

2025

ANNUAL REPORT



Arts
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west



connections
creativity
communities



Arts North West acknowledges Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of the lands we work on; the country upon which language, arts and culture has been shared and practiced for thousands of years.

We celebrate First Nations people's enduring Connection to Country, to Culture and Community.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal Elders past and present, our cultural leaders of today and the inspirational leaders of our future.



WHO WE ARE

Arts North West facilitates the development of arts and cultural projects and initiatives across the New England North West of New South Wales. We have a service area of over 93,000 km² and population of over 183,000 people.

Our Vision is for a rich, diverse cultural landscape.

Our Mission is to expand creative opportunities in our region.

As a key service provider in the region, Arts North West drives cultural growth by increasing participation in arts and cultural activities, building community and cultural capacity, and delivering innovative programs. We do this through tailored support, strategic advice, advocacy, professional development opportunities, and by forging strong partnerships and networks across the region.

For over 25 years, Arts North West has remained true to its core purpose of regional arts development while responding with agility to local and global challenges. We are recognised as the peak advisory body for arts in the region, with a strong reputation built on deep community engagement, responsive service delivery, and long-term support for creatives and cultural organisations.

Our work is guided by four Core Objectives:

- **CREATIVITY**- Develop and broaden diverse audiences and their participation in arts and cultural activities.
- **COMMUNITY** - Grow and support community cultural capacity.
- **CONNECTIONS**- Forge strong partnerships and networks across the region.
- **GOVERNANCE** - Ensure a sustainable organisation through sound leadership and accountability.

Arts North West delivers a range of impactful and responsive programs that reflect these objectives and respond to the needs of our region's creative ecology:

- **ANW Museums and Heritage Network** – connecting and supporting regional museums, collections, and heritage professionals.
- **ANW Enable Arts Program** – supporting creatives with disability and promoting inclusive arts practice.
- **ANW SustainABLE Communities Program** – fostering creative responses to environmental, cultural, social, and economic sustainability.
- **FIRST STORIES: Moving Forward Together** - Arts North West's First Stories Program partners with First Nations individuals and organisations to strengthen opportunities for Aboriginal artists and communities across our region.
- **Arts North West ON TOUR** – showcasing local talent and facilitating regional creative exchange.
- **Arts North West Connect** – public and accessible database for creatives, venues, museums and artworkers, designed as a regional connector and cultural tourism platform for the region's creatives, councils, and cultural organisations.

Arts North West is committed to leveraging the transformative power of the arts to build connected, creative, and inclusive communities across the New England North West.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



In 2024, Arts North West along with many other arts and cultural organisations; navigated a turbulent funding environment, as parameters and priorities shifted within Create NSW. Despite this uncertainty, Arts North West responded with resilience and clarity of purpose, successfully adapting to these changes and continuing to advocate strongly for the needs of our region's artists and communities. Importantly in March 2025, Arts North West secured multi-year investment from Create NSW, providing the organisation with stability and confidence for the next four years. This funding ensures that Arts North West can continue to deliver impactful programs, deepen engagement across the region, and plan strategically for long-term outcomes in support of the arts and creative communities.

Despite this upheaval, in 2025, the organisation continued to strengthen its services and programs, supporting artists across our region and enabling access to creative experiences for many thousands of people. Funding has been delivered directly to artists through the CASP and MicroGrant programs, while the Arts North West team has also played a vital role in supporting artists and organisations to secure additional funding through one-on-one advice sessions.

A key area of growth in 2025 has been the continued development of strong and meaningful First Nations programming. Arts North West is committed to supporting Aboriginal artists, cultural leaders and communities across the region, ensuring that First Nations voices are centred, respected and amplified. Through dedicated programs, partnerships and the guidance of the Aboriginal Steering Committee, the organisation is working to strengthen cultural practice, support intergenerational knowledge sharing, and create opportunities for Aboriginal artists to lead and shape the cultural life of the region. Alongside established initiatives such as Arts North West On Tour, which brings high-quality music and theatre performances to our communities, the organisation has remained responsive and agile-developing new programs that reflect the needs and aspirations of the richly diverse communities across our broad region of New South Wales.

In the creative arts, we express ideas and emotions that cannot be communicated in other ways. The stories of our region-shared through writing, music, weaving, painting, carving and more-are of profound value not only to regional communities but to the nation as a whole. These voices must be heard. The complex challenges of our time cannot be addressed by politicians or scientists alone; artists play an essential role in shaping understanding and telling authentic stories. Creative thinking represents a uniquely powerful form of analysis-one that is increasingly vital in today's world.

Art is not merely entertainment. The creative industries are a significant contributor to the Australian economy, particularly in regional areas, where artistic activity strengthens local economies, fosters social connection, and enhances quality of life.

At the same time, many regional communities continue to face considerable challenges. The arts provide a critical platform for regional voices to speak truth to power, and one of Arts North West's key roles is to amplify these voices.

At its core, our work is about people-investing in the diverse individuals and communities of our region. I extend my sincere thanks to the Arts North West team for their dedication in building relationships, delivering impactful projects, and sustaining resources for the arts. I acknowledge Lauren Mackley for her ongoing contribution to Arts North West, and I thank Miranda Heckenberg, who has led the organisation as Executive Director throughout 2025 with professionalism, insight and commitment.

I also acknowledge the members of the Arts North West Strategic Advisory Council and the Aboriginal Steering Committee for their wisdom and guidance, which continue to shape our strategic direction. Finally, I thank my fellow Board members for their time, commitment, and invaluable expertise in helping to build a strong and forward-looking vision for the North West region of New South Wales.

As I step down from the role of Chair in 2026, I do so with great confidence in the future of Arts North West. It has been a privilege to serve the organisation and the communities of our region. I am pleased to hand the reins to Rachael Parsons, whose leadership, insight and commitment to the arts will guide Arts North West into its next chapter. I wish Rachael, the Board, and the team every success as they continue this important work.

Professor Alistair Noble
Chairperson
Arts North West





MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2025 was a period of major transition and reflection across the whole arts sector in Regional NSW. This has meant that stepping into the Acting role of Executive Director, during Lauren Mackley's maternity leave, has provided me with a unique perspective on the important role Regional Arts Development Organisations (RADOs) play within New South Wales' cultural ecology - a role that is not always as visible or as well understood as it should be.

New South Wales has a unique and highly effective model for supporting regional arts and culture through its network of Regional Arts Development Organisations. Across regional NSW, RADOs provide place-based expertise, sector development, advocacy, project delivery and creative leadership that is deeply connected to local communities, while also contributing to a coordinated statewide network through Regional Arts NSW. When communities, artists or councils engage with Arts North West, they are not only accessing the knowledge and experience of our local team, but also the collective expertise, advocacy and intelligence of a broader regional network working to strengthen arts and culture across the state.

Over the past year, I have gained a deep appreciation for the breadth of work undertaken by organisations such as Arts North West. While programs, events and funding outcomes are often the most visible aspects of our work, much of our impact lies in the long-term relationships, partnerships and strategic support that underpin sustainable cultural development in regional communities. Increasingly, the sector is recognising the need to move beyond measuring outputs alone and toward better understanding the broader outcomes arts and culture create, outcomes connected to wellbeing, social cohesion, cultural identity, economic resilience and community capacity.

This is particularly important in regional Australia, where arts and culture are not separate from community life, but deeply embedded within it. The work of Arts North West is strengthened by our partnerships with local government, community organisations, artists, cultural workers and First Nations communities across the New England North West. Together, we contribute to a creative ecology that supports not only artistic practice, but also tourism, education, local economies and community wellbeing.

The year also reinforced the importance of sustainability and adaptability within the arts sector. Ongoing discussions around funding, cultural policy and regional investment have highlighted the need for strong advocacy, robust evidence and collaborative approaches to ensuring regional communities continue to have access to vibrant cultural opportunities. Arts North West remains committed to contributing to these conversations while continuing to deliver responsive, place-based support across our region.

During this year there has also been consideration of how Arts North West is located within the region. Establishing a second Arts North West Office in Tamworth reflects a broader intention to improve accessibility, strengthen connections, and place the organisation at the centre of regional cultural activity in order to ensure it is well positioned to support all member LGAs into the future.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank the Arts North West team of staff for their support during the year and acknowledge the members of the Board, whose volunteer commitment, governance and strategic oversight are provided alongside their own demanding professional responsibilities. Their contribution to the organisation and the region is significant and deeply appreciated.

Miranda Heckenberg
Arts North West
Acting Executive Director

CONTRIBUTING COUNCILS

Arts North West recognises the support of Create NSW and the following local government bodies in the New England North West:

ARMIDALE REGIONAL
GLEN INNES SEVERN
GUNNEDAH SHIRE
GWYDIR SHIRE
LIVERPOOL PLAINS SHIRE
MOREE PLAINS SHIRE
NARRABRI SHIRE
TAMWORTH REGIONAL
TENTERFIELD SHIRE
URALLA SHIRE
WALCHA COUNCIL



Create NSW
Arts, Screen & Culture



CORE FUNDING

Arts North West is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW and the contributions of 11 Local Government Authorities in the New England North West. Arts North West is thankful for this ongoing support for our organisation and the Arts in the New England North West.



PROJECT FUNDING

Arts North West projects are made possible by our partnerships and grant funds obtained by the below funding bodies and organisations.



Advice and Support

Strategic support and policy
development

Marketing and Promotions

Resource Hub

Professional Development

Creative Development

Project Management

Grant Support and advice

Industry Networking Forums

Public Art Support

Advocacy

Grant Auspicing

Research and Evaluation

CORE SERVICES

Arts North West provides a myriad of offerings and services to the communities, artists, and cultural institutions in the New England North West region. These services are provided to communities within our contributing council footprint, the majority of these services are free or alternatively, fee by negotiation.

OUR SERVICES

Advice and Support - We offer tailored advice and practical support for artists, organisations, communities, arts workers, local government staff and possible collaborators. By addressing challenges and identifying opportunities, we help ensure success in your creative endeavours.

Strategic Support & Policy Development - Arts North West offers expert guidance in strategic planning and policy development tailored to the arts and cultural sector. We assist regional organisations and local government bodies in crafting frameworks that align with best practices, ensuring sustainable growth and effective governance.

Marketing and Promotions - Leverage our expertise in marketing and promotional strategies to amplify the reach and impact of your creative projects and events.

Resource Hub - Access a diverse range of resources designed for museums, community galleries, creatives, arts workers, and anyone organising arts and cultural events.

Professional Development - We deliver professional development workshops for arts workers, creatives, councils, businesses, and arts organisations across the region.

Creative Development - Arts North West supports the conception and development of creative projects, helping artists and organisations transform ideas into impactful cultural initiatives that enhance regional arts.

Project Management - Arts North West specialises in Project Management for cultural events and projects. With extensive experience in delivering successful, high-impact initiatives, we are your trusted partner in bringing creative visions to life.

Grant Support and Advice - Discover a wealth of grants and funding opportunities for regional NSW artists and organisations. We are happy to review your funding applications and provide feedback to maximize your chances of success.

Industry Networking Forums - Our forums connect artists, cultural practitioners, and organisations to collaborate, share insights, and build lasting partnerships across the creative sector.

Public Art Support - We offer tailored support for public art projects, guiding artists and organisations through planning, funding, and implementation.

Advocacy - We champion the arts by advocating for greater support, visibility, and recognition. Arts North West ensures that arts and culture remain central to local and state government policies and community discussions.

Grant Auspicing - We offer grant auspicing services for eligible projects, providing management and guidance to meet governance and financial reporting requirements.

ARTS NORTH WEST PROGRAMS

FIRST NATIONS FIRST - ABORIGINAL CULTURAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

ANW prides itself on embedding Aboriginal perspectives in all aspects of our operations, ensuring Aboriginal voices guide our development and community and cultural protocols are respected. In the coming years ANW will:

- Secure and maintain funding for a dedicated Aboriginal Arts Officer within ANW
- Create opportunities for capacity building through creative and professional development as well as support economic pathways and ventures
- Capacity building opportunities for the delivery of creative and professional development by First Nations people for First Nations people
- Create spaces for Aboriginal people in our area to directly inform the development, strategic direction and branding of our Aboriginal Cultural Support Program

By fostering a deeper connection to Country, culture, and community, this program and its accompanying initiatives honour the cultural heritage of Aboriginal peoples and enriches the broader community's understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal arts and culture.

ARTS NORTH WEST CONNECT

'ANW Connect' is a database for artists, venues, museums and artworkers, designed as a regional connector and cultural tourism platform. In the coming years, ANW will evolve this program and transform it to a holistic creative connectedness hub, with networking forums, public programming offerings, assistance for cultural offerings as well as tailored professional development capacity building opportunities. ANW will:

- Increase the reach of creative disciplines to include First Nations cultural tourism offerings, musicians, theatre and performance creatives and spaces, public art listings and assistance with the delivery of public art projects.
- Leverage this database to provide creative networking forums
- Deliver large scale biannual event that showcase the regions creatives
- Facilitate opportunities for collaborations between artists, cultural and community organisations, and local communities

Enhancing this program benefits artists by providing new opportunities for creative expression and income generation, and also strengthens the region's cultural infrastructure, creating a dynamic and interconnected arts sector. The program's success lies in its ability to build a network of support that benefits all participants, from emerging artists to established cultural institutions.

ARTS NORTH WEST ON TOUR - REGIONAL LIVE PERFORMANCE TOURING

'Arts North West ON TOUR' (ANWOT) provides an agile, viable and efficient touring route of live theatre, performing arts, and musical performances, primarily throughout the New England North West but also throughout the north of New South Wales.

We support producers and venues by providing specialised tour coordination, price negotiation, technical support and advice, through our fee-for-service model. These offerings bring high-quality performances to communities across the region, builds new audiences and fosters a greater appreciation for the arts. Creatives are provided with valuable opportunities to showcase their work to wider and more diverse audiences, enhancing their professional development and career prospects.

This program ensures that the performing arts remain a dynamic and integral part of the regional identity. In the coming years ANW will:

- Expand this program to deliver a state-wide approach to live performance touring throughout regional NSW, in partnership with other RADOs.
- Increase and promote regionally developed content to tour across NSW.

ANW MUSEUMS AND HERITAGE NETWORK

The NENW Museums Network plays a vital role in preserving the heritage of the region. This sector is currently at a critical juncture of viability. ANW supports regional museums and cultural institutions to ensure that the stories and traditions of the past are preserved and also integrated into contemporary cultural practices. This helps to build a sense of continuity and identity within communities, fostering pride and a deeper connection to place.

ANW will:

- Enable museums to engage with contemporary audiences, creating programming and projects that integrate traditional narratives with modern artistic practices
- Create forums and networking opportunities to share skills, ideas and resources across the region
- Identify and advocate for career pathways to be explored and maintained in the sector

ANW aims to ensure that the history and stories of the community and the region are preserved, accessible and celebrated.

ANW SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

The 'Arts North West Sustainable Communities Program' is a new program that is informed by the knowledge that, for regional communities to thrive, there needs to be investment in liveability, which consists of three essential pillars:

- Environmental integrity
- Economic viability
- Social equity

The NENW is experiencing social and economic transitions due to climate change, industry transitions, and changing population demographics. This program responds to the changes in our regional identity through creative expression to explore, express and socially connect us all.

ANW:

- Provide data collection and research outcomes for audience evaluation in our regional context
- Position arts and culture as a key pillar to diversify the economy
- Create platforms for marginalised voices to be expressed and explored
- Position ANW as a key organisation for creative recovery, community resilience, and a partner in the journey toward sustainable communities

ANW ENABLE ARTS PROGRAM

ANW's commitment to creating inclusive and accessible spaces for artistic expression is reflected in programs such as the 'ANW Enable Arts Program' which focuses on ensuring that people with disabilities can fully participate in the arts. By removing barriers to access, ANW is actively working to engage a broader audience, ensuring that the arts are a vibrant part of daily life for all community members. This is a key focus for ANW in the coming years.

ANW

- Continue to be guided by people living with disabilities to inform our project and program development
- Increase training for ANW staff and provide capacity building opportunities in the region for a more inclusive and accessible industry
- Ensure inclusion and accessibility is part of our day-to-day practices
- Develop biannual bespoke projects that focus on inclusion and accessibility through community engagement

OBJECTIVE 1: CREATIVITY

Develop and broaden our diverse audiences and their participation in arts and cultural activities



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS ART FAIR

MENTORS & MENTEEES 2025

**Arts
north
west**



**First
Stories**
Moving forward together



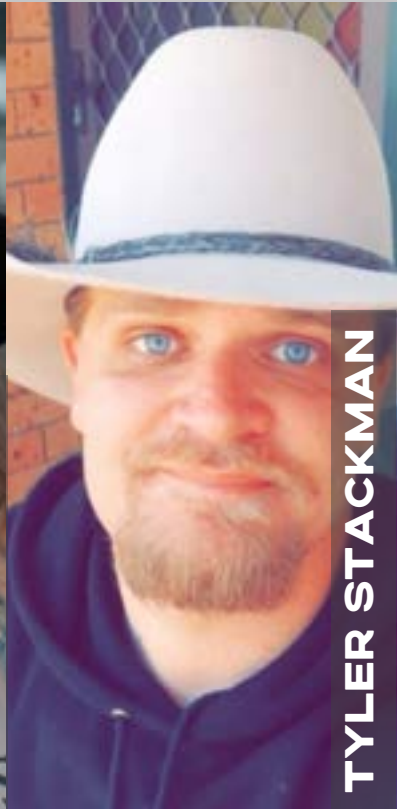
KATE BRIGGS



JODIE HERDEN



AMY ALLERTON



TYLER STACKMAN

Since 2023, Arts North West has supported four First Nations artists annually to attend the National Indigenous Art Fair (NIAF) and the Blak Markets, creating significant opportunities for regional artists to develop professional skills, build networks, and present work on a national stage.

The program operates through a mentorship model where previous mentees return as mentors for new participants, ensuring knowledge and experience are passed on each year. Arts North West covers all travel, accommodation, and meal costs, while artists retain 100% of sales from the fair.

In 2024, Waabii Chapman-Burgess and Tania Hartigan mentored Kate Briggs and Amy Allerton. In 2025, Jodie Herden and Tyler Stackman attended as mentees, supported by mentors Amy Allerton and Kate Briggs.

Held on Gadigal Land at Sydney's Overseas Passenger Terminal, NIAF and the Blak Markets provided artists with access to workshops, galleries, and cultural experiences. Participants attended screen printing and dry point etching workshops at Eora TAFE, visited Artbank with Maningrida artists Alison Cooper and Derek Carter, explored the Art Gallery of NSW, and participated in archival research sessions at the University of Sydney.

Artists also participated in the Blak Markets alongside NIAF, collectively generating more than \$5,000 in sales. Tyler Stackman sold works to national and international visitors, with one major artwork acquired for permanent display at the University of Sydney.

The initiative continues to strengthen pathways for First Nations artists to access national audiences, professional development, and long-term creative opportunities.

MOREE GOMEROI MARKETS

On Sunday 23 February 2025, Arts North West supported the Moree Gomeroi Markets in partnership with Regional NSW, Tourism Moree, Miyay Birray, Aboriginal Affairs, and Moree Plains Shire Council.

The markets created a platform for First Nations artists and makers to showcase and sell work directly to the community. Twenty artists participated across 13 stalls featuring jewellery, weaving, painting, sculpture, textiles, and cultural artefacts. An estimated 550 people attended the event, with 221 artworks and handmade items sold during the markets.

Arts North West contributed \$1,900 directly to stallholders and provided market infrastructure and transport support valued at more than \$1,600. ANW also secured an additional \$19,999 in grant funding to support delivery of the event.

Stallholders recorded combined sales of \$4,727, with artists retaining 100% of their earnings. The markets supported cultural enterprise, economic participation, and visibility for First Nations artists within the region.

Community feedback highlighted strong support for the event and its future growth, with participants noting positive engagement between organisers, artists, and visitors. The Moree Gomeroi Markets demonstrated the value of culturally led market events in supporting regional creative industries and community connection.

TAMWORTH NAIDOC MARKET 2025

Arts North West supported a First Nations market event held at the newly redeveloped Fitzroy Street Plaza in Tamworth's CBD as part of National NAIDOC Week celebrations. The event showcased First Nations cultural pride, creativity, and enterprise through a vibrant public market featuring regional artists and makers.

Arts North West provided marquees, tables, and logistical support, with the Aboriginal Arts Officer assisting stallholders with bump-in and bump-out across the event.

Eight First Nations stallholders participated, including Tess Reading / Art Without Fear, Pauline Sampson, Amy Allerton / Indigico, Taylor Nicholls and Skye Nicholls, Jody McKenna, KD Creations, Audrey Fogg / Lil Aud Aboriginal Art, and Billy Trewlynn.

The market strengthened opportunities for First Nations artists to share culture, connect with audiences, and generate income while contributing to the activation of Tamworth's CBD during NAIDOC Week.

MICRO GATHER AND TRADE AT BAIADA CAROLS IN THE PARK

The event attracted strong community engagement, with attendance exceeding 3,000 people across the duration of the program. This high level of participation provided significant exposure opportunities for artists and strengthened audience connection with First Nations arts and culture.

Arts North West (ANW) supported three artists and their businesses to exhibit and sell artwork on-site, showcasing works from six First Nations artists throughout the event. This initiative created valuable opportunities for cultural representation, professional visibility, and direct audience engagement, while also supporting economic outcomes for participating artists.

ANW also successfully implemented its first "Mini G&T Market" concept, designed to provide a shared and accessible exhibition and sales space for multiple artists within a single stand. Participating artists included Audrey Fogg, Jodie Herden, and Tania Hartigan. The collaborative market model encouraged artist networking, increased product diversity for visitors, and provided an affordable and supportive platform for artists to engage with new audiences and expand their market presence.



URALLA - SEASONS OF NEW ENGLAND

Arts North West supported First Nations artists Waabii Chapman Burgess and Amy Allerton to participate in Seasons of New England in Uralla, marking the event's first year including First Nations stallholders.

Arts North West assisted with participation costs and provided market equipment to support the artists' involvement. The event created opportunities for both artists to showcase and sell their work, increasing visibility for First Nations creative practice within a regional market setting.

The initiative supported cultural representation, economic participation, and pathways for First Nations artists to engage with new audiences and markets. Feedback from participants highlighted the success of the event and the value of ongoing support for First Nations arts participation in regional communities.



WALLABADAH - YUGA-LI FESTIVAL

In May 2025, The Art Shack @ Wilgabah hosted the Yuga-li Festival, a cultural event featuring markets, live music, and creative workshops. Arts North West supported the festival through grant auspicing, market equipment, setup assistance, stallholder coordination, and meal support for participants and organisers.

Arts North West also funded 11 First Nations workshop tickets, increasing access for community members to participate in cultural learning and creative activities delivered by Waabii Chapman-Burgess, Jo-Anne Barr, and Mark Atkins. Workshops included weaving, felt hat making, and didgeridoo making, with 17 participants attending across the sessions.

The Gather and Trade Markets featured 11 First Nations artists across nine stalls showcasing artworks, crafts, and cultural products. A total of 46 artworks and handmade items were sold, generating \$1,435 in sales, with artists retaining 100% of earnings.

The festival strengthened cultural participation, creative exchange, and economic opportunities for First Nations artists and communities.



MYALL CREEK GATHER & TRADE

On 7 June 2025, Arts North West supported the Myall Creek exhibition opening at Ceramic Break Sculpture Park through the delivery of a Gather and Trade market featuring four First Nations stallholders.

The event provided artists with opportunities to showcase and sell work directly to visitors, with a combined total of 62 artworks and handmade items sold during the opening. Ceramic Break Sculpture Park recorded 78 visitors across the event, supporting strong community engagement with First Nations arts and cultural programming.

Arts North West provided stalls, tables, tablecloths, lunch support, and assistance with market setup, as well as contributing to catering costs for the Lions Club lunch. ANW also supplied sound equipment and supported young local artists to perform publicly, creating opportunities for emerging performers to gain live audience experience.

The event strengthened visibility for First Nations artists, supported local creative participation, and contributed to a welcoming and culturally active community event.





MICRO GRANTS

ARTS NORTH WEST MICROGRANT PROGRAM 2025

The Arts North West Microgrant Program 2025 provided targeted, small-scale funding to support creative practitioners, community groups, and arts organisations across the region. Designed to be accessible and responsive, the program enabled the delivery of diverse creative projects, skill development opportunities, and community-led initiatives. In 2025, a total of 19 microgrants were awarded, supporting a broad cross-section of artistic disciplines including visual arts, performance, music, community arts, and cultural development.

RECIPIENTS

- **Emily Simson** – Attending a two-day Watercolour & Woodcut workshop in Manly Vale to explore new printmaking methods. (Armidale Region)
- **Gallop Productions** – Completing post-production and marketing for the short film Cigarette Fingertips, furthering regional storytelling and filmmaking. (Uralla Shire)
- **Glen Innes Pottery Club Inc.** – Installing a new small kiln and funding assisting electrical installation costs. (Glen Innes Severn Shire)
- **Jurassic Jack Roarsome Adventure** – Construction of a new Triceratops puppet for Roarsome Dino Kindy show. (Tamworth Region)
- **Liz Powell** – Expanding printmaking studio with new equipment for copper plate etching and mezzotint. (Tenterfield Shire)
- **Moree Arts Community Centre Inc.** – Developing a new professional website (Moree Plains Shire)
- **New England Bach Festival** – Hosting a public concert and community launch to introduce new artistic directors and promote the upcoming 2027 Festival. (Armidale Region)
- **Riley Jordan** – Participating in online printmaking workshops to develop new artistic techniques. (Glen Innes Severn Shire)
- **Roger ‘Buddy’ Knox** – Running a music workshop with guest mentor Eugene Hideaway Bridges (Tamworth Region)
- **Tamworth Art Academy (Big Sky Studio)** – Hosting an outdoor projection event linked to the Fitzroy Street Outdoor Gallery, supporting artist fees and event resources. (Tamworth Region)
- **Tania Hartigan** – Purchasing a fibre grinder to recycle textiles into handmade paper, supporting sustainable art practices and community workshops. (Liverpool Plains Shire)
- **The Blank Canvas** – Launching Tuesday Art Hour, an affordable and inclusive after-school art program for children. (Gunnedah Shire)
- **Wade Fishenden** – Expanding regional leathercraft workshops with the purchase of new leatherworking tools (Tamworth Region)
- **Wendy Lorraine Thompson** – Creating a new body of landscape paintings (Tamworth Region)
- **Wood We Create** – Expanding woodturning workshops and demonstrations through the purchase of new tools and mobile equipment. (Walcha)
- **Brainsplode Artist Services** – Presenting The Songwriters Hub at UNE Tamworth, providing professional development and showcase opportunities for local songwriters. (Tamworth Region)
- **Gay Landeta** – Attending a three-day etching workshop to enhance technical printmaking skills and artistic practice. (Tenterfield Shire)
- **GuyrARTists** – Delivering a pop-up exhibition and interactive art activities at the Guyra Agricultural Show. (Armidale Region)
- **Paul Wilson** – Supporting local music showcases through Listen in Glen Innes. (Glen Innes Severn)
- **Tamworth Regional Craft Centre Inc** – Contribution to the purchase of new pottery wheels. (Tamworth Region)



COUNTRY ARTS SUPPORT PROGRAM (CASP) 2025

The Country Arts Support Program (CASP) 2025 continued to play a key role in supporting community-led arts and cultural development across the Arts North West region. Funded by the NSW Government and delivered locally by Arts North West, CASP provides small grants to enable locally initiated projects that increase participation in the arts and strengthen cultural activity in regional and remote communities. In 2025, a total of six projects were supported, reflecting a diverse range of creative practices including visual arts, community workshops, cultural infrastructure, and collaborative initiatives. The program prioritises accessibility, community engagement, and local capacity building, ensuring that projects respond directly to the needs and interests of their communities.

RECIPIENTS

- **Mungindi Men's Shed Inc** – Weemelah Cushion Making Workshop

A practical, creative workshop bringing people together to learn sewing skills and make something beautiful for their homes.

- **Baan Baa Community Hall Incorporated** – Bringing Live Events to Baan Baa 2026

Live performances returning to Baan Baa, giving the community a place to gather, celebrate, and be inspired.

- **Community Weathering Station** – How to Weather Together

Exploring climate, place, and resilience through art and storytelling.

- **Deepwater Art and Pottery Group** – Ceramic Christmas Decorations and Figurines

Hands-on workshops to create unique Christmas decorations and sculptures using hand- and slab-building techniques.

- **Black Gully Printmakers** – Prints of Armidale: Telling Stories Through Print, Press and Exhibition

Celebrating local stories through the art of printmaking, bookmaking and exhibition.

- **New England Regional Art Museum** – New Horizons Mentorship

A mentorship program supporting an emerging artist to grow their skills and explore new opportunities under the mentorship of Walcha artist, Angus Nivison.

The 2025 CASP projects supported grassroots creative activity across a broad geographic area, enabling communities to develop and deliver projects that reflect local identity, environment, and cultural priorities. Funded initiatives ranged from skill development and workshop delivery to the creation of new works and community-based cultural experiences.

The program delivered measurable benefits, including:

- Increased community participation in arts and cultural activities
- Strengthened local creative networks and partnerships
- Enhanced access to arts experiences in smaller and remote communities
- Support for both emerging and established artists and facilitators



RIVER COUNTRY

Arts North West supported the delivery of River Country at the Dhiyaan Aboriginal Centre in Moree. Led by The Cad Factory in partnership with the National Museum of Australia and Petaurus Education Group, the touring project explored the cultural, ecological, and social significance of the Murray–Darling river systems and wetlands. Originating from a 2023 community program at the National Museum of Australia, River Country developed into a multi-year regional tour engaging communities across New South Wales. The project involved more than 200 regional artists living along the Murray–Darling Basin, including 18 artists from the New England North West region.



Together, they created collaborative artworks reflecting connections to waterways and changing river ecologies. Presented in Moree from 2–5 April, the program transformed the Dhiyaan Centre into an immersive exhibition space featuring large-scale installations and artworks inspired by river landscapes, species, and ecosystems.

The program included inclusive artmaking activities inviting participants to share their own “river stories” through creative responses to Country, waterways, and environmental connection. Designed for broad accessibility, the workshops supported participation from people of all ages and backgrounds through guided and self-directed engagement. The project strengthened community participation, cultural storytelling, environmental awareness, and creative expression. By combining exhibitions, workshops, and cultural activities, the initiative deepened community engagement and learning outcomes.

Arts North West’s involvement contributed to the successful delivery of the Moree program and highlighted the value of collaborative arts initiatives linking national institutions with regional communities. Julie Jana’s facilitation supported meaningful place-based participation and storytelling within this significant cultural project.

WALCHA CREATIVE WAYFINDING 2024/ 2025

Arts North West, in partnership with Walcha Council and Walcha’s Arts Advisory Committee, delivered an interpretive signage project within Walcha’s Open Air Gallery to improve wayfinding, site activation, and recognition of cultural landmarks.

The project involved the design, production, and installation of engraved interpretive plaques alongside key public artworks throughout the gallery. Produced in collaboration with Etcht Engraving, the plaques provide artwork information including artist attribution, historical context, and interpretive details.

The signage supports visitors in navigating the dispersed collection of public artworks across Walcha, creating a clearer and more accessible wayfinding experience.

Consistent visual markers encourage self-guided exploration and contribute to increased visitor engagement and longer dwell time within the township.

The project was delivered in consultation with local stakeholders, including Stephen King and representatives of the Walcha Open Air Gallery, ensuring the signage aligned with the town’s identity and cultural narrative.



By combining interpretation with practical navigation, the initiative strengthened the visibility and accessibility of Walcha’s public art collection while enhancing the overall visitor experience. The project also reinforced the role of public art in supporting cultural tourism, local storytelling, and community pride within the region.

Arts North West supported the delivery of Balancing Act, a professional development program presented in Tamworth and Armidale in partnership with the University of New England. The workshops assisted artists and creative practitioners in managing the practical challenges of sustaining a creative career. Sessions focused on time management, income streams, wellbeing, and long-term creative practice, while encouraging peer discussion and knowledge exchange.

The program attracted emerging and established artists from across the New England North West region, supporting strong participation and engagement. Participants shared experiences and strengthened regional networks and peer connections within the arts sector.

Delivered through accessible regional venues, Balancing Act increased access to locally based professional development opportunities. Participant feedback highlighted increased confidence, clearer career pathways, and practical strategies to support sustainable creative practice within regional communities.

Arts North West partnered with MusicNSW to deliver The Mix – Uralla, a regional music industry networking and professional development event held at Alternate Root Café.

The event brought together artists, venue operators, promoters, educators, managers, and technicians to strengthen local industry connections and encourage knowledge sharing. Facilitated by Niño Haggith, the session provided information about industry opportunities, support services, touring networks, and professional development pathways available through MusicNSW.

Participants engaged directly with MusicNSW representatives, discussed local challenges and opportunities, and strengthened regional peer networks. The partnership between Arts North West and MusicNSW connected local music communities with statewide industry support and resources.

The event also supported ongoing engagement through a local Amateur Original Music Night, contributing to live performance opportunities and regional audience development.

BALANCING ACT WITH UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND



MUSICNSW - THE MIX @ URALLA

MUSICNSW





MUSIC NSW

Arts North West continued its partnership with Music NSW to deliver the Regional Partnership program to assist musicians, venues and touring personnel in regional NSW. Offering advice and creating pathways between local industry, local government and artists, and providing on-the-ground support for regional musicians, venues and live music professionals. Music NSW grows regional touring as well as supports with project management, planning, budget, insurance, promotion and marketing, funding sources and opportunities in relation to individual or organisational arts and cultural practice. Music NSW and ANW delivered a series of 1-on-1 sessions and networking events in Uralla in 2025 coinciding with a Open Mic Night.

*Check out the North West Sounds Spotify playlist
produced by Music NSW.*

ARTS NORTH WEST ON TOUR



ARTS NORTH WEST ONTOUR

Arts North West ON TOUR (ANWOT) is a regional touring service bespoke to Arts North West. Providing nationally acclaimed locally produced live theatre and musical offerings to performing arts venues in the New England North West and afar. ANWOT promotes, supports and negotiates touring productions for venues throughout regional NSW, while also providing touring advice, marketing collateral and resources.

In 2023 Arts North West changed from a subscription based model to a fee-for-service model to respond to opportunities for smaller venues, community organisations, galleries, museums and local venues to be part of the tour coordination. This model provides agility 'post-covid' and also ensures theatre can continue to viably tour regional NSW.

In 2025 Arts North West hosted touring shows in venues across the NENW and neighbouring RADO's, providing a total of 19 performances from 5 different productions with councils, performance venues, community organisations, galleries, museums, schools, pubs, clubs and halls to be part of the tour coordination.

ARTS NORTH WEST ONTOUR



LITTLE WINGS PUPPETS PRODUCTION 'TRINKET THE ROBOT'

Arts North West supported the touring of Trinket the Robot, an interactive puppet performance for young audiences presented across the New England North West region. Inspired by Pinocchio, the production explored emotional literacy through the story of a robot experiencing human emotions for the first time. The performances combined humour, storytelling, and audience participation to explore themes including joy, fear, sadness, resilience, and change. Colour-based emotional storytelling provided children with an accessible introduction to wellbeing and emotional awareness. The production successfully engaged families and school audiences while demonstrating strong suitability for regional touring, educational programming, and accessible arts experiences for young people.

2 August (Saturday) - Tamworth Regional Conservatorium of Music

4 August (Monday) - Gunnedah Civic Theatre

6 August (Wednesday) - Coonabarabran Town Hall

7 August (Thursday) - Roxy Theatre, Bingara



MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL COMEDY FESTIVAL ROADSHOW

The Melbourne International Comedy Festival Roadshow featured a mix of established comedians and emerging performers presenting stand-up, storytelling, and character comedy across the New England North West region. The tour attracted strong attendance and gave regional audiences access to high-quality contemporary comedy not regularly available outside metropolitan centres. Audience feedback highlighted the diversity and quality of performances and the value of experiencing a nationally recognised arts program locally. The program strengthened community connection through shared live performance experiences and demonstrated continued demand for contemporary comedy touring in regional areas. It also reinforced the value of touring partnerships in increasing regional access to live arts and entertainment.

Thursday 12 June - Gunnedah

Wednesday 25 June - Glen Innes Chapel Theatre

Wednesday 9 July - Welder's Dog Brewery, Armidale

Thursday 10 July - Moree Services Club

Friday 11 July - Tamworth Capitol Theatre



SONGBIRDS TOUR ANNA WEATHERUP AND AMY VEE

In April 2025, Arts North West presented Songbirds, a regional tour featuring Anna Weatherup and Amy Vee across the New England North West. Anna Weatherup, recognised for her appearance on The Voice and her album Crossing the Sea, performed original music and live storytelling. Amy Vee, an award-winning songwriter with national and international touring experience, brought a repertoire shaped by collaborations with leading Australian musicians.

The tour delivered high-quality contemporary live music to regional audiences and strengthened access to professional touring performances across the region.

The tour travelled through:

Thursday 10 April - Armidale

Friday 11 April - Baan Baa

Saturday 12 April - Tamworth

Sunday 13 April - Piallaway

MR SNOTBOTTOM!

Arts North West toured Mr Snotbottom across the New England North West region, delivering a high-energy live performance for families and young audiences. The tour featured interactive comedy, music, and playful humour designed for children aged 4+. The performances attracted strong audience participation, with children actively engaging throughout the shows. Families responded positively to the accessible and entertaining format, highlighting the value of quality children's programming presented locally. The tour supported community engagement, family participation, and audience development by introducing young people to live performance in a fun and inclusive environment, reinforcing the importance of touring children's theatre across regional communities.

Thursday 8 May - Civic Theatre, Gunnedah

Friday 9 May, 6:00pm - Crossing Theatre Auditorium, Narrabri



THE UKULELE MAN

Arts North West supported the regional presentation of The Ukulele Man, an award-winning theatre work exploring the life of British entertainer George Formby through live music, comedy, and storytelling. Performed by Marcel Cole and Katie Cole, the production traced Formby's rise from music halls to entertaining troops during World War II. The performance combined humour, music, and historical narrative while exploring the challenges of Formby's life.

Audience feedback highlighted strong storytelling, musicianship, and audience engagement. The adaptable production increased regional access to award-winning independent theatre.

Thursday 17 July - Barraba Playhouse

Friday 18 July - Gunnedah Conservatorium of Music

Saturday 19 July - Baan Baa Hall

Sunday 20 July - Tamworth Capitol Theatre



OBJECTIVE 2: COMMUNITY

Grow and support community cultural capacity

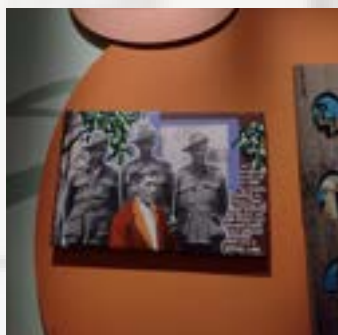
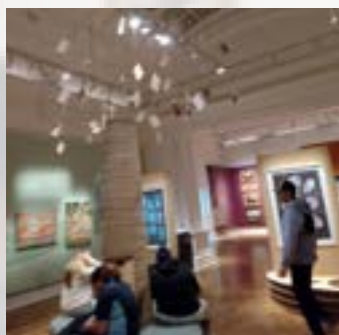


NARRABRI HIGH SCHOOL- BANGARRA EXCURSION 2025



In 2025, senior members of the Narrabri High School Junior AECG travelled to Sydney for a cultural excursion centred on First Nations arts and storytelling. Supported by Arts North West through IVAIS funding, the program provided students with opportunities to engage directly with contemporary Aboriginal visual and performing arts. Students visited the State Library of NSW exhibition *The Country Cries for Truth*, featuring works by Bundjalung artist Bronwyn Bancroft. The exhibition explored Australian histories through painted archival imagery and visual storytelling. Students responded positively to the exhibition, reflecting on the strength of the artworks and the stories they communicated about Country, identity, and history.

The group also attended a preview performance of Bangarra Dance Theatre's *Illume*. Inspired by stories from Lombadina in the Kimberley region, the production explored landscape, culture, and connection through dance and music. Students described the performance as powerful and engaging, highlighting the importance of seeing Aboriginal culture and storytelling expressed through contemporary performance. The excursion strengthened cultural learning, creative engagement, and access to major First Nations arts experiences.



Images provided by Krystal Li at Narrabri High School



CULTURAL WOMENS DAY - WILGABAH

On 27 November 2025, Arts North West supported the Cultural Women's Day held at Wilgabah in partnership with Tamworth LALC and The Art Shack. Twenty Yinarr from across the region attended the event, participating in cultural activities designed to strengthen connection to community, Country, and wellbeing.

The program included a felt craft workshop alongside opportunities for cultural sharing, conversation, and community connection within a culturally safe environment.

Arts North West's Aboriginal Arts Officer attended the day to assist with event delivery and provide support to organisers and participants throughout the program.

The event created opportunities for cultural engagement, creative participation, and strengthening relationships between First Nations women across the region while reinforcing the importance of culturally led wellbeing initiatives and community gatherings.





ARMIDALE AUTUMN FESTIVAL - ROAMING MURALS AND KIDS COLOURING WORKSHOPS

As part of the Something to Talk About Autumn Festival, Arts North West delivered roaming murals and children's colouring workshops in the Beardy Street Mall to support CBD activation and community participation. The roaming murals introduced live public artworks, allowing visitors to observe artists working throughout the festival. The children's colouring workshops provided accessible creative activities for families and young people. Transforming the mall into an active cultural space and increased foot traffic and visitor dwell time within the CBD. Families and visitors engaged with the activities across the festival period, contributing to a strong community atmosphere.



MINERAMA FESTIVAL, GLEN INNES - BADGE MAKING ACTIVITY

Arts North West delivered a badge making activity at the Minerama Festival in Glen Innes, providing an accessible creative engagement opportunity within the festival program. Participants designed and created personalised badges using a range of materials, colours, and imagery. The activity was designed for all ages and skill levels, encouraging easy participation and hands-on creativity. The badge making station maintained steady engagement throughout the festival, supporting creativity, self-expression, and interaction among attendees. The activity complemented the broader festival program by offering a relaxed and interactive experience for families and visitors. The project demonstrated the value of low-barrier creative activities in increasing participation and contributing to an active festival atmosphere.



LITTLE CHILLERS @ BIG CHILL IN ARMIDALE

As part of the Big Chill Festival 2025 in Armidale, Arts North West supported a Silent Disco within the "Little Chillers" space, designed as an inclusive, family-friendly environment for children. The Silent Disco formed part of a low-sensory zone, allowing children and families to engage with music and movement in a calm and flexible setting. Using wireless headphones, participants controlled their own audio levels and selected from curated music channels, creating a personalised experience within a shared space. The Little Chillers area was designed to reduce sensory overload often associated with large festivals and support participation for children with sensory sensitivities. The program successfully encouraged inclusive participation, enabling children of varying needs and comfort levels to engage at their own pace. This initiative demonstrated the value of low-sensory programming in supporting accessibility and participation within regional festivals.



GUNNEDAH YOUTH EXPO - BADGE MAKING ACTIVITY

Arts North West delivered a badge making activity at the Gunnedah Youth Expo, providing an accessible creative experience for young people. Participants created personalised badges using colours, symbols, and messages. The activity required no prior experience and encouraged quick, hands-on participation. The badge making station attracted strong engagement throughout the expo, supporting creativity, self-expression, and social interaction. It also provided an informal entry point for young people to connect with the broader event program. The activity demonstrated the value of low-barrier creative experiences in supporting youth engagement and participation.



ARMIDALE CREATIVE STREETS - OIL PAINTING DEMONSTRATION - STILL LIFE LIVE IN 4 HOURS WITH DANNY STANLEY

As part of the Armidale Creative Streets program, Arts North West supported a live oil painting demonstration led by acclaimed artist Danny Stanley. Titled Still Life Live in 4 Hours, the event provided public access to contemporary painting practice in a public setting. Over four hours, Danny Stanley completed a still life painting while explaining composition, colour mixing, brushwork, and oil painting techniques. The interactive format allowed attendees to observe the process, ask questions, and gain insight into artistic decision-making. The event engaged emerging artists, students, and community members, supporting public participation and appreciation of professional visual arts practice. It also activated the public space and encouraged creative learning within the regional community.



BINGARA ORANGE FESTIVAL - STILL LIFE WORKSHOP - FONDA SHAE

As part of the Bingara Orange Festival, Arts North West supported a still life workshop led by Fonda Shae, using oranges as the subject for drawing and painting activities. Participants explored composition, colour, texture, light, and tonal variation through guided exercises. The workshop was designed for all skill levels and provided an accessible environment for creative participation. Using locally significant produce strengthened connections between artmaking and regional identity. The session supported creative skill development, confidence, and community engagement while introducing participants to still life techniques. The workshop demonstrated the value of artist-led activities in regional festivals and community arts programming.



FIESTA LA PEEL - GOMEROI DESIGNS AND COLOURING IN WITH JODIE HERDEN

As part of Fiesta La Peel, Gomeroi Yinarr artist Jodie Herden delivered a First Nations colouring activity that engaged community members in cultural learning through creative practice. Participants explored First Nations designs, patterns, and language connected to Gomeroi storytelling and knowledge systems. The activity used colouring as an accessible way to introduce cultural expression and encourage respectful engagement with First Nations perspectives. Open to all ages, the session supported strong participation from families and young people, encouraging intergenerational learning and community connection. The activity demonstrated the value of artist-led cultural programs in supporting awareness, understanding, and engagement with First Nations culture.



TAMWORTH PRIDE FESTIVAL - BADGE MAKING ACTIVITY

Arts North West delivered a badge making activity at the Tamworth Pride Festival, supporting creative participation and community connection within an inclusive festival environment.

Participants designed personalised badges using colours, symbols, and messages reflecting identity, pride, and self-expression. The activity was open to all ages and required no prior artistic experience, encouraging participation from individuals, families, and young people.

The badge making station attracted strong engagement throughout the festival, fostering creativity, conversation, and social connection.

Participants used the badges to express support for the LGBTQIA+ community and contribute to the welcoming atmosphere of the event.

The activity demonstrated the value of accessible creative experiences in community festivals.

CHRISTMAS IN THE HIGHLANDS - KID'S ACTIVITIES

As part of Christmas in the Highlands, ANW delivered children's creative workshops in bag making, badge making, and pencil case decoration. Designed for all ages and skill levels, the activities encouraged hands-on participation, creativity, and self-expression through craft activities. The workshops contributed to a vibrant, accessible, and family-friendly festival atmosphere within the broader Christmas celebrations.



CHRISTMAS IN THE HIGHLANDS - ILLUMINATIONS



The Christmas in the Highlands - Illuminations program featured a Youth Projection Project engaging young people in digital arts and projection mapping. Coordinated by LM vs ML Consultancy in partnership with The Bioluminescence Project and Real Artworks, the initiative was supported by Arts North West and local stakeholders. Delivered through a three-day workshop in Glen Innes, the program invited participants aged 15-18 to explore projection art, digital storytelling, and installation design. Facilitators provided hands-on training in video creation, animation, sound, projection mapping, and collaborative installation processes.

Participants developed original visual content that was projected onto local buildings during the Illuminations event, transforming public spaces into interactive artworks. The project combined artistic innovation with youth engagement through strong collaboration between partner organisations. It supported skills development in creative technology, teamwork, and digital arts practice while increasing youth participation in the festival. The final public projection showcase contributed to the visibility and vibrancy of the Christmas in the Highlands program and demonstrated the value of contemporary digital arts initiatives in regional communities.



BOGGABRI PUBLIC SCHOOL MURAL

In 2025, Arts North West supported a mural project at Boggabri Primary School led by regional artist Jordan Lucky. The project formed part of a broader place-making initiative focused on improving school environments through public art.

Jordan Lucky worked with the school community to design and create a large-scale mural inspired by the Boggabri region. Drawing on local flora and fauna, the artwork used bold colours and dynamic forms to create an engaging visual space.

The mural contributed to a staged rollout of artworks across the school, helping transform the grounds into a cohesive and vibrant environment. The project also introduced students to professional artistic practice and the process of developing public art. The completed mural strengthened connections to place and community identity while enhancing the school environment for students and staff. The project demonstrated the value of artist-led public art initiatives in regional schools, delivering cultural, educational, and community outcomes.



ADVICE & ADVOCACY

The creative industries continue to play a critical role in Australia's economy and social fabric. According to Creative Australia and the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the cultural and creative economy now contributes more than \$122 billion annually to the national economy while supporting employment, tourism, innovation, education, and community wellbeing. These impacts are particularly significant in regional areas seeking economic diversification, population retention, and long-term resilience.

In 2025, Arts North West (ANW) has continued to strengthen its role as the lead arts and cultural development organisation acting as a conduit between the NSW Government, local councils, cultural institutions, and the creative sector, ANW has actively supported the implementation of the NSW Vibrancy Reforms. These reforms aim to modernise planning, liquor licensing, outdoor activation, and sound and noise regulations to encourage greater cultural participation and support live music, festivals, and night-time economies across NSW.

ANW has supported councils, venue operators, event organisers, and creatives in navigating changing regulations while advocating for reduced red tape around festivals, live music, and public events. This work has strengthened opportunities for regional touring, creative enterprise development, and cultural activation, while reinforcing the role of arts and culture as drivers of local economies and community vibrancy.

A key focus of ANW's advocacy throughout 2025 has been increased and sustained investment in regional arts and culture. ANW continues to advocate for equitable funding models that recognise the unique challenges facing regional communities, including geographic isolation, workforce shortages, limited infrastructure, and rising delivery costs. This includes advocating for long-term operational funding and ongoing support for regional artists, arts workers, galleries, museums, performing arts venues, festivals, and cultural organisations.

ANW has also prioritised stronger partnerships with Destination NSW and regional tourism stakeholders to better position arts and culture as central drivers of visitation, place-making, and economic growth. Through collaborative advocacy, ANW is working to ensure cultural tourism is embedded within broader tourism strategies, creating stronger opportunities for festivals, public art, live music, and creative experiences to attract visitors and extend overnight stays across regional NSW.

The identity of the NENW region is rapidly evolving. While agriculture, mining, and renewable energy remain dominant industries, the region is also experiencing demographic and cultural change, including growing culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) populations, transient workforces, and an ageing population, with more than 20% of residents aged 65 years or older. Environmental pressures, natural disasters, and climate uncertainty continue to impact regional communities and reinforce the importance of cultural connection and resilience.

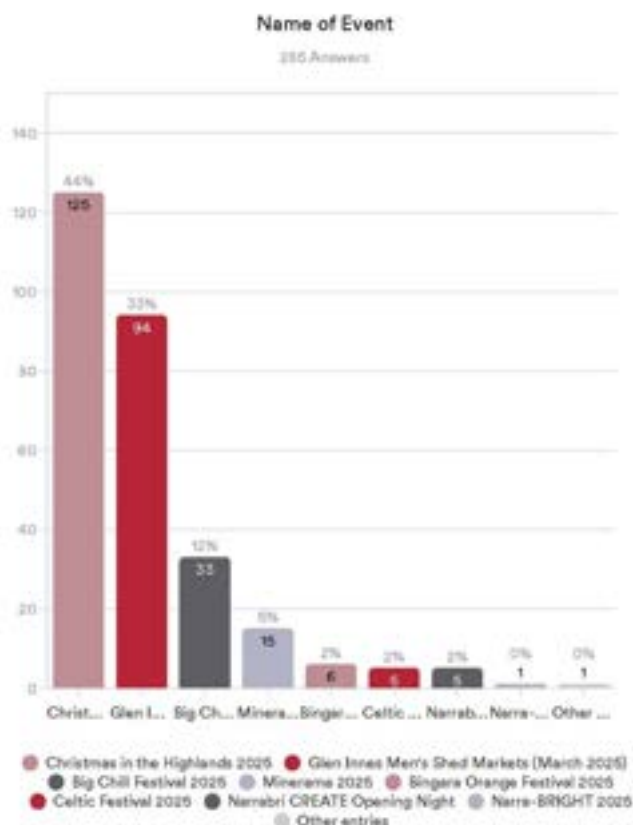
In response, ANW remains agile and responsive, delivering programs that reflect the distinct identities and evolving needs of communities across the region. Through the NENW Sustainable Communities Program, ANW is collecting localised cultural and economic data in partnership with councils, galleries, museums, performing arts venues, and major events. This includes visitor spending, audience demographics, overnight stays, and participation trends, helping inform evidence-based advocacy, strategic planning, and targeted investment.

By producing and sharing regional cultural research, ANW empowers stakeholders to better understand and articulate the social, cultural, and economic value of the arts. Through strong partnerships, sector leadership, and sustained advocacy, Arts North West continues to amplify the transformative power of the arts across regional NSW—supporting tourism, strengthening community identity, fostering creative skills for future industries, and celebrating the unique stories and cultural richness of the New England North West.

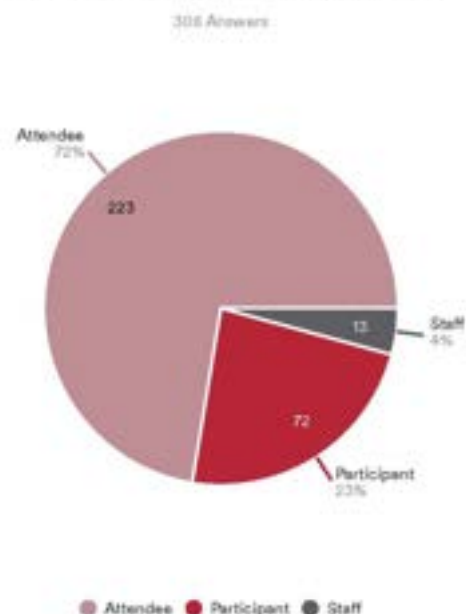
UNDERSTANDING OUR AUDIENCES



Arts North West collects and collates valuable data at the event and provides a detailed case study, complete with insightful and easy-to-interpret graphs. This comprehensive analysis serves as a roadmap for organisers, highlighting event successes and areas for improvement. Equipped with this bespoke service, event holders can make informed decisions, optimising future events, and shape stronger connections within their communities.

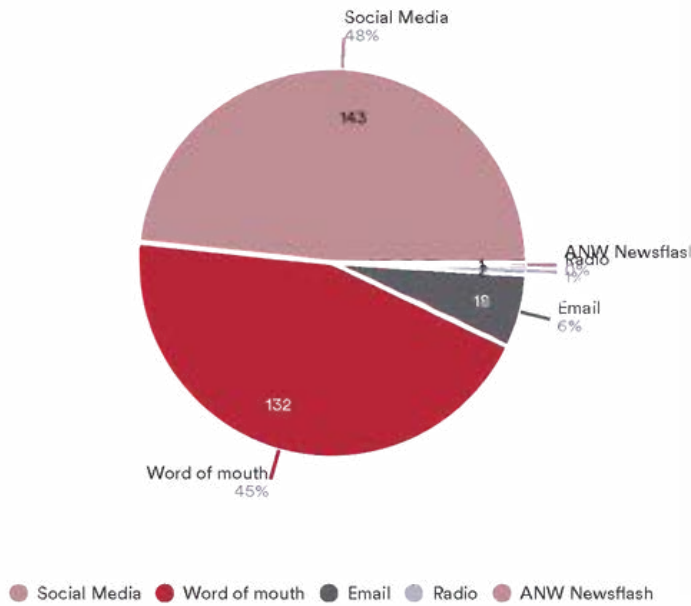


In what capacity are you attending this event?
306 Answers



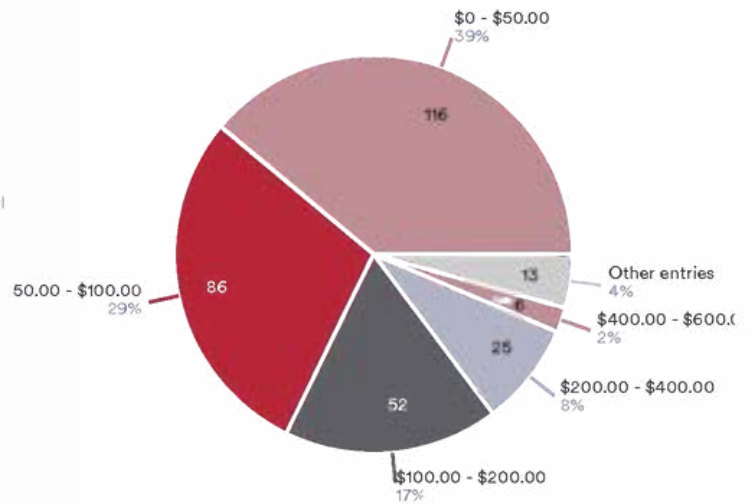
How did you hear about the event?

296 Answers



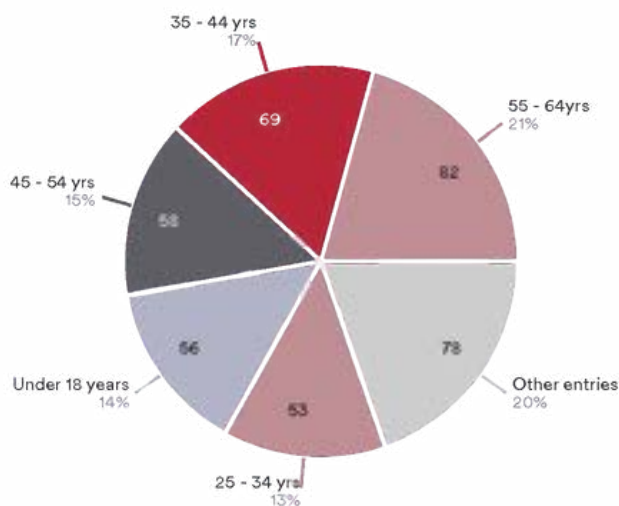
How much money have you spent to be part this event? e.g. Tickets, accommodation, meals, shopping etc

298 Answers



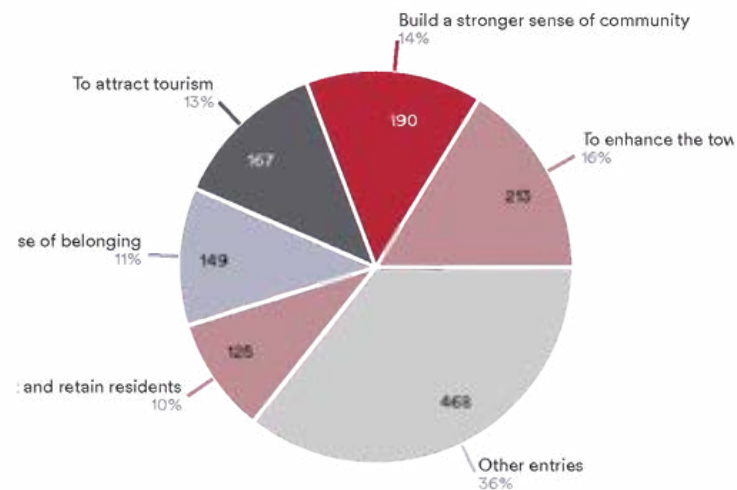
What age demographic are you and the people you attended this event with? (Please select multiple ages brackets, if applicable)

396 Answers



Why would you like to see more events, activated spaces and public art in the NENW?

1312 Answers



SUMMARY REPORT OF LARGE-SCALE OUTDOOR EVENTS IN THE NEW ENGLAND NORTH WEST (NENW) - 2025

In 2025, large-scale outdoor events across the New England North West (NENW) continued to demonstrate the significant social, cultural, and economic value of arts and cultural activity in regional NSW. Community feedback collected from a range of festivals and public events highlights strong audience participation, positive visitor experiences, and the growing role of events in driving tourism, community connection, and regional identity. The evaluation captured responses from 285 participants across major events including Christmas in the Highlands 2025, Glen Innes Men's Shed Markets, Big Chill Festival 2025, Minerama 2025, Bingara Orange Festival 2025, Celtic Festival 2025, Narrabri CREATE Opening Night, and Narra-BRIGHT 2025. The largest proportion of responses came from attendees of Christmas in the Highlands (44%) and Big Chill Festival (33%), demonstrating the strong reach and engagement of these events across the region.

The data confirms that outdoor events are highly valued by local communities and contribute significantly to regional liveability and economic activity. The majority of respondents attended as audience members (72%), while 23% participated directly in programming or activities, reflecting strong community involvement and creative participation. Social media (48%) and word-of-mouth promotion (45%) were identified as the primary ways audiences learned about events, highlighting the importance of digital engagement and local networks in regional event promotion.

Community responses also highlighted the broader social impacts of outdoor events. Respondents identified key motivations for wanting more events, activated spaces, and public art across the NENW, including enhancing town vibrancy, building stronger community connection, attracting tourism, creating a sense of belonging, and helping attract and retain residents. These findings reinforce the important role arts and cultural events play in strengthening social cohesion and improving quality of life in regional communities.

Economic impacts were also evident through visitor spending patterns. Nearly 30% of respondents reported spending between \$50 and \$100 during their visit, while 17% spent between \$100 and \$200, and 8% spent between \$200 and \$400. These figures demonstrate that outdoor events contribute directly to local economies through accommodation, dining, retail, fuel, and tourism-related expenditure.

Audience satisfaction across the events was extremely high. Event experience ratings showed that 71% of respondents rated their experience between 8 and 10 out of 10, with the highest single response being 10/10 (30% of participants). This reflects the strong quality of programming, community engagement, and event delivery occurring across the region.

Importantly, the 2025 evaluation also challenges common assumptions about regional demographics and cultural participation in the NENW. While the region is often characterised by an ageing population—with more than 20% of residents aged over 65—the survey results demonstrate strong engagement from younger and family demographics in outdoor events and community activations. The audience data reveals significant participation from people aged 25–44 years, alongside strong attendance from families with children under 18. Respondents aged 35–44 represented 17% of survey participants, while younger adults aged 25–34 accounted for 13%, and families with children under 18 made up 14% of responses.

These findings indicate that outdoor festivals, live music events, public activations, and community celebrations continue to resonate strongly with younger residents and emerging families across the region. This is particularly significant at a time when many regional communities across NSW are experiencing youth outmigration, declining civic participation, and the loss of long-running community events due to volunteer fatigue, rising operational costs, and limited funding. The NENW data suggests that adaptable, accessible, and experience-driven outdoor event models may be key to sustaining long-term audience engagement and ensuring the longevity of regional cultural activity and attracting and retaining young people in regional areas.

Unlike more traditional arts models, outdoor events create low-barrier opportunities for participation, social connection, and intergenerational engagement. These events activate public spaces, encourage spontaneous participation, and create inclusive environments that appeal to broad audiences. The strong attendance figures and overwhelmingly positive audience satisfaction ratings demonstrate that communities continue to value shared cultural experiences that are place-based, family-friendly, and community-led.

The findings reinforce the importance of continued investment in outdoor cultural activation across regional NSW. Supporting these event models is not only an investment in tourism and economic development, but also in community sustainability, youth engagement, and regional liveability. The evaluation demonstrates that outdoor arts and cultural events are becoming increasingly important forms of regional infrastructure-supporting economic diversification, strengthening community wellbeing, and helping regional towns remain vibrant, connected, and culturally resilient.

OBJECTIVE 3: CONNECTIONS

Forge strong partnerships and networks across the region.



DARWIN ABORIGINAL ARTS FAIR ARAA PD AND MARKET 2025



In 2025, Arts North West supported the Aboriginal Regional Arts Alliance to allow regional First Nations artists and the ANW Aboriginal Arts Officer to attend major national cultural events in Darwin.

Tania Hartigan and Tess Reading and other NSW artists and arts workers participated in the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair (DAAF), the DAAF Weekend Market, the National Indigenous Fashion Awards, Country to Couture 2025, and the National Indigenous Music Awards. The artists represented the New England North West region on a national stage while developing industry connections and showcasing their work to audiences from across Australia.

Arts North West also funded the Aboriginal Arts Officer to attend and support participating artists while assisting in the operation of a shared market stall featuring five NSW Aboriginal artists. During the DAAF Weekend Market, which attracted 28,668 attendees online and in person, artists from the New England North West region sold over 60 artworks, generating more than \$12,000 in sales.

Professional development included DAAF workshops in boab carving, market running, and First Nations dance, alongside visits to the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Northern Centre for Contemporary Art, Laundry Gallery, Crocosaurus Cove, and Mindil Beach Markets.

AGQUIP ARAA STALL

In August 2025, Arts North West supported the Aboriginal Regional Arts Alliance (ARAA) to deliver the first Aboriginal-focused arts stall at AGQUIP. Held from 19–21 August, the event attracted more than 44,000 visitors and provided a valuable platform to showcase regional Aboriginal artists and cultural products to a broad national audience.

Arts North West's Aboriginal Arts Officer supported stall operations and artist engagement throughout the event, with four New England North West artists represented. Tania Hartigan attended in person to promote and discuss her work with visitors. The initiative generated strong public interest and positive feedback, highlighting opportunities for greater inclusion of Aboriginal arts within major regional events and industry spaces.



THE NEXT GENERATION: STRENGTH, VISION & LEGACY - NAIDOC WEEK 2025 - GUNNEDAH



In 2025, Arts North West Executive Director Lauren Mackley delivered a bespoke curatorial training opportunity for Hollie Crawford and staff at the Gunnedah Bicentennial Creative Arts Gallery.

The intensive professional development program focused on exhibition planning, curation, installation, artist engagement, and community exhibition delivery. The training supported Hollie Crawford's development as an emerging First Nations curator while strengthening curatorial capacity within the gallery.

The program culminated in the delivery of Gunnedah's annual NAIDOC exhibition, *The Next Generation: Strength, Vision & Legacy*, presented from 4 July to 8 August 2025. The exhibition celebrated First Nations culture, creativity, and community leadership as part of NAIDOC Week programming.

The initiative created valuable pathways for First Nations leadership within regional galleries and demonstrated the importance of mentorship, skills development, and cultural representation in community arts programming.

CREATE NSW ICIP WORKSHOP 2025

In November 2025, Arts North West supported regional community participation in the Create NSW ICIP Workshop held at the Armidale Keeping Place. The workshop focused on updates to Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) protocols and their impact on artists, organisations, and cultural practice.

Through funding from Regional Arts NSW, Arts North West assisted community members to travel and attend the roadshow, increasing regional access to important cultural governance discussions.

Attendees included Arts North West Aboriginal Arts Officer, Waabii Chapman-Burgess, Lorraine Fishenden, Pene Riggs, and representatives from UNE Armidale and Local Land Services.

The workshop strengthened awareness and understanding of ICIP protocols within the regional arts and cultural sector.





YARNBOMBING FINALE: PICASSO GUITAR TAMWORTH

The Yarnbombing Finale at Tamworth's Picasso Guitar was delivered as part of the 'Hats Off to Country festival' by LM vs ML Consultancy and Julie Jana in collaboration with Arts North West. The project demonstrated large-scale participatory public art, connecting communities across the region through craft and collaboration.

Developed over two years, the initiative invited individuals, community groups, and craft networks to contribute crocheted and knitted pieces for a large textile installation. More than 330 contributions were received from participants across 11 Local Government Areas, reflecting strong regional engagement. The final installation transformed the Picasso Guitar into a colourful handcrafted artwork using curated textile pieces collected throughout the project.

The project generated strong public visibility during the festival and enhanced the visitor experience by activating one of Tamworth's iconic public artworks. It also fostered community connection and shared ownership, with contributors seeing their work represented within a major public artwork.

The initiative highlighted the value of community-led creative practice and demonstrated how traditional crafts can be adapted within contemporary public art. Participant feedback emphasised social connection, wellbeing, and pride in contributing to a significant regional installation.

JIM A. BARKER EXHIBITION - MOREE SOCIAL CO HOUSE & INDUSTRY MIXER

Arts North West supported the Jim A. Barker exhibition 'Artisans of the New England' at the Social Co House in Moree, alongside an industry networking event. The exhibition formed part of a broader initiative to showcase regional creative practice while strengthening connections across the arts sector.

'Artisans of the New England' was a photographic project documenting artists and makers across the New England region. Initiated in 2022, the series captures a diverse range of creatives-including painters, sculptors, ceramicists, and craftspeople-highlighting the depth and diversity of regional practice. The Moree exhibition brought this body of work into a new community context, offering audiences insight into the people and stories behind the region's creative industries. The exhibition was complemented by an industry mixer, providing opportunities for artists, practitioners, and stakeholders to connect, share knowledge, and build professional relationships. The exhibition and mixer successfully combined public engagement with sector development, attracting strong attendance and fostering meaningful connections.



ARTS NORTH WEST AND HUNTER NEW ENGLAND HEALTH - ARTS INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS ACROSS THE NENW

In 2024, Arts North West was approached by Hunter New England Health to support arts and health infrastructure initiatives across Moree, Gunnedah, and Tamworth. The collaboration focused on integrating public and accessible artworks within healthcare settings to improve patient wellbeing, create welcoming environments, and strengthen community connection.

The initiative recognised the importance of art in mental health units, maternity wards, children's wards, and emergency departments, where accessible artworks can reduce stress, support emotional wellbeing, and create calmer, more human-centred spaces for patients, families, and staff.

The project also presented an important opportunity for Arts North West to partner with state government outside traditional arts funding and delivery models. It created pathways for local artists to contribute to high-calibre state infrastructure projects, ensuring regional creative voices were represented within significant public health environments.

By connecting artists with large-scale health infrastructure projects, the initiative highlighted the value of creative practice in public spaces while supporting regional employment, cultural visibility, and long-term community wellbeing outcomes.



TAMWORTH MENTAL HEALTH UNIT (BANKSIA) - ARTS IN HEALTH PROJECT SUPPORT

Arts North West partnered with Health Infrastructure and Hunter New England Local Health District to support the delivery of the Arts in Health program for the new Tamworth Mental Health Unit (Banksia). The project forms part of the NSW Government's Statewide Mental Health Infrastructure Program, embedding creative practice within healthcare environments to enhance wellbeing and recovery. Arts North West supported the Expressions of Interest (EOI) process, assisting artists to understand application requirements, selection criteria, and the broader context of arts in health environments. This included guidance on preparing submissions and ensuring artworks aligned with the therapeutic and cultural objectives of the facility.

In addition, Arts North West was on the Tamworth Mental Health Unit Advisory Board that engaged local Aboriginal artists to contribute major works for communal spaces, embedding Gomeroi cultural knowledge, storytelling, and language into the design of the facility.

The artists were chosen from 30 high-quality entries in response to a public expression of interest, showcasing the creative talent of the region.

The artists include:

- Carolyn McCosker (Inverell)
- Leslye Coyle (Ogunbil)
- Stephanie Creigh (Tamworth)
- Isabelle Devos (Armidale)
- Theresa May Chatfield (Tamworth)
- Elouise Roberts (Armidale)
- Audrey Fogg (Tamworth)
- Phoebe Hillard (Armidale)
- Peter Abery (Graman)

MOREE HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT ARTS PROJECT

Arts North West supported Hunter New England Health (HNE Health) in the Moree Hospital Redevelopment Arts Project by assisting local and regional artists to engage with the Expressions of Interest (EOI) process. Arts North West delivered EOI support sessions at the Bank Art Museum Moree (BAMM) on 27–28 October. These sessions provided accessible, one-on-one guidance to artists interested in applying for the project.

Support included:

- Clarifying project scope and application requirements
- Guidance on preparing EOI submissions
- Information on selection processes and expectations
- Advice on insurance and compliance requirements

The sessions created a supportive environment for artists to ask questions and build confidence in submitting proposals. The initiative increased local artist participation by reducing barriers to the application process. Artists were better equipped to submit informed and competitive EOIs. The collaboration strengthened connections between the arts and health sectors, highlighting the role of art in enhancing public spaces and community wellbeing.



GUNNEDAH HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT ARTS PROJECT

Arts North West played a key role in supporting the Arts in Health component of the Gunnedah Hospital Redevelopment, working in partnership with NSW Health Infrastructure to connect local artists with a significant public art opportunity. The redevelopment integrates creative practice into the design of the facility, recognising the value of art in enhancing wellbeing and creating welcoming healthcare environments. Arts North West supported the Expressions of Interest (EOI) process, providing guidance to artists on application requirements, selection criteria, and submission development. This support ensured that regional artists were well-positioned to engage with the opportunity.

Following the selection process, five artists were commissioned, including:

- Monique Hope
- Rachel Passfield
- Ronnie Long
- Warrick Keen

The project supported regional artist development and visibility and provided opportunities to contribute to a high-profile public infrastructure project. The inclusion of locally connected artists ensures that the artworks reflect the identity, culture, and stories of the Gunnedah community. The Gunnedah Hospital Arts in Health project demonstrates the impact of integrating local creative practice into public infrastructure, delivering lasting cultural, social, and community benefits.



MEDIA & ENGAGEMENT



In 2025, Arts North West strengthened its role as a regional communicator, advocate, and connector for the arts and creative industries across the New England North West. Through strategic storytelling, digital engagement, and sector communication, ANW continued to increase visibility for regional artists, organisations, events, and creative industries while supporting stronger community and industry connections.

A central component of this work is Arts North West Connect, the region's online creative directory and interactive arts trail. Following a comprehensive audit and renewal process, active listings reduced by 26% to 220 profiles. While overall profile numbers declined, the process significantly improved the accuracy, relevance, and integrity of the platform. Arts North West Connect remains an important regional resource; showcasing artists, creative businesses, venues, galleries, museums, festivals, and cultural organisations across the NENW. The platform supports cultural tourism, strengthens local visibility, and provides a central access point for discovering creative activity throughout the region.

As part of the redevelopment of the new Arts North West website, scheduled for launch in July 2026, ANW plans to expand Connect beyond artists and venues to better represent the broader creative industries sector. This expanded scope reflects the increasing role of the creative industries in regional economic development, tourism, innovation, and employment.

Throughout 2025, ANW also progressed the development of a new integrated website, designed to consolidate Arts North West and Arts North West Connect into a single digital platform. The redevelopment focuses on improved accessibility, clearer navigation, stronger resource delivery, and a more effective user experience supporting program engagement and sector participation. The current website continues to operate as a central information hub for arts and cultural activity across the NENW, providing access to the regional Events Calendar, grants, professional development opportunities, sector news, and community resources.

ANW's digital engagement and audience reach increased significantly throughout 2025. Key outcomes included:

- **Social media growth from 5,500 to 6,465 followers across Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn - an 18% increase**
- **More than 500 social media posts published**
- **Newsletter subscriptions increasing to 2,376 subscribers - a 13.14% increase**
- **384,332 Instagram views achieved through fully organic engagement**
- **7,126 social media interactions - a 21.2% increase in engagement**
- **Arts and Cultural Events Calendar listings increasing from 587 to 598 events - a 1.87% increase**

These outcomes demonstrate growing audience engagement with regional arts and cultural content and reflect the increasing importance of digital communication in supporting visibility, participation, and sector connectivity across geographically dispersed communities.

Digital platforms continue to play a critical role in promoting regional events, supporting artists and organisations, strengthening advocacy outcomes, and increasing access to opportunities across the creative sector. ANW's communications strategy prioritises accessible, regionally relevant content that reflects the diversity, identity, and activity of the NENW.

2025 has been a year of sustained growth in digital engagement, audience reach, and sector visibility. Through strategic communications and platform development, Arts North West continues to strengthen the profile of the arts and creative industries across regional NSW while supporting the communities, organisations, and practitioners that shape the cultural identity of the New England North West. Looking ahead, the launch of the new website in 2026 will deliver a more integrated and responsive digital platform for the region's arts and creative industries. Improved functionality, stronger data capabilities, and expanded creative industry representation will support deeper engagement with artists, audiences, organisations, councils, and tourism stakeholders.

REGIONAL ARTS NETWORK

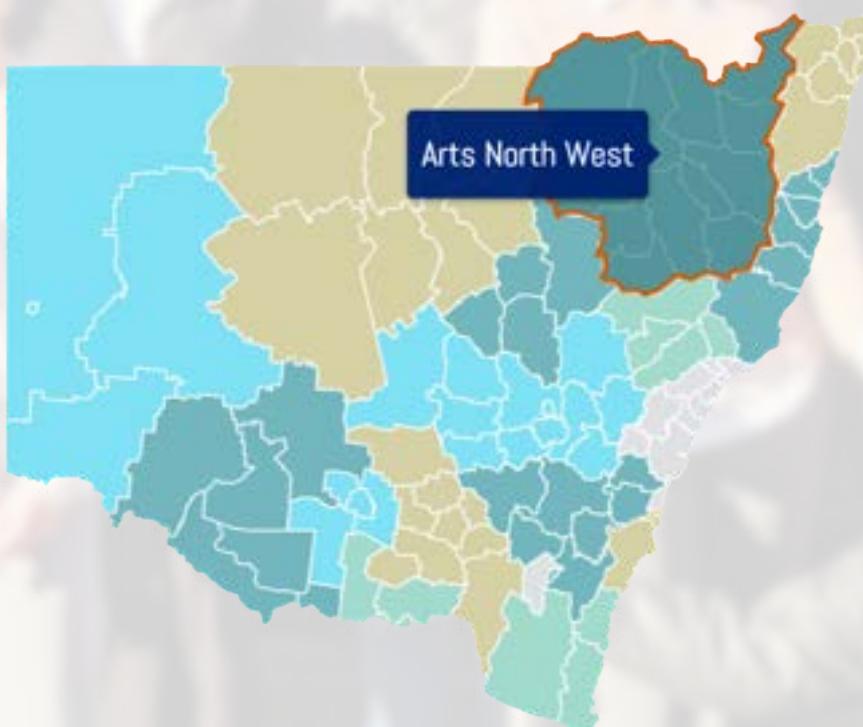
Regional Arts NSW has been the overarching body for Regional Arts Development in NSW for over 75 years. In recent years this organisation has transitioned to a subscription model.

There are 15 Regional Arts Development Organisations in New South Wales, 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. In 2018 Arts North West moved to a skills based board. Each employs an Executive Director and other staff who coordinate a cultural development program across the contributing local government areas in their region.



REGIONAL ARTS DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATIONS IN NSW



ARTS MID NORTH COAST

ARTS NORTH WEST

ARTS NORTHERN RIVERS

ARTS OUTWEST

ARTS UPPER HUNTER

EASTERN RIVERINA ARTS

MURRAY ARTS

ORANA ARTS

OUTBACK ARTS

SOUTH COAST ARTS

SOUTH EAST ARTS

SOUTH WEST ARTS

SOUTHERN TABLELANDS ARTS

WEST DARLING ARTS

WESTERN RIVERINA ARTS

STATEWIDE PROJECTS



In 2024–2025, 75 young creatives from across regional NSW participated in Horizons, a creative industries mentoring program delivered through the Regional Futures NSW Regional Arts Network and funded by the Department of Regional NSW. The program connected emerging creatives with experienced industry mentors, providing professional guidance, industry connections, and practical experience to support pathways into the creative industries.

Throughout the program, participants refined their creative practice, built professional networks, and explored sustainable creative career opportunities across a range of disciplines. The Horizons Digital Showcase highlighted the outcomes of the program and demonstrated the strength of emerging regional talent. Arts North West was strongly represented through both participating creatives and mentors.

Featured Artists from the Arts North West Region

- Tilda Morse – Dance and Musical Theatre
- Jack Fuller (JACKY BOY) – Music Production
- Tommy Burnett – Writing and Publishing
- Sophie Rogers – Theatre
- Belle Meyer – Musical Theatre and Acting
- Logan Hughes – Digital Visual Arts

Mentors from the Arts North West Region

- Danny Stanley – Multidisciplinary Mentor
- Isabelle Devos – Visual Arts Mentor

Arts North West also hosted a regional celebration event at NERAM in February 2025, showcasing participant outcomes and strengthening regional creative connections.

The Horizons Digital Showcase:

horizons.regionalfutures.net.au/showcase-2024

CULTURAL TOURISM

In 2025, Arts North West (ANW) continued strengthening arts and cultural tourism through partnerships with the NSW Regional Arts Network (RAN), Destination NSW, and regional stakeholders. This work builds on the 2024 statewide cultural tourism research commissioned by RAN and delivered by Patternmakers through the Regional Futures initiative. The 2024 research identified cultural tourism as a strategic priority for regional NSW and highlighted opportunities to improve promotion, partnerships, audience development, and visitor engagement. For the New England North West (NENW), findings identified a need to better support cultural tourism operators, artists, and event organisers through stronger marketing and tourism collaboration.

Arts and cultural tourism includes travel experiences centred on creative life, heritage, and cultural expression, including festivals, galleries, museums, live performance, First Nations cultural experiences, public art, music, literature, food culture, and creative workshops. A major focus throughout 2025 was the development of the Regional Tourism, Arts and Cultural Events Toolkit, commissioned by RAN in partnership with Patternmakers, with advice from Destination NSW and support from Create NSW.

The toolkit was designed for:

- Artists and cultural organisations
- Tourism operators and event organisers
- Councils and enabling agencies

The resource aims to strengthen collaboration between arts, tourism, and local government sectors while improving regional visitor economy outcomes.

Throughout 2025, consultation occurred across regional NSW to gather case studies, examples, and practical insights into successful arts and cultural tourism initiatives. The toolkit includes:

- Planning templates and workshop resources
- Tourism and marketing strategies
- Regional case studies and examples
- Audience development and visitor engagement tools
- Research references supporting planning and investment

The toolkit supports regional operators to strengthen tourism-focused programming, improve visitor experiences, and increase the sustainability of arts and cultural events.

Arts North West continued supporting this work through promotion, advocacy, and sector engagement. The Arts North West Events Calendar remains a key platform promoting festivals, exhibitions, performances, workshops, and public events across the NENW, increasing visibility for regional creatives and organisations. The Regional Arts Network, comprising fifteen Regional Arts Development Organisations across NSW, continues to provide leadership in sustainable arts and cultural development. Through initiatives such as the Arts and Cultural Tourism Toolkit, the network is helping regional communities better leverage the visitor economy while strengthening the visibility and value of regional arts and culture.

The toolkit is scheduled for statewide launch in 2026.



OBJECTIVE 4: GOVERNANCE

*Provide sound and effective corporate governance
to ensure a sustainable organisation.*



**2025 – 2028
STRATEGIC PLAN**

ARTS NORTH WEST INC
16 EAST AVE GLEN INNES (02) 6732 4988
ABN 13 294 582 557

**Arts
n^{orth}
west**

GOVERNANCE

ARTS NORTH WEST BOARD

SKILLS BASED BOARD, 9 MEMBERS ELECTED BY MEMBERS

Arts North West (ANW) is a not-for-profit arts service organisation with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status and registered charity status. For more than 25 years, ANW has provided leadership in arts and cultural development across the New England North West region.

Established as a Regional Arts Development Program in 1996 and incorporated as an independent Regional Arts Board in 1997, ANW was founded to support regional arts development, cultural participation, and creative sector growth. Since its establishment, the organisation has continued to evolve its programs, governance, and strategic priorities in response to the changing needs of regional communities and the creative sector.

In 2018, ANW transitioned to a two-tier governance structure comprising a skills-based Board of Management and a Strategic Advisory Council (SAC). The Board governs the organisation and oversees strategic, financial, and operational responsibilities, while the SAC provides regional input and sector feedback through representatives from contributing local government areas and independent cultural organisations.

The Board collectively provides expertise across:

- Governance and strategic planning
- Financial management
- Legal and not-for-profit compliance
- Local government
- Arts practice, administration, and cultural development
- Regional economic development and tourism
- Community and cultural services
- Human resources
- Information technology and communications
- Risk management and insurance
- Marketing and fundraising



ANW maintains a regular policy and procedure review process, with audits and updates undertaken every two years and endorsed by the Board. Policies are revised in line with legislative and regulatory changes to ensure organisational compliance and best practice governance.

The organisation is committed to inclusive governance and culturally responsive decision-making. The Aboriginal Steering Committee provides guidance on culturally appropriate practice and supports self-determination for First Nations communities across the region. The EnAble Arts Advisory Committee provides advice on accessibility and inclusion to support equitable participation for people living with disability.

Board and committee composition prioritises First Nations representation, cultural diversity, disability inclusion, gender equity, and regional representation. ANW actively encourages nominations that reflect the diversity of the New England North West community and support inclusive leadership across the organisation.

2025 BOARD MEMBERS



**Arts North West, Vice Chair
Peter Ross**



**Arts North West, Public Officer
Sandy McNaughton**



**Arts North West, Treasurer
Thomas Robinson**



**Arts North West, Board Member
Rachel Parsons**



**Arts North West, Chair
Alistair Noble**



**Arts North West, Board Member
Tania Hartigan**



**Arts North West, Board Member
Lisa Berges**

2025 STRATEGIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC) MEMBERS

AIMEE HUTTON AND SARAH REDDINGTON FROM ARMIDALE REGIONAL COUNCIL

RHONDA BOMBELL AND CAROL SPARKS FROM GLEN INNES SEVERN SHIRE

SUSAN FRATER FROM GUNNDAH SHIRE COUNCIL

CAROLINE LUMLEY AND CIAN MIDDLETON FROM LIVERPOOL PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL

KELLY JAMES AND SUSANNAH PEARSE FROM MOREE PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL

MARK WATT FROM NARRABRI SHIRE COUNCIL

RYAN BROOKE AND BRIDGET GUTHRIE FROM TAMWORTH REGIONAL COUNCIL

KIM RHODES FROM TENTERFIELD SHIRE

TONI AVERAY AND ADAM BLAKESTER FROM URALLA SHIRE COUNCIL

NENA FAY HICKS FROM WALCHA.

RACHAEL PARSONS (ARMIDALE) AND REBECCA RYAN (GUNNDAH) AS COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES



STAFF 2025



- **Acting Executive Director** - Miranda Heckenberg
- **Communications/ Media and Engagement** - Penne Fraser
- **Administration Officer** - Leah Fontyn
- **Aboriginal Arts Officer** - Robbie Hartigan
- **ANWOT Touring Coordinator** - Hester Fraser
- **Finance Contractor** - Path Bookkeeping
- **IT Contractor** - Cloudwize Pty Ltd

Throughout 2025, Acting Executive Director Miranda Heckenberg represented Arts North West at Regional Arts NSW network meetings held regularly throughout the year. These meetings provide important opportunities for Regional Arts Development Organisations (RADOs) across NSW to collaborate, share sector knowledge, and engage directly with Federal and State government departments, arts agencies, and key industry stakeholders. Miranda also attended the annual Regional Arts NSW staff gathering, bringing together staff from all Regional Arts Development Organisations across the state to strengthen sector networks, strategic collaboration, and regional cultural development outcomes.

In 2025, Arts North West remained committed to delivering programs and initiatives that support artistic excellence, regional collaboration, and sector innovation. The dedication, professionalism, and collaborative approach of the team strengthened the organisation's capacity to deliver meaningful outcomes for artists, communities, councils, and cultural organisations across the New England North West.

We acknowledge and thank Acting Executive Director Miranda Heckenberg for her leadership, professionalism, and strategic guidance throughout 2025. Her contribution ensured continuity, stability, and strong organisational direction during a significant period for the organisation. Arts North West also welcomes the return of Executive Director Lauren Mackley and looks forward to her leadership as the organisation continues to strengthen arts and cultural development across the region.

We extend our sincere thanks to the communities, artists, organisations, volunteers, partners, and stakeholders of the New England North West whose ongoing support and participation contributed to the success of Arts North West programs and initiatives throughout the year. Through collective effort and collaboration, we continue to strengthen the creative capacity, cultural identity, and sustainability of the region.

As Arts North West looks toward 2026, the organisation remains focused on fostering creativity, connection, and collaboration while continuing to support a vibrant and resilient arts and cultural sector across regional NSW.

ABORIGINAL ARTS STEERING COMMITTEE

The NENW Aboriginal Arts Steering Committee supports Arts North West with cultural guidance and decision-making, strategic planning, advice and feedback and will be developing respectful and sustainable relationships based on trust and respect for our cultural values and our histories. The NENW Aboriginal Arts Steering Committee aims to be comprised of two Aboriginal volunteer representatives from each of the contributing LGAs in our region.

This support assists the organisation to deliver programs and services in a culturally safe, respectful, and inclusive manner while strengthening relationships with Aboriginal communities across the region.

In 2025 the Arts North West Aboriginal Arts Steering Committee directly contributed to

- IVIAS Mid Year Report
- ANW website
- Aboriginal Arts Steering Committee Terms of Reference
- Committee Membership
- Development of Programs and Projects
- Linking with Elders and key First Nations stakeholders in community

2025 STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS INCLUDED

- Kaliela Thornton (Tamworth),
- Tyler Stackman-Green (Walcha),
- Leanne Pryor (Gunnedah),
- Tammy Wortley (Gunnedah),
- Raquel Clarke (Moree),
- Mona Fernando (Moree),
- Amy Allerton (Tamworth),
- Lyniece Keogh (Tamworth),
- Ethan Towns (Narrabri),
- Waabii Adele Chapman-Burgess (Glen Innes),
- Rose Lovelock (Armidale)

First Stories
Moving forward together



Australian Government

Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support



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