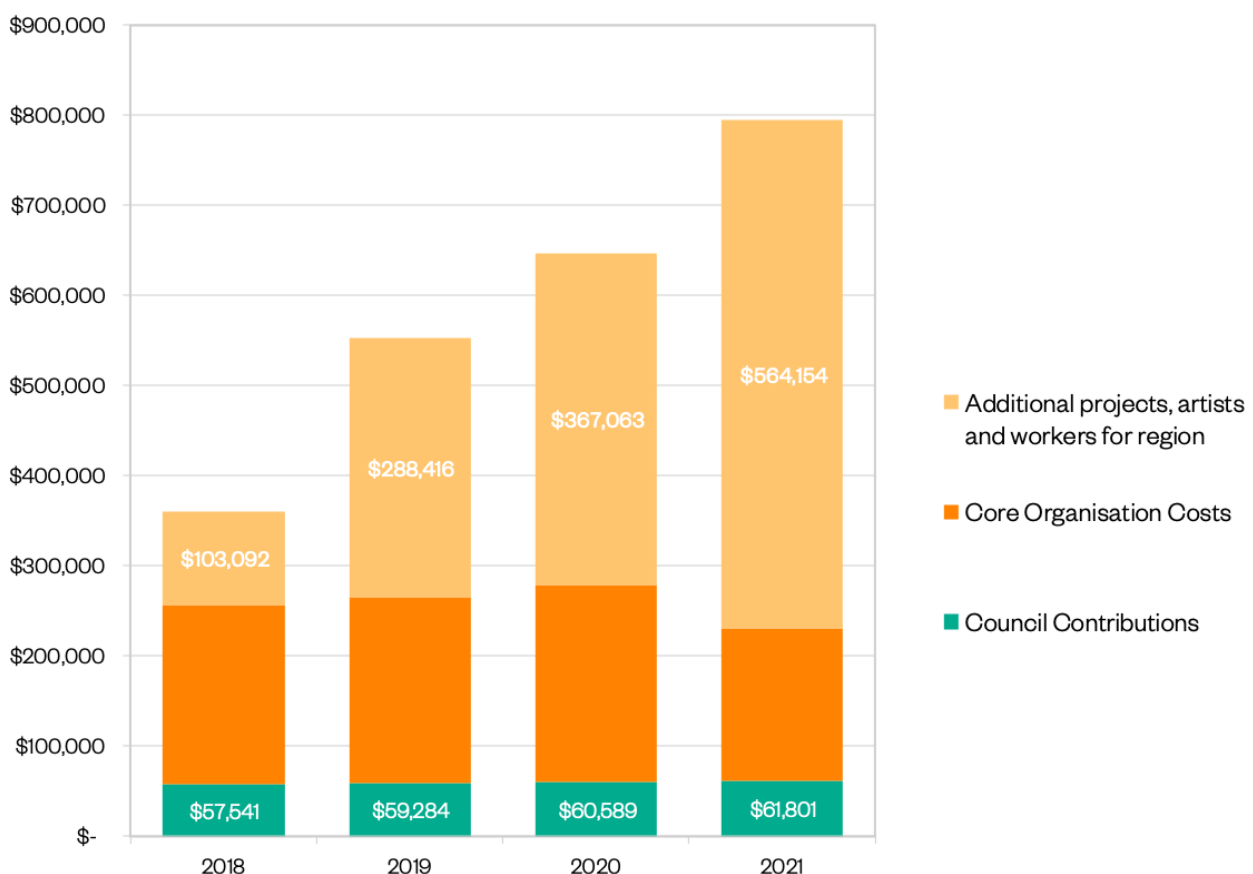


Financial Returns

Eastern Riverina Arts continues its track record of growth, delivering an increasing dividend on our members' investment.

In 2021, ERA-led projects including Arbour Festival, Arts Restart and Renew Wagga distributed more than \$500,000 in artist fees, production fees and worker salaries across our region, above and beyond the core services that are funded through the contributions of our member councils and Create NSW.

To read our full audited financial statement for 2021, please visit easternriverinaarts.org.au/documents



Acknowledgements

Eastern Riverina Arts acknowledges the financial and in-kind support of its member Councils



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The Friendly Shire



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