

# Eastern Riverina Arts

# Renew Wagga

End of Project Report



Supported by



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

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# Executive Summary

Between 2020-2023, Eastern Riverina Arts delivered the Create Space project under the name 'Renew Wagga,' with the objective of breathing life into vacant shopfronts and empty spaces to unlock new opportunities for creative people in Wagga Wagga.

The project's core work, undertaken by ERAs Creative Business Officer, was to collaborate with property owners, Council and emerging and established creative practitioners to generate short term access to vacant spaces in the Wagga Wagga CBD. Alongside this, we set up open and transparent processes through which artists, creative practitioners and cultural groups could apply to access these spaces for the purpose of bringing more vibrancy to the streetscape and to prototype new creative and/or social enterprises.

ERA affiliated with Renew Australia, building on an established framework, and accessing insurances, legal agreements and processes that were then adapted for use in the Wagga Wagga context.

Tailored mentoring and professional support was provided to participating creative businesses to ensure their growth and eventual transition out of the program. Professional development workshops, opportunities and partnerships were delivered throughout the life of the project to support hundreds of local artists and creative people to improve their business skills and capabilities.

Eastern Riverina Arts utilised this project to grow its capacity as a champion for creative enterprise and a contributing player in broader economic development projects. We became a core member of Wagga Council's Business Roundtable (initially established to improve economic cooperation during Covid), and established productive and ongoing relationships with the Wagga Wagga Business Chamber and Enterprise Plus (formerly the Wagga Wagga Business Enterprise Centre).

As the project progressed, it became clear that the best way to contribute to the ongoing development of creative business in Wagga Wagga was through the establishment of a creative hub that could provide a range of spaces and collaborative opportunities under the one roof. With the support of the Stronger Country Communities Fund, ERA developed a vision and business plan for The Station Creative Workspace - the transformation of Wagga Wagga's former Ambulance Station into a creative hub that provides artist studios, offices, meeting spaces, a gallery, workshop and event spaces. To date, additional funding has been secured to fit out and activate The Station, and a masterplan and business case are underway that will guide the continuing evolution of this leading regional creative hub.

# RENEW Wagga Wagga Snapshot



**\$225,718**

In commercial real-estate  
waived for creative businesses

**723 m2**

Of vacant CBD shopfront  
activated

**25**

Professional  
development  
workshops for local  
creative businesses

**852**

Workshops and events run  
by Renew Wagga  
participants

**186**

Local artists  
supported to sell  
work through Renew  
Wagga Businesses

**22**

Artists in  
residence

over  
**5548**  
customers

The launch of the  
Station Creative  
Workspace in  
Wagga Wagga

**9**

Commercial  
leases signed



# Renew Wagga Shopfront Activation Program

## Graduates

### Middlemost

Est. August 2021

Janine Middlemost is known locally for her eclectic fashion label Middlemost, her shop features not only her beautiful designs made from recycled fabrics, but also provides workshops to the community. Each garment is a unique piece of wearable art.

Janine launched her shopfront business through the Renew Wagga Project in August 2021 and has now graduated from the program, signing onto a commercial lease and is successfully driving her business forward and sharing her space with other creative practitioners.

Janine also hosted Millie Hocking of The Shy Fox, in the first six weeks that the shop was in operation. Millie's love of Australian flora features in her textile design and her work highlights the importance of upcycling to reduce clothing and textile waste. Millie encourages sewing and upcycling through her kits and workshops and hopes to use her passion to continue exploring and loving Australian flora.



[Workshops | Middlemost](#)

WEB: [Handmade Vintage Fabric Clothing | Middlemost](#)

FACEBOOK: [Middlemost | Janine Middlemost](#)

INSTAGRAM: [@middlemost](#)

# F.Stop Workshop

Est. May 2021

F.Stop Workshop is a photography studio run by Patrick Ronald and James Farley. F.Stop inspires creativity, confidence, and curiosity through practical experiences. They seek to empower the creative community and to encourage a sense of pride and belonging in Regional Australia. They provide community and creative services for people of all ages and abilities. Their vision is to provide a better future for all through creativity, education, and community.

F.Stop believes that through creativity, education and community, a more equitable future of coexistence for all is possible. For their part in this future, they seek to be better allies to Australia's First Nations communities; to create accessible and inclusive opportunities for creative engagement; to respect the diversity of the human experience, and to tread lightly on the earth.

F.Stop entered the Renew Wagga program in May 2021, and have now exited the program by going mobile, roaming the countryside offering creative engagement programs to small schools and in regional and remote communities. Their most recent project at the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery: Future Photographers Lab, continues the strong tradition of new photographic practice emanating from the Riverina. The Future Photographers Lab will support four emerging photographers; Molly Burley, Brittany Hefren, Tayla Martin and Ash Smith.

[F.Stop @ the Gallery: Future Photographers Lab - Wagga Wagga Art Gallery](#)

WEB: [f.stopworkshop](http://f.stopworkshop)

FACEBOOK: [F.Stop Workshop](#)

INSTAGRAM: [@fstopworkshopwagga](#)





# Little Yellow House Gallery and Studio

Est. May 2021

The Little Yellow House was named after Maggie's own little yellow house, a place she calls home and where she creates art in all its forms.

Maggie is a Riverina artist living in Wagga Wagga. She has loved painting and drawing since she was a little girl and would describe her style as eclectic as she is drawn to a number of subjects and finds as her artist journey continues these interests get wider. Maggie has created a Gallery and Studio that represents the work of a range of emerging female artists and a space to collaborate, meet and support one another.

"My dream has been to have a commercial space of my own to show my art and to both paint and teach in. I had been looking at spaces but the cost was prohibitive until I was selected to be part of this program. This is literally a dream come true."

Maggie entered the Renew Wagga Program in May 2021 and has created a nurturing creative space for artists, young people and customers. Local artists use her studio as a regular creative space and Maggie now works with NDIS clients, young people and provides professional development programs for local artists. Maggie graduated from the Renew Wagga program in July 2022 by signing a lease to continue her wonderful work in her space on Tompson Street.

[WEB: thelittleyellowhouseart.com.au](http://thelittleyellowhouseart.com.au)

[FACEBOOK: The Little Yellow House](https://www.facebook.com/TheLittleYellowHouse)

[INSTAGRAM: @thelittleyellowhouse\\_art](https://www.instagram.com/thelittleyellowhouse_art)



# Unique State Art Space

Est. October 2022

Unique State (U/S): an original impression unlike any other.

U/S combines a passion for printmaking and community with a drive to support and grow regional artistic practices and is the most recent addition to the Renew Wagga Family, opening in November 2022.

Unique State Art Space offers workshops, social groups, 1:1 art therapy sessions and a retail space that stocks original prints from local artists and specialist art materials with a focus on bringing the love of printmaking home. Unique State Art Space opened in October 2022 and Art therapy capacity is available from November.



## ABOUT US

**Unique State (U/S):**  
*an original impression unlike any other.*

Elaine Comlin brings together her passion for printmaking and community to create a safe space to explore creative arts therapy.

Unique State is a place to collaborate, communicate and promote creative well-being, with social groups providing space to work alongside peers.

## OUR VALUES

### ENGAGEMENT WITH MATERIALS

- Offering process based creative sessions.
- Fostering creative play.
- Access to printmaking, drawing, painting and clay-based sessions.

### SAFE, ACCESSIBLE & HELD SPACE

- Striving for best practice by upholding:
  - Transparency
  - Accountability & boundaries
  - Training & development
  - Equity of access

### GROWTH

- Participant lead
- Mentored approach
- Promoting creative well-being & art for health.
- Building capacity for NDIS participants.

### CREATIVE COMMUNICATION

- Providing participants with creative tools that support:
  - sense of belonging and identity
  - explores needs, values, interests, and strengths.

Fees as of Sept 2022	Prices
1 HR session - NDIS	\$190
45 MIN session - NDIS	\$175
1 HR session - Other	\$165
45 MIN session - Other	\$148
Group session - per person	\$55



WEB: [Print Workshop](#) | [Unique State Art Space](#) | [Wagga Wagga](#)

FACEBOOK: [Unique State Art Space](#) | [Facebook](#)

INSTAGRAM: [@uniquestate\\_artspace](#)

# Station Creative Workspace

## The Journey

2022 saw the graduation of three participants of the Renew Wagga project. Established through the program in 2021, the Little Yellow House Gallery and Studio and Middlemost both progressed onto commercial leases to continue their businesses on Thompson Street. F.Stop Workshop took their business mobile, offering creative engagement programs to schools and communities across the region.

Visual Artist and Art Therapy practitioner Elaine Camlin joined the Renew Wagga program by launching Unique State Art Space (U/S) in October 2022. Unique State offers workshops, social groups, 1:1 art therapy sessions and a retail space that stocks original prints from local artists and specialist art materials with a focus on bringing the love of printmaking home.

Over the course of the project, we consulted broadly with prospective creative businesses in our region, and came to realise that we need to make a broader range of commercial spaces available.

This thinking led to the development of a detailed business case for a creative industries hub featuring artist studios, creative office suites, gallery and workshop spaces and meeting and digital studio spaces.

We made a successful bid to lease the historic Wagga Wagga Ambulance Station building from Wagga Council, and established a working partnership with the Wagga Wagga Business Chamber to ensure we deliver professional support and networking opportunities.

Linking arts and business development organisations, The Station gives entrepreneurs the perfect launchpad to experiment, collaborate and showcase innovation. Participants in the Station Creative Workspace office suites will formulate a business plan as part of their tenancy arrangement and will grow their businesses beyond The Station on an agreed timeframe.



# Activity Summary

Since April 2023, we have supported 6 people through the usage of Creative Office Suites. 56 Artists have exhibited their work in our gallery space and had their work for sale. A total of 14 events have taken place – and these are detailed in our Professional Development Summary (Page 9).

Category	Renew Shopfront Data	Eastern Riverina Arts & The Station Creative Workspace Data	Total
<b>Total Visitors (Customers)</b>	<b>3931</b>	<b>1617</b>	<b>5548</b>
<b>Total Attendees (Workshops and Events)</b>	<b>2643</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>2931</b>
<b>Artists Represented</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>186</b>
<b>Expressions of Interest</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Artists in residence</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Workshops/events</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>852</b>
<b>m2 retail space unlocked</b>	<b>627</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>723</b>
<b>\$ Business space</b>	<b>190,218</b>	<b>355,00</b>	<b>225,718</b>
<b>Commercial leases signed</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>

# Renew Wagga Professional Development Program

A key element of the Renew Wagga project was ensuring our creative start-ups and broader creative community have the professional skills to succeed in their businesses. We developed a comprehensive professional development program with key partners, to ensure our creative community is well supported, inspired, and armed with all the tools necessary to thrive.

## 2021

2021 was slightly marred by COVID-19 and the restrictions associated with that, however we were still able to deliver the following:

- Partnering with Creative Plus Business, a Sydney based organisation that provides information, training, support, and help needed to find and sustain self-employment in the creative and cultural industries to deliver a range of workshops.
- 2 x workshops at The Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre on 17 February 2021. 'Diversifying Creative Income' & 'What's it Worth?'. 18 Participants
- 1 x networking event and Q&A with Monica Davidson at Romanos Hotel, 17th February 2021. 30 Participants
- 1 x Zoom workshop at F.Stop Workshop, 10 July 2021, Fundamentals of Marketing. 10 Participants
- Partnering with Riverina Murray Business, ERA developed a tailored professional development program for Renew participant, The Nest. (Session #1: draft a Memorandum of Understanding for the collective incorporating the running of, marketing and fund distribution aspects of the business. Session #2: Financial management for small business. Session #3 Knowing Your Pitch)
- Collaborating with the Compton School in Canberra, and brokering a relationship between them, and Adam Bannister, a pioneer in the accessible events space, resulting in Adam gaining a scholarship for their new Graduate Certificate of Creative Business, which he completed in November 2021 and has since gone on to win national awards for his work in this area.

- Advisory sessions with Claire Harris, ERA Creative Business Officer. Each of the three current Renew Participants and one future participant (The Nest) had a minimum of three one on one planning sessions with ERA's Creative Business Officer to map out their business plan, plan their business trajectory and delve into the details of running a shop front including: Tax implications, marketing, council regulations, funding opportunities, budgeting, covid safety and relationship management.

## 2022

- In August 2022 we launched ArtWork, a series of professional development sessions, delivered in a relaxed setting and covering a range of topic areas. Our first session was held on August 25th entitled, The Art of the Sell. The session was a panel style event with three local visual artists who have found success selling their work in very different ways.
- 'Ever wondered how those Bluethumb 'overnight' success stories made it happen? (hot tip, it wasn't overnight!) Or what the 'F' is an NFT?
- What are some tips for approaching a commercial gallery?

Our panellists tackled topics such as:

- What are the pros and cons of selling via different platforms?
- Money is not a dirty word: How to effectively price your work.
- What the 'F' an NFT?
- Selling outside of your hometown
- How to approach galleries or retail venues, and
- Some very handy do's and don'ts

The interest in our Panellists conversation on selling NFT's has informed the topic of our next session which will be held in November, and will be a working session with Artists Yianni Johns on the topic.

- Partnering with Creative Plus Business, a Sydney based organisation that provides information, training, support, and help needed to find and sustain self-employment in the creative and cultural industries to deliver a range of workshops. On April 1st, 2022 we hosted Monica Davidson for a day long deep dive into the freelance world, Freelance Survival Skills.
- The in-depth session covered the basics of a freelance creative career in one fell swoop. The practical and entertaining workshop covered the most essential aspects of learning how to freelance in a creative career, including diversifying your income, working out your rates, super and tax and developing a business plan. We had 10 in attendance on the day and overwhelmingly positive feedback.
- Individual business consults:

In 2022 we invited artists who were unsuccessful in their EOI to the program to take part in a one-on-one consultation with ERA's Creative Business Officer Claire Harris. By doing this we were able to filter them through to appropriate business supports (Riverina Murray Business, Business Connect, Creative Plus Business), connect them to other local businesses for collaboration opportunities, and offer support and advice so that they can work towards a successful application to engage with the Ambulance Station Creative Work Space. The response was really positive and through offering a small amount of time and resources, we hope to develop a future Renew Wagga cohort.

**“This is precisely the kind of facility that I would love to work from.” ... “I need to be around other creative people to feed off their energy, to be exposed to their art which renews my excitement and motivation. And in turn, do the same for others.”**

-Creative Hub Survey 2022



## 2023

In the first part of 2023 our focus was relocating our operations into The Station, Creative Workspace. We kick started some PD in May once we were settled.

- In May 2023, Milk Crate Theatre travelled from Sydney to offer our community an inclusive practice workshop
- Film Funding Workshop
- In June 2023 Creative Plus Business delivered three Workshops at The Station, teaching pitching, pricing and networking for creatives. They also offered three local organisations free one on one 4 hour strategic planning sessions.
- We continued our one on one monthly marketing and business planning sessions with Elaine Camlin at Unique State Art Space
- We have been working closely with Renew Participant, Freeroam Theatre through mentoring, strategic planning & funding support.
- We leveraged the success of the RENEW shopfronts to source an artist studio space for local artists Kate Smith and Rach Viski through Knight Frank.
- We launched our monthly Work in Progress sessions at Station Creative Workspace offering artists an opportunity to present and showcase their current projects for feedback from our creative community.
- We partnered with the Wagga Wagga Business chamber to deliver a product photography workshop to local creative business owners and entrepreneurs.
- We hosted Regional Arts NSW at the Station to deliver Work of Art, a professional development opportunity targeted toward women working in the arts and creative industries designed to develop skills, strategies, confidence and connection to help grow their creative enterprise.

**“It’s an ideal situation for creative people to find the missing link that will move their business idea toward success. The ability to collaborate and share ideas is really not possible in any other spaces other than a hub.”**

-Creative Hub Survey 2022





# Data Collection Model

We have developed a robust evaluation framework for the RENEW Wagga project that consists of Quantitative and Qualitative evaluation methods in addition to national media monitoring.

Qualitative – This involves face to face recorded interviews with ERA’s Creative Business Officer, Claire Harris on a quarterly basis. The approach taken here is that discussions around private information, sales data and how ERA can best support participants occurs in these meetings, leaving the more data driven questions to the survey. This involves a level of trust, and sensitive data is kept confidential. NB: Some of these points that are not confidential in nature have been provided as supporting documentation.

Quantitative – Participants are sent a survey from Renew Australia on a monthly basis. This captures a review of our participants' regular KPI's, sale data, foot traffic, event numbers, workshop numbers and gives room for general project feedback. NB: This is provided as support material.

Media monitoring – We received monthly Meltwater media monitoring reports in the first year of the program. We found that tracking the media generated ourselves was much more efficient so in 2022 and 2023 and through google alerts we tracked our own media generation. We tracked mentions across TV, Print, Radio and Social Media  
(See Media Report).

“Being born in Wagga I believe this space would be greatly received by the community and to work out of it and be associated would be very beneficial to my business. The relationships I could grow with other creatives and business people would have its obvious positives.”

-Creative Hub Survey 2022



# Project Legacy

## Additional funds sought to leverage SCCF funding

Since our successful application to occupy The Ambulance Station we have applied for a total of 3 funding opportunities, totalling \$820,782 to leverage current SCCF funding over the next three years. The funds are for a combination of capital works, human resourcing, future scoping and activation of the space. We are very pleased that we have been successful for all three.

### **1)Successful - Creative Capital Minor Works and Equipment Round Two - \$250,000.**

This funding will enable the transformation of The Station into a state-of-the-art contemporary facility, that can facilitate events, exhibitions, and creative collaboration under the experienced management of ERA. Once fitted out, the Ambo Hub will be the vital gap-filling infrastructure that will unlock the capacities of local visual and performing artists, support the growth of creative companies, and nurture the development of professional, tourable bodies of work by local creators.

### **2)Successful – Wagga City Council Community Grants - Gallery Fit Out - \$7,500**

The Gallery will be a versatile and flexible exhibition and event space that will showcase local creativity, host workshops and networking events, and act as a launchpad for local creative practitioners. Think: pop up shops, kids holiday workshops, experimental performances, installation artworks and envelope-pushing public programs. The Gallery will require the fit out of a gallery track system, and gallery lighting. The Gallery will become a space of invention, innovation and professionalism, offering artists a platform to showcase their work and Ideas in a supported setting.

### **3)Successful - Stronger Country Communities Fund (SCCF) - Round 5 - Open Doors at The Ambo - \$563,282**

Open Doors at The Ambo is a program of activity to jump-start the utilisation, engagement and community impact of The Ambo, a brand-new community facility opening in Wagga Wagga in 2023. Through inclusive cultural programming and the establishment of long-term partnerships with community organisations and groups, we will ensure this facility's social benefits reach the broader community, including refugee and migrant groups, First Nations, youth and people with disability. In its first three years of operation, thousands of community members will utilise the Ambo's gallery and event spaces, meeting rooms, makers markets, workshop programs, artist studios and freelancer suites.





# RENEW WAGGA





# RENEW Wagga Launch

Photographs by Brittany Hefren





# Middlemost & The Shy Fox

Photographs by James Farley





# F.Stop Workshop

Photographs by F.Stop Workshop





# Little Yellow House Gallery & Studio





# RENEW Christmas Markets

Photographs by Ash Smith





# Professional Development

With Creative Plus Business & Local Artists





# Unique State Art Space





# The Station Creative Workspace

