

National Cultural Policy Submission

Country Arts SA | The Art of Inspiring Communities

Country Arts SA's vision is for artists and communities of regional South Australia to thrive through engagement with the arts, and be recognised as essential contributors to the nation's cultural voice.

For 29 years, we have transformed the way the arts are made and engaged with in regional South Australia. Our Strategic Plan 2021-2025 has five focuses: engaging with and elevating regional Aboriginal Elders, artists and communities; being informed and led by regional South Australians; representing and reaching all South Australia's diverse communities; and measuring, responding to and reducing our environmental impact.

Country Arts SA ensures people across each region have access to arts and culture by presenting shows and workshops for people of all ages at their arts centres in Mount Gambier, Renmark, Noarlunga, Port Pirie and Whyalla and in community-owned venues in other towns.

Working with galleries across the state to curate visual arts exhibitions and residency projects, visual artists' work is showcased to state, national and international audiences. Country Arts SA also offers funding grants and professional advice to regionally-based artists and communities, enabling them to realise their own arts and cultural aspirations.

The work of Country Arts SA takes us across regional South Australia, so we see firsthand the impact arts and culture has in people's everyday lives; the way it diversifies local economies and provides jobs for regional people and is essential to their communities, to their responses to climate change, to their wellbeing and sense of place.

In 2020-21:

220,199 people enjoyed new arts and cultural experiences that were supported, produced, developed, presented and shared by Country Arts SA

24.03FTE were generated through our work, employing 1,115 artists and arts workers, including 201 First Nations and 683 regional people

1,786 events were presented, with 8 new works produced – 3 of which were First Nations led and 22 new works presented, 6 First Nations led

The pandemic provided us with the opportunity to refocus some of our work and develop 2 new programs:

- Local and Live – over 50 regional artists and crew were supported to perform to local audiences and reach new followers online
- Venue 6 – a digital platform created with and for artists to develop new work and audiences to come together.

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Far North & West
Middleback Arts Centre

Mid North & Yorke
Northern Festival Centre

Riverland & Murraylands
Chaffey Theatre

Limestone Coast
Sir Robert Helpmann Theatre

Hopgood Theatre

STATEWIDE PROGRAMS
Arts & Cultural Development
Visual Arts
Performing Arts
Grant Funding

ABN 63908129329

First Nations

- Self-determined pathways for First Nations artists and organisations with greater financial support;
- Deepen our understanding of local First Nations ways of working to evolve organisational culture to attract and safely support First Nations artists, workers and audiences;
- Regional artists and organisations be supported to work respectfully with local First Nations language groups to ensure that all are supported to flourish, not just those in larger centres;
- All non-Indigenous funded companies have KPIs for working respectfully with First Nations artists, staff and audiences;
E.g. [Arts South Australia ATSI Strategy](#)

A Place for Every Story

- Recognise that everyone is unique and has a valid story to share;
- Invest long term in regional and remote organisations to develop regional programs with regional artists and communities;
- All funded companies have KPIs for building safe workplaces to work equitably with artists, staff and audiences of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, disabilities, genders, LGBTQIA;
- Support experimentation and risk taking in creating new work;
E.g. [Country Arts SA's Euphoria](#)

The Centrality of the Artist

- Work with regional arts and cultural organisations to develop pilot programs to grow diverse career pathways for artists and arts workers, where the options for employment are scarce
- Bring arms of federal government together to support artist employment in health, education, tourism, development, etc
- Trial ways to support artists and their careers, such as universal wage and portable benefits
- Incentivise arts and non-arts organisations to employ artists on retainer
- Support local governments and non-arts organisations to work in partnership with arts organisations to employ artists and workers
E.g. [Country Arts SA Creative Communities Partnership Program](#)

Strong Institutions

- Support peak bodies for the creative and cultural arts industries and institutions, especially in regional and remote communities where artists and audiences rely heavily on these organisations for representation in the national conversation
- Support organisations to work collectively long term to provide sustainable and diverse pathways for workers lost to other industries through the pandemic, such as technicians and producers
- Recognise and support the interdependencies between and with organisations and sole practitioners that is core to the way we work
- Reward regional and remote organisations that build diverse sustainable investment models where the economies of scale are different to metropolitan cities/large regional towns
E.g

Reaching the Audience

- Invest in regional arts and cultural infrastructure to renew existing infrastructure and create new places that reflect our modern cultures, local community needs, and the current and future ways arts and culture are made and shared;
 - Digital infrastructure must be upgraded so that artists and audiences can share equal experiences regardless of where they live and work
 - Integrate arts and cultural learning in schools to build cultural literacy in future generations;
 - Provide an insurance scheme against pandemics and the effects of climate change so that artists and companies to continue to create and share work confidently;
 - Support creating work with communities to capitalise on local artists, expertise and stories to build local capacity, engagement and reduce carbon usage;
- E.g. [Country Arts SA's Shows on the Road program](#)