

National Cultural Policy Submission

Regional Arts Australia is pleased to present this submission to the Australian Government.

Regional Arts Australia (RAA) is a not for profit peak body that is the national voice for arts in regional Australia. We seek to ensure arts and creativity in regional Australia are embedded within all of Governments plans for Regional Australia, to be critically positioned across multiple policy platforms and to support strong partnerships between governments, industry, not-for-profits and commercial business.

We recognise that regional Australia is not a homogenous place and encourage programs that support a creative ecosystem that is interconnected and integrated across art forms, across communities and across landscapes.

We applaud the decision to create a National Cultural Policy and note the work undertaken in 2021 and the recommendations published in the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications and the Arts report, 'Sculpting a National Cultural Plan'. In particular we highlight the recommendations to:

1.24 Develop a national cultural plan - medium and long term needs of the sector

1.25 Develop strategies to grow cultural and creative industries – focus on rural, regional and remote

2.177 Consult with Tourism Australia, state and territory government peak bodies and industry relevant entities.

3.81 Work with tertiary education provider develop internships for young people to work in regional galleries, libraries, archives and museums

3.81 Work with regional arts and cultural organizations to develop pilot programs for young people.

6.82 Produce cultural and creative satellite accounts- publish data on employment, trends, revenue, geographic trends across the creative and cultural industries

6.87 Support regional peak bodies for the creative and cultural arts industries and institutions

The cultural and creative industries play a critical role in contributing to the creativity, diversity and prosperity of Australia's regional and rural economy. They are a crucial element in the make-up of future liveable regions and are central to thriving and healthy communities and sustainable social and economic growth.

There are many and varied ways in which the arts and creativity continue to shape regional Australia. The overall health of the arts and creative ecology relies on the interconnection of advocacy, brokerage, presenting and producing elements.

A cultural policy and investment in associated initiatives and cultural plan must be industry-led with a strong place-based focus. We advocate for the inclusion of a Regional Strategic Framework that is embedded in and adds value to all five pillars. A framework that is cross-disciplinary, multi-artform, inter-generational and importantly is self-determined by and for regional communities.

RAA's Regional Strategic Framework is a place-based strategy that is designed to bring together industries and policy sectors to build a diverse, adaptive and more sustainable regional, remote and rural Australia. The framework is positioned to understand the variety and diversity of a whole regional creative ecology and provides the mechanism for programs and initiatives to be delivered nationally while being responsive to local needs.

Through this approach RAA is committed to maintaining strategic, collaborative relationships for the benefit of arts and creative practice across the country to:

- Facilitate opportunities that strengthen artistic and creative practice;
- Increase access and participation for artists, organisations, audiences and communities;
- Strengthen the fabric of the creative ecosystem;
- Maintain dynamic and resilient communities across artistic, social, economic and health indexes;
- Provide timely support to tell and celebrate Australian stories across art forms and across landscapes.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- MULTI YEAR REGIONAL ORGANISATION CORE FUNDING
- PLACE BASED INVESTMENT
 - Enterprise and innovation through increase in Regional Arts Fund (RAF)
 - Jobs Programs / Employment contracts and jobs security
 - Access and Pathways (education and careers and industry training)
- STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE – CONNECTING INDUSTRIES

We must work alongside our First Nations colleagues to support communities, knowledge, landscapes, ecosystems and Indigenous cultural sites across Australia.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these in more detail, and can be reached at any of the details below.

SUBMISSION CONTACT

Ros Abercrombie
Executive Director
Regional Arts Australia



Please refer to the attached appendix – Regional Strategic Framework

First Nations

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples represent 45 per cent of the population of very remote areas of Australia, and 16 per cent of the total population in remote areas.

Supporting a thriving, self-determined First Nations creative ecosystems that is embedded in place-based creativity and industry best practice is critical.

Regional Arts Australia advocates for social inclusion, creativity and accessible cultural and artistic experiences nationally. We are committed to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and providing national awareness for diverse cultures, languages and knowledges of First Nations peoples. To ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices across local, regional and national communities to inform and implement the key priorities.

We recommend:

- Respect, understanding and protection of Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) consumer protection frameworks, laws and protocols
- Investment and capacity building of First Nations small to medium arts organisations, First Nations-led infrastructure including studios, small-to-medium arts organisations and galleries.
- Development and pathways for First Nations creative workers and leaders / Investment in First-Nations-led education and training programs.
- Further investigation associated with a National Indigenous Arts and Culture Agency/Authority (NIACA)
- Action legislative reform as recommended by the Fake Art Harms Culture campaign.

We support the submissions and recommendations made by our First Nations colleagues.

A Place for Every Story *reflecting the diversity of our stories and the contribution of all Australians as the creators of culture.*

Participation and inclusion: Create opportunities for all Australians to participate in and contribute to arts and culture.

Regional Arts Australia's guiding principle is that 'place' is central to creative practice. It provides profound practical and emotional links between the economies and synergies of artistic and cultural practice.

The cultural and creative industries play a critical role in contributing to the creativity, diversity and prosperity of Australia's regional and rural economy and narrative. The arts are vital enablers helping us to explore vibrancy, diversity, accessibility and inclusiveness. They are fundamental to nation-building and to the continual advancement of the economy and environment. Across all art forms, the creative industries allow for individuals and communities to create and engage, to connect experiences, to develop skills, to tell stories, to respond and recover. Through exhibitions, film, dance, performance and music we can generate stories, connection and narratives of place, community and identity and support the recovery/growth of other industries especially tourism and hospitality.

Place-based programs such as the Regional Arts Fund (RAF) seed longer-term cultural and economic sustainability, boosting local capacity, diversifying audience engagement, increasing accessibility and connection. Investment in innovative approaches and programming within existing areas of strength would make arts, cultural and creative activities more accessible to all Australians.

RAF CASE STUDY

The Regional Arts Fund (RAF) continues to be one of the most successful avenues for delivering targeted programs. The devolved funding model, delivered through RAA's Regional Program Administrators, continues to be one of the most successful means of delivering targeted cultural programs in regional, remote and rural Australia.

A focus on enterprise and innovation supports telling and celebrating Australian stories across art forms and across landscapes.

Through the annual RAF in 2020-21, a total of \$3,082,599.36 in funding was allocated to 325 projects across all states and territories. The size and scope of projects differs, depending on the funding streams: Project Grants and Quick Response Grants, Cultural Worker Positions and Strategic Projects. The distribution of funds is outlined in the table below:

Program	# grants	%	\$ amount granted	%
Quick Response Grants	198	61%	\$ 557,520.16	18%
Project Grants	110	34%	\$ 1,817,083.20	59%
Cultural Worker Positions	11	3%	\$ 330,000.00	11%
Strategic Projects	6	2%	\$ 377,996.00	12%
	<u>325</u>		<u>\$ 3,082,599.36</u>	

The RAF objectives are focused on sustainable cultural, social and economic development, community and audience engagement, and professional development opportunities for artists and arts workers. All RAF projects must benefit regional people and places and must align strongly with the objectives.

In 2020-21 RAF projects are estimated to have generated:

- Applicant contributions (both cash and in kind) \$2,418,390.71
- Leveraged income \$4,542,781.54
- Participants 129,497
- Audience members 1,627,826
- Employment opportunities 1,597

Over the recent 5-year RAF Deed 2016-2021 the Government investment of \$14.57 million, supported in excess of 1760 project and leveraged a further \$43.3 million, 3 times the investment.

Demand for the Regional Arts Fund is higher than ever with some jurisdictions seeing an almost 70% un-met need and demand across applications.

We recommend:

- **Increase to the Regional Arts Fund (RAF)**
- **New Programs that respond to sector needs through the mechanisms of the RAF**

Regional Arts Australia and the Regional Arts Fund (RAF) provide the government with a direct, cost effective and fiscally responsible means to boosting innovation within the national cultural ecosystem. As an organisation and a network, we can respond in an agile and nimble manner. Our delivery record managing the RAF demonstrates best practice, reliability and transparency.

The Centrality of the Artist *supporting the artist as worker and celebrating their role as the creators of culture.*

To support a creative ecosystem that is interconnected and integrated across art forms, across communities and across landscapes we need to strengthen the fabric of the creative sector. This means supporting the artists and practitioners. It also means supporting the institutions, service agencies, venues, colleagues and collaborators that work alongside and champion artistic endeavours. A thriving creative ecosystem requires a whole of ecology approach.

The centrality of the artist requires multi-dimensional connections and includes the supporting; educational programs, career pathways, professional development opportunities, commissioning of new work, presentation, audience development, capacity building and investment in practice.

We understand the need for

- Career pathways for artists/ arts workers
- PD opportunities for artists/ arts workers
- Cost of remote living/ travel support
- Sector development
- Communication & Digital connectivity

To champion the centrality of the artist is to ensure equity of access to participation in creative practice wherever someone lives, works or studies.

We recommend:

- **Education and Career Pathways (Skills & Industry Training)**
- **Jobs Programs (employment contracts) & Creative Workers in Schools (CWS)**

Education and Career Pathways

Whole of life education and training opportunities in regional Australia

Increased education and training opportunities for the creative industries in regional Australia will ensure equity of access and address skills shortages in the creative sector. Regional Australia requires access to specialised arts teachers and fit for purpose rooms and equipment in primary and secondary education and access to creative industry tertiary courses at TAFE and regional universities. Creating opportunities to access training and education without relocating is vital to ensuring the next generations of regional creatives.

Fellowships represent a direct investment in the professional development of regional artists and practitioners and provide an opportunity to expand their creativity, build strategic partnerships, and increase arts access in regional and remote communities across Australia.

RAA's National Fellowship Regional Program offers guaranteed income (for a short period) for an artist/ practitioner to develop their work, skills and networks or research. The demand for this program is high with submitted applications increasing annually. With increased investment RAA could support more individuals in creative development, career pathways at a time and place of their choosing.

Introducing **Employment Contracts** for funding programs. Artists could be contracted through an employment contract thereby proving job security and associated IR benefits such as leave entitlements and super. This is cost neutral program with significant benefit to the individual whilst providing job security.

RAA proposes the development of Jobs Programs that provide full or part-time employment for artists. One example is the Victorian Creative Workers in Schools program.

*“The **Creative Workers in Schools initiative (CWS)** employed 172 creative industries workers to undertake six-month residencies in Victorian government schools. Creative workers and schools were supported to work together to co-design and deliver a creative arts program that supported learning across the Victorian Curriculum F–10 over two school terms.*

The CWS program was delivered by Regional Arts Victoria (RAV) through the support of the Victorian Government’s Working for Victoria (WV) initiative, and in partnership with the Department of Education and Training (DET) and Creative Victoria.”

Programs such as CWS increase future employment prospects for artists and prepare artists with a range of skills and training in areas such as; Child Safety Policy, Cultural Awareness Training, Equity and Access, Trauma-Informed Practice, Equity in Cultural Planning.

The Victoria pilot program could be expanded to a national long-term artist in schools program through the mechanism of Regional Art Australia and our network. This would provide Full time or Part Time employment for artists and embedding creative practice into the school curriculum.

In future years programs could be extended to placing Creative Workers in aged-care homes, volunteer led museums, and other community-based organisations.

Strong Institutions *providing support across the spectrum of institutions which sustain our arts and culture.*
Public value: Strengthen the capacity of the creative sector to deliver benefits to Australians.

Regional institutions are an important part of the broader creative ecology. Regional galleries, performing arts centres, small halls, education and training institutions, community centres all provide meaningful access arts and creative experience to all Australians.

All indicators are pointing to a growing regional sector and greater integration of cultural industries with tourism, agricultural, health, education and technology specifically. As suggested in, the RAI Regional Growth Prospects Report, “Creative industries have a vital role in supporting business innovation and underpinning the cultural vitality of regions.” June 2019.

The network of regional organisations, provide linkage to the Small / Medium sector, independents and grassroots collectives and connect with major institutions through programming, touring and visitation. A thriving arts and creative sector require a diverse, well supported range of institutions, from volunteer organisations, service orgs and peak bodies through to the majors and everything in-between.

Regional Arts Australia is one of the longest running arts organisations of its kind in Australia. Initially established as Council for the Encouragement of Music in 1943 and then founded as the Arts Council of Australia in 1947, Regional Arts Australia is marking 80 years in 2023.

Through a national approach, Regional Arts Australia (RAA) ensures arts and creativity across regional, rural and remote Australia and is committed to maintaining strategic, collaborative relationships for the benefit of arts and creative practice across the country.

We recommend:

- **Multiyear Organisational Regional Core Funding**
- **ABS Cultural and Creative Industries**
- **Connection with Infrastructure Australia and Regional Development Australia**

Multiyear Regional Core Funding

Building organisational capacity and sustainability through operational multi-year investment specifically for small / medium regional organisations and peak service agencies, both with national and state and territory remits.

The program responds to the increasing demand on the Australia Council Four Year Funding program. For the period 2020-2024, 95 organisations received 4-year funding (28 were newly funded organisations), 27 were regional organisations – 28.5% of the overall allocation.

Core operational support would enable regional arts organisations to stabilise, consult and plan for better governance and delivery models in order to:

- establish closer relationships with local government authorities
- reduce the burden on volunteers
- encourage more collaboration and connectivity
- respond to, and report on increased engagement with First Nations arts
- become more inclusive and reflect the diversity of regional communities
- produce and present more relevant, world-class regional art

RAA has been collaborating with the Australia Council in exploring the opportunity of a regionally specific organisational 4-year funding program.

ABS Cultural and Creative Industries

Given the scale of the cultural and creative industries and their importance to future employment, the ABS could produce a cultural and creative industries satellite account every year as it does for tourism.

We recommend the Government to devote resources to measuring the economic impact of the cultural and creative industries. Culture should be integrated into public policy on the same grounds as health, education, social services, and housing and Cultural Impact Statements considered along with impact statements for the environment, gender equity, and regional communities.

Connection with Infrastructure Australia and Regional Development Australia

Partnerships are to a thriving national regional arts sector are key in leveraging cross industry support and championing arts in the regions beyond the regional arts sector. A Regional Strategic Framework would enable greater connection with Infrastructure Australia and Regional Development Australia to embed cultural strategy into broader regional planning. Recognising the short, medium and long-term needs for hard and soft cultural infrastructure in regional development plans will assist strategic investment from all levels of Government into regional and remote communities.

Through a national approach, Regional Arts Australia (RAA) ensures arts and creativity across regional, rural and remote Australia and is committed to maintaining strategic, collaborative relationships for the benefit of arts and creative practice across the country.

Reaching the Audience *ensuring our stories reach the right people at home and abroad.*

Creative economy: Build sustainable, networked and globally recognized creative industries.

The Arts and culture can inform and reflect Place Making and Place Branding. They can attract local, national and international visitors and actively enhance tourism destinations and visitor experiences for local and visiting audiences.

Arts and culture create a product – the products attract visitors enabling interaction and exchange allowing the place to flourish which in turn equates to Place Making and Place Branding. Place branding is more than the creation and promotion of place and often an extension to the physical and social environment of place.

Arts and culture generate the layers of meaning;

- Help to capture attention and promote attractions and infrastructures
- They make it possible to maximize and rationalize the use of certain spaces. Preservation of these spaces may result in financial benefits and dissemination of artistic and cultural heritage.
- Through cultural events, places may attract not only tourists but also investments that generate employment and economic diversification.

Audiences can be attracted by, the place (location or geographic region), by institution (venue or site), by produce or experience (exhibition, festival, arts trail, open studio, concert). The economic beneficiaries to small businesses, local hospitality and accommodation and spillover effect into other industries in terms of total output, value-added can be significant.

During Covid we witnessed the ‘pivot to digital’ on-line sales and virtual audience experiences through digital offerings. We saw an increase in accessibility both in regional artists and organisations inclusion in webinars and seminars and artists able to access online auditions and recording opportunities. We also saw regional audiences enjoying increased access to online content from galleries, concerts, theatres nationally and internationally. None of this can be lost.

However, access to digital platforms, services and resources is not equal.

We recommend:

- **Building Digital Capacity – regional, remote and community access**
- **New Touring Models**
- **Cultural Tourism Programs**

Building Digital Capacity – regional, remote and community access

To be effectively equipped for the advances, challenges and opportunities that will be part of our future, we need to be supported by robust digital infrastructure and local technical knowledge. We need to ensure infrastructure and training that will enable regional and remote communities to undertake projects that integrate communication platforms with content creation.

Ensuring we have a fit-for-purpose legislative, regulatory and investment environment is essential to a viable and relevant cultural and creative economy. By embedding the expansion of digital literacy in projects that are desired by communities we will effectively drive engagement across communities in regional and remote Australia. Digital skills and literacy at all levels of the sector, including new approaches to digital practice, distribution and platforms.

RAA is advocating for a scheme that ensures infrastructure and training that will enable regional and remote communities to integrate communication platforms with content creation and audience development.

We recommend a scheme that supports adequate digital infrastructure (software and hardware), education pathways and training to the creative sector across regional Australia.

The scheme would support and integrate:

1. Connectivity
2. Digital infrastructure (software and hardware),
3. Education pathways & training

New Touring Models

Support for the development of new models of developing, producing and touring new Australian works, locally and nationally with Inter-regional production and touring models to be explored.

Multi-tiered creative projects (like Local Giants) provide regional practitioners with supportive pathways that connect artist residencies and producer training with creative development, presentation of new work and short form touring. This enables regional performing arts centres across Australia to act as cultural connectors within their communities and explore new co-commissioning, co-producing and investment models.

<https://regionalarts.com.au/programs/local-giants>

We recommend a long-term approach to support cultural participants 'on both sides of the stage', with a commitment to art as an expression of local identity. In doing so we move beyond the limitations of conventional import touring models, instead building local cultural investment through people: their businesses, their social networks, their ethnicities, their collective values and aspirations. In this model, potential audiences will be inclusive of First Nations people, young people, culturally diverse people, people with disability.

Cultural Tourism Programs

Supporting regional communities to build a network of arts and cultural experiences that are high quality and create employment and consumer activity across the regions.

Programs that increase tourism visitation in regional, rural and remote communities across Australia by providing financial support for arts and cultural activity to:

- Support place-based programs to increase visitation
- Build consumer confidence and activate engagement
- Drive engagement across communities and between regions
- Support sector-led responses.

We recommend investment in cultural tourism programs that build the capacity of the sector to deliver exceptional experiences to visitors.